

Press Release from Bloody Sunday March Committee

Date: 13th January 2013

Bernadette McAliskey to address this years Bloody Sunday March

The Bloody Sunday March Committee is delighted to confirm that Bernadette McAliskey will deliver the main address at this year's Bloody Sunday March for Justice rally. Asked why she had accepted the invitation to speak she said:

“I've agreed to speak because I do not believe that the real culprits for Bloody Sunday where either exposed or held to account through The Bloody Sunday Inquiry. I believe the British Government were responsible and the people who got the blame were a handful of soldiers.

I always believed there should not have been an inquiry. There should have been prosecutions at the Hague. But whatever I believed, truth and justice have not been achieved through that process and as long as that remains the case I'll continue to be on platforms and forums calling for it.

I also believe in the fundamental right to articulate dissent from a majority opinion and that right continues to be under serious threat in Northern Ireland today.”

Bernadette McAliskey (nee Devlin) was a prominent member of the civil rights movement at the time of Bloody Sunday and, as MP for Mid Ulster, was the youngest woman ever to be elected to the House of Commons.

On the 30th January 1972 she was on the platform in Derry, about to address the rally when 1 Para entered the Bogside and started shooting into the fleeing crowd.

She made sure to be in House of Commons the next day because as the only member of the Westminster parliament present in Derry on the day she had an automatic right to put to Parliament what she had witnessed.

The Speaker refused her that right saying she had no rights other than those granted by the speaker. However Reginald Maudling the British Home Secretary at the time was given the floor and allowed to speak about Derry, suggested that the paratroopers only returned fire at identified gunmen.

At that point Bernadette Devlin (as she was then) walked across the floor of the house and struck the home secretary. Speaking afterwards she said her only regret was that she didn't hit him hard enough.

Since then Bernadette McAliskey has been consistent in her support for human and civil rights for those denied them whoever and wherever they may be and most recently in the

case of the detainee Marian Price. She currently works in a community project in South Tyrone that deals with a wide range of human rights and social justice issues.

This year's Bloody Sunday March for Justice will take place in Derry on Sunday January 27th starting from Creggan shops, Central Drive, Derry at 2.30 pm.

Speaking on behalf of the committee Jim Keys said, *"The theme of this year's March for Justice is 'End Impunity' and there are many issues of injustice beyond Bloody Sunday that need to be addressed today. The Bloody Sunday March and its associated programme of events have established themselves as an annual space and platform to explore and begin to address those issues as well as make connections between them. We encourage everyone to come and join us."*

Full details of the programme of events are available on the Committee's website at:
<http://BloodySundayMarch.org/>

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This press release is also available in the Press Release area of the Bloody Sunday March website: <http://BloodySundayMarch.org/>