

## **ICCL urges Minister for Justice to respond to Sallins Case petition (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/112359>)**

### **14 months have passed without a response to call for public inquiry 25 November 2024.**

**The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) has written[1] to the Minister for Justice asking her to respond to a 14-month-old petition[2] for a public inquiry into the case of the Sallins Men and the ongoing violations of the men’s human rights.**

The petition – prepared by human rights organisations ICCL, the Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ), the Pat Finucane Centre and Fair Trials – was submitted in September 2023 to the Department of Justice. Since then, the only answer from the Minister has been that she will respond to the petition “in due course”[3].

Six men, known as the Sallins Men (Michael Barrett, Osgur Breatnach, John Fitzpatrick, Nicky Kelly, Brian McNally and Mick Plunkett (since deceased)), were arrested, detained and interrogated following the Sallins train robbery in 1976. Four of the men signed alleged confessions and all six of them had extensive bruising and injuries after their arrests which they said were inflicted by members of the Gardaí. Three of the men were tried before the Special Criminal Court, found guilty and spent time in prison. They were all subsequently acquitted or pardoned. There has never been a public inquiry into the case.

ICCL and the petition’s supporting organisations maintain that the arrest, detention, interrogation, prosecution and conviction of the Sallins Men and their continued ill-treatment by the State is of significant public concern, and that a statutory inquiry is required to vindicate their rights.

#### **Speaking today, Christopher Stanley, KRW LAW LLP, said:**

“KRW LAW LLP is assisting all the Sallins Men – Osgur Breatnach, Nicky Kelly, Brian McNally, John Fitzpatrick and Michael Barrett – in their continuing demands for truth, justice and accountability as a result of their wrongful arrest, interrogation including torture, detention and conviction arising from the Garda response to the Sallins train robbery in 1976.

“Almost a year ago, KRW assisted in preparing the joint civil society petition delivered to the Minister for Justice by ICCL and other human rights NGOs. Now, over a year later, we support the message made clear in ICCL’s letter to the Minister that the government’s failure to address the human rights abuses arising from the Sallins Case is both an indictment of and indicative of the position of successive Irish governments to fail to investigate conflict-related violations in accordance with standards demanded by the European Convention on Human Rights. That is a human rights deficit that must be accounted for.

“We call on the Minister to acknowledge and reply to this letter with a fulsome response to the petition and a public inquiry.”

#### **Claire Mc Evoy, Acting Co-Director, ICCL, said:**

“The human rights violations inflicted upon the Sallins Men by An Garda Síochána and accepted by other parts of the Irish criminal justice system were part of a systemic pattern of human rights violations endemic across many years in Ireland’s history. The Irish State has systematically failed to address their treatment and the systems which enabled this treatment to occur.

“14 months ago we petitioned the Minister for Justice and government to establish a public inquiry into the case. Since then, the only response we’ve received is that the Minister will respond to the petition “in due course”.

“The impact of this case lives on for the five surviving Sallins Men and their families. They deserve truth, justice and accountability, all of which can only be achieved through a fully independent statutory inquiry. We hope the Minister and government will respond to this request with the urgency it merits, including so that similar violations can never happen again.”

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[1] Letter from ICCL to Minister for Justice, 19 November 2024:<https://www.iccl.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241119-ICCL-letter-to-Minister-for-Justice-re-Sallins-Petition.pdf> (<https://www.iccl.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241119-ICCL-letter-to-Minister-for-Justice-re-Sallins-Petition.pdf>)

[2] Civil Society Petition to the Minister for Justice on the Sallins Case:<https://www.iccl.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Sallins-petition-FINAL.pdf> (<https://www.iccl.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Sallins-petition-FINAL.pdf>)

[3] Parliamentary question to the Minister for Justice, 11 October 2023:<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-10-11/4/> (<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-10-11/4/>)

**Region**

Nationwide

**Date Entered/Updated**

25th Nov, 2024

**Expiry Date**

9th Dec, 2024

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