



Osgur Breatnach's address to ICCL Seminar on the Special Criminal Court, 26 January 2022

Se bhur mbeatha. Hello.

Sometime ago, an acquaintance, who was writing a book was searching for a title. I suggested *Dead Man Talking* as he had been sentenced to death by the Special Criminal Court. The commuted sentence was reversed fifteen years into his life sentence as his innocence became clear- as did some of the manufactured evidence against him. Compensation claims were refused by the State who said he was out of time to make any claim. No inquiry followed into his frame-up.

Following is only a bird's eye view of a section of the Sallins Case before the Special Criminal Court. I speak mainly of myself but there were other co-accused: Mick Barret, John Fitzpatrick, Nicky Kelly, Brian McNally and Mick Plunkett.

Be aware, that some of my following comments leave me open to a large fine and jail term, as per the intimidating terms of the Act that re-established the Special Criminal Court in 1972.

You may want to disengage from this zoom in case you are attached as co-conspirators. I say this half in jest and half in truth for it is the type of evidence that would have been accepted by the Special Criminal Court in the past and would have led to your prompt conviction and jail time.

Special Courts in the Irish State once consisted of military officers who sentenced prisoners to execution by firing squad. The latest 1972 version with judges replacing the military was renamed and restructured to be more palatable to the public.

Since then, in its years of operation, the court has in fact sentenced both men and women to death.

The Special Criminal Court is an integral part of a triumvirate of repressive apparatus against Irish citizens: the government that

perpetuates it; the police who use it and the Court itself that administers its own special version of so-called "justice". Like Covid their sole purpose is to perpetuate itself.

And like all repressive legislation, it is invariably regularised from targeting political opponents into domestic law for use against the general population. All this happens under the Offences Against the State Act.

I read it once a long time ago, and from memory, I recall it allowed secret trials, death sentences, secret burials of the executed and confiscation, destruction or sale of their property. All that has changed for the better since is the abolition of the death penalty.

It was a replica of the Special Powers Act in the North of Ireland, since abolished as part of the Good Friday Agreement.

No wonder that Ian Smith, then running the apartheid state of Rhodesia, challenging British Government attacks on his regime in the 60s, stated he would gladly abolish **all** his repressive legislation if only he could import verbatim the Special Powers Act, or, by inference, the Offences Against the State Act.

Much about the **Sallins Mail Train Robbery** case is misleading for instance it happened in nearby Hazlehead. The IRA stole, in today's money, over €1.5M from an unguarded train. It was the largest robbery in Irish history, at the time.

But the arrests that followed, the largest Irish round up since WW2, were **pre-planned, long before the robbery** and aimed exclusively at the infant political party to which I then belonged. And therein lies the real story of why the State fears an independent public inquiry.

The Sallins Case has **nothing** to do with a train robbery.

You can get full details on the Sallins Case on the webpage sallinsinquirynow.ie. which campaigns for a statutory public and independent inquiry into the Sallins Case.

By inquiry terms I mean my torture (and that of others) at the hands of the State, not just the gardai, from the moment of my kidnapping to the present day, and the cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and

punishment **still** being meted out to me, now for the 46th year in this **criminal corrupt state-endeavour**.

On the website, you can see a cross section of the hundreds of thousands, across all religious, political and societal groups, who are on record as supporting the demand, including a number of ex-Presidents and all the human rights groups in Ireland. The website also includes articles, reports, and specific general information on the Sallins Case.

You should also read one of my satirical books [*Al Pacino, the Judge and I*](#) available on Amazon. It's a small book, only six inches high, with a small €5 price. It follows my take on comments by the Sallins trial Judge on my bad acting ability.

But, be aware in advance, the cover does warn readers that the book should be banned.

THE MEDIA IN THE SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT

The media in the Special Criminal Court, at the time of my infamous trials, ran a pooling system. Sometimes, reporters from each of the main news outlets attended. Often, they sat in the pub across the road while one held the journalistic fort in the courtroom. They then shared the day's report. This meant that if one reporter failed to report events, or note the nuance of evidence, all the media repeated the error.

For instance, only *Hibernia Magazine* reported the *sleeping judge* story prior to our legal challenge. When the sleeping judge issue was raised, all the court reporters were approached to sign affidavits of the judge's behaviour. **While acknowledging he slept on the bench, they refused to sign**, stating fear of retribution and damage to their careers and perhaps fines and incarceration for bringing the Court into disrepute.

To this day, the general media seem to have great difficulty in using the word 'torture'.

My terminology of the word torture is not a subjective interpretation. It is an objective one agreed by international definitions in dictionaries and law.

It involves oppression- either physical or/and mental- to force someone to go against their own free will to sign a so-called confession.

There is no ambiguity in the word torture. It is clearly defined.

You don't have to lose fingernails to be tortured.

Mental oppression constitutes torture, which is exactly what the Court of Criminal Appeal found as it quashed both my sentence and conviction.

WHY THE SALLINS CASE IS NOTORIOUS

The Sallins Case is notorious because I and a few others put our necks, careers and our health on the block. With many others, we commenced a political **campaign** to expose the related human rights court abuses. We did so across the media, on the streets, in jail and on hunger strike and we had the determination and expertise to campaign. We did so as part of our commitment to human rights.

Following my release on bail, after the mass arrests of over 40 associates of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the response was immediate. Press conferences were held, Amnesty International and other human rights groups, trade unions, cultural and community groups and international support groups were advised of the torture and the blatant attempt to smash the legally registered political party to which I then belonged.

The IRSP, of which I am no longer a member, I left in 1982, was a newly registered, all-Ireland legal political party.

In a new departure in Irish republican politics, it had **no** armed wing. The fake news that it did, was successfully spread to isolate it. The party engaged in purely political activity, supporting an inclusive peace process, at the time innovative, and supporting a broad front of radical and progressive forces to challenge wealth distribution in Ireland and for a more inclusive democracy. It did this in the face of daily state-intimidation, harassment, detentions, arrests and black PR campaigns.

Exposing the frame-up, Irish cities were mass postered, a bonding glaze being mixed into the paste that prevented posters being pulled down at night by gardaí. Media editorials, political parties and trade unions all questioned the arrests and treatment meted out. Kadar Asmal told me it was directly as a result of the case that the ICCL was established.

Republicans, historically, refused to accept the jurisdiction of the Special Court at their trials. They gave no evidence and were promptly sent to suffer the brutal regime of Portlaoise Jail, innocent or guilty.

But once **we** were charged, we decided to expose the frame-up politically and openly, in court and on Irish streets and internationally. And I'm still doing it.

Before I was charged in 1976, I suffered, consecutively, in an eight-day period: eight detentions, three court appearances, incarceration in three jails and hospitalisation.

THE SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT, ITS JUDGES AND DETECTIVES

Going into the Special Criminal Court I knew some of the Court's powers:

- It could introduce new procedures at any time, following discussions with the Justice Minister;
- It could short circuit oversight by higher courts to rulings by calling them 'findings of fact'- no matter how erroneous the so-called 'facts' were;
- Also, it invariably turned the onus of proof from the State onto the prisoner and the court usually accepted the word of Gardaí;
- Daily, during the trial, I wrote monitoring reports which were distributed the following day as leaflets and press releases, internationally.

JUDGES

I was aware that the judges in the court were:

- political appointees by the Minister for Justice- not the court system;
- invariably they were present or ex-members of the political parties that had held power in the State since its formation and which I politically opposed;
- I saw them as being either consciously or unconsciously biased;
- I also knew that **some conscientious judges refused and still refuse to sit in the Court but that this went unreported.**

DETECTIVES

I knew that the thirty or so detectives that huddled under the empty juryless box followed the trial into every minutia of evidence and legal argument.

- They were the same detectives that gave evidence in **all** cases before the Court. It was school-time, and they took notes learning new lessons or amending their evidential notebooks before they took the stand;
- Most were Heavy Gang members and professional perjurers;
- During my trial, most of these Detectives were promoted. This was a clear message to the bench of the State's position and what the trial verdict should be.

GOING TO COURT

In 1978, I was aged 28. On the first day of my trial, I passed a small public park on Green Street, where the Special Court was situated. Two hundred years earlier, the park was a graveyard, where Republicans swung in the wind on the gallows at the entrance before being buried within, having suffered juryless sentencing tribunals.

Now, armed soldiers at a checkpoint trained their loaded weapons on me and interrogated my destination and interest in the Special Court before letting me by. How could members of the public get passed this intimidating blockade to exercise their right to attend any public trial- or would they want to, I wondered.

My bail was revoked during each day of trial so that for the four trials that followed over the next year, I was in continual custody, on and off.

As I sat in the dock, in the amphitheatre shaped court room, I recalled that my great-grandfather had defended *The Invincibles* here for the *Phoenix Park Assassinations*.

Family lore had it that the youngest, was tried and acquitted twice. I recalled this from the same dock wherein, after his third trial, he was found guilty, dragged away and hung. And that he was innocent.

As I looked around the court on my first day I had no illusions about the outcome.

WHAT IS A FAIR TRIAL?

It is a basic tenant of a fair trial that a prisoner should have the expectation of receiving a fair trial. I had the opposite expectation. I was well aware of the unjust trials that went on in the Court, publicised by media reports and Mary Robinson's thesis which called the court a 'sentencing tribunal.'

Amnesty International's investigative mission (1978), which in referring to my case and others, made a finding that the Special Criminal Court was biased to the prosecution, despite the prosecution evidence being the result of endemic torture.

As I sat in the dock I recalled how, **once charged, I had appeared repeatedly before the District Court, over nine months, awaiting a Book of Evidence. It never arrived.** Eventually the trial process was ended and was thrown out of Court, and I was again a free man- if on borrowed time.

As I had a related **civil action** pending against the State and named Gardaí, I knew I would be re-arrested and brought before the Special Criminal Court to weaken my civil case. I expected to be convicted and sentenced to 20 years.

I contemplated moving with my wife and 5 year-old child to live with relatives in Spain- Spain having no extradition agreement with Ireland at the time.

But being a human rights activist, I believed that this was a case **so perverse** and **patently corrupt** that I had a responsibility to expose it, educate people and possibly instigate changes to law, including the abolition of the court itself.

Human rights activists have a particular responsibility to society not to fold in the face of oppression, as its purpose is to intimidate others away from engagement in human rights.

And I was intrigued as to how the Court and the State, in this case, could ignore the Constitution and the law, whitewash the gardai, ignore exculpating medical evidence to find me guilty- without bringing itself into permanent disrepute- that in itself would prove to be part of its own future downfall.

This result is slowly emerging.

But I was certain of one thing, I can tell you. That they **would** find me guilty I had no doubt.

An alternative verdict would have exposed the same appalling vista faced by judges in the Birmingham Six case.

GIVING EVIDENCE

From the dock, my health was compromised. It still is.

I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in 1976, what at the time was known as the *Vietnam vet's illness*. The condition wasn't confirmed in medical journals until 1978.

I was locked into a subconscious emotional response to the terror in the tunnel, and my subsequent contemplation of suicide in my cell- all as if it had just finished five minutes earlier.

My nerves were and are always shot, taught, on red alert for expectant new trauma at any moment. I am paranoid in the medical sense, initially suspicious of everyone. My sleep pattern is disrupted, smattered with nightmares. I am introverted and stunted emotionally, prone to fits of anger and shame. The shame akin to that experienced by many rape victims who, falsely, feel they have voluntarily contributed to their own ordeal. Interestingly, my symptoms are universal to all torture victims.

I believed I was going to jail for a significant part of my life, that my life and expectations as I knew them were dissipating before my eyes.

But, then as now, I was and am determined to do what I can to expose the falsehood of the separation of powers by this triumvirate of repressive government, torturers given immunity from law and a Special Court functioning as a prejudiced executioner.

THE PROSECUTION

The State had no evidence against me except a signed inculpatory statement. It wasn't true nor was it voluntary nor were the verbal statements they falsely attributed to me.

Interestingly, the State said its only requirement was to show the court that there had been a crime and that the statement had been made.

It was not their function to show the statement was even true, they said.

The Court did not contradict this.

- The prosecution did not contradict my sworn evidence that I was not nor had I ever been a member of an illegal organisation or paramilitary group.
- However, detectives cynically giving evidence belied this. Without any evidential support, in a calculated political attack against those who could not defend themselves, they shredded the reputation of named members of the party to which I then belonged, the Irish Republican Socialist Party. They perjured themselves further by stating that we had freely and voluntarily admitted as much.
- The State argued that that all my allegations of my being refused legal access and of being threatened or even assaulted were untrue and part of a politically inspired smear campaign against the Gardaí.
- Any breaches of my Constitutional rights, or of the Judges Rules, or legal detentions spilling over into illegal detentions were all inadvertent. They were not, they said, conscious or deliberate.

THE STATE'S EVIDENCE

The State's first task was to prove that there had been a robbery, easily confirmed. Then, they paraded 50 or so gardaí and cleaning staff in and out of the witness box to confirm they neither saw nor heard anything untoward during our detention. Obviously, this did not drown out the

memory of the screams I heard in the Bridewell that night. Sometimes they were my own.

Next, the expert Heavy Gang witnesses gave evidence. Their arrest list followed a confidential tip-off to Inspector Ned Ryan who had orchestrated the arrests and interrogations and now stage managed the garda witnesses during the trial.

This was the Irish State's version of the infamous and subsequently discredited Supergrass trials being conducted in the North of Ireland. In essence, a senior Garda Officer became the Supergrass stand-in.

The detailed movement of detectives in the Bridewell and which prisoners they were with in the crucial days of the torture are supposed to be recorded in the Bridewell's official record book. Of course, the pages for the relevant period were missing having been mysteriously ripped out.

The detectives' own set-piece records of alleged interrogations was their notebooks. However, these presented in almost identical syntax, use of words and sentence structure allegedly without any conferring, patently an impossibility.

At trial, one detective gave evidence in the witness box of not seeing his notebook for months. I called my solicitor over and told him it was in his inside left-hand pocket. I had earlier seen him taking notes as others gave evidence about him. Asked to empty that pocket out popped the notebook, with the excuse he had forgotten it was there. No comment from the court ever followed.

Another detective said I was arrested in relation to the robbery. At a later trial he said the opposite. This perjury was to facilitate a crucial legal point. If there was no arrest in relation to the robbery prior to the interview during in which I signed my statement, then, abracadabra, the second arrest became legal and my statement legally admissible. He was exposed when I alerted my legal team to his previous evidence from my notes. No adverse comment, or any comment, ever followed from the Court on this.

At the end of the day, I overheard one of the journalists tell Superintendent Ryan that the Garda's evidence would not be published. It wasn't.

On another occasions I overheard Superintendent Ryan admonish his team to 'get their stories right' then noticing me earwiggling, he called a conference elsewhere.

Another detective gave evidence he 'knew me'- prejudicial code to the judiciary that I was a suspect in other cases. He knew me alright, as I had often written to the Garda Commissioner complaining about his harassment following my legal political activities.

The very fact that I was before the Special Court was, in itself, prejudicial.

THE IDENTIFICATION SCANDAL

The State evidence began to fall apart when alleged identification details of one co-accused turned out to be the opposite characteristics of him. An alleged hair comparison equalled those of half, if not most of the population.

State evidence of one of the householders, a woman, whose house was taken over at the time of the robbery, was contradicted. In the witness box, she denied her alleged identification of anyone of the gang in her house, who were all masked. Her statement of evidence which she signed was written by a detective. It was not her words. Nor was it true. She did not and could not identify anyone. No adverse comment on this ever followed from the bench.

My co-accused was acquitted, a sacrificial lamb to the other expectant frame-up convictions.

The insertion of this so-called 'identification evidence' explains the nine-month failure to produce a book of evidence earlier in the District Court. The DPP was reluctant to charge anyone without any 'identification evidence'. Thus, it was later presented by the gardaí, however untrue. Only then did the DPP support our prosecution before the Special Criminal Court.

In a later 1983 Sallins Case Review the DPP said that had he known in 1976 what he knew at the time of the review, **no one would have been charged.**

The State continued its defence of the Gardaí and opposition to the release of Nicky Kelly.

This report still remains secret although its existence has been confirmed to me by a number of sources.

THE SLEEPING JUDGE

When I first noticed the sleeping judge I raised it with the legal team. They were reluctant to raise it publicly, pocketing it for an appeal. I was uneasy with their decision. I was cognisant of the value of publicising the fact that I was being tried by a sleeping judge in a court shameless of its overt prejudice. I designed a poster "*Justice Sleeps in the Special Criminal Court*" which was postered across the 26 Counties and abroad.

After a few days of the judge nodding off, being kicked under the table by the presiding judge, doors being banged and law books being dropped by court clerks to keep the judge awake, I told my Senior Counsel that unless he raised it, I would interrupt the court to do so.

When the legal team did raise it officially in court, the three judges **refused to hear any evidence**, retired to their chambers, returning with a "*finding of fact*" that the court was able to fully continue fulfilling its duties, by inference that the judge was not asleep.

Incidentally, no one knows if the sleeping judge was awake when that decision was made.

We appealed to the High Court, which ruled that the trial court's "*finding of fact*" could not be overturned.

Chief Justice Tom Higgins headed the Supreme Court hearing. The so-called independent, but irate and prominent ex-Fine Gael member, TD and failed Presidential Candidate, demanded our legal team withdraw their affidavits.

He said that a delay in taking the case before them mitigated against the application; that there was no proof the judge was actually asleep despite the eight affidavits to the contrary; that a trial court "*finding of fact*" inferring he was not asleep could not be appealed. The application

was refused. The Chief Justice added that the lawyers were a disgrace to their profession.

I was talked out of arriving at trial with a stuffed parrot on my shoulder referencing Monty Python's dead parrot sketch. If asked, I would inform the court that the parrot was not asleep, only resting, as per the sketch.

The trial continued as did the judge's naps. Occasionally we pointed it out in open court. The general media present ignored the issue except for *Hibernia*.

One day soon thereafter, the dying judge, heavily medicated, never made it to court. On his death, the trial was aborted, and a new trial was set.

IN THE WITNESS BOX

There is no transcript of the first Special Criminal Court trial and trial within a trial (a so-called *voire dire*). Many of the detectives gave evidence, some of which they contradicted in the next trial.

Following is the gist of **my case** at the trial that followed the death of the sleeping judge:

- I submitted I was illegally before the court as I had been freed by the District Court and I was being tried again having already been just tried before the sleeping judge. These submissions were refused by the Court.
- My evidence was that I was arrested on the day of the robbery, specifically for alleged involvement in the robbery. I denied I was involved. I was threatened that no one would want to join my party by the time they had finished with me. I repeatedly insisted I wanted to contact a solicitor, during any interaction with gardaí, said requests were ignored. After 24 hours I was detained for a further 24 hours, at the end of which I was released.
- A few days later I was subjected to a **so-called arrest** in the office of the newspaper I edited, specifically in relation to the Sallins Robbery. This was my second arrest in connection with the same offence. As such, **it was illegal** and in lay- man's terms, I was **kidnapped**. Again, my attempts to contact a solicitor were ignored. I was told I had no rights. Each subsequent 24 hours I was further detained for a further 24 hours.

- **Screams** in the small hours of the morning woke me on the second day of this detention. I was led to a tunnel under the Bridewell and to a locker room in the garda station where, in both, I was tortured physically and mentally by the Garda Heavy Gang.
- They wanted me to inculcate myself in the train robbery. They also wanted me to inculcate others from a list they had. They threatened to arrest my wife.
- Much later, **disorientated**, traumatised, bruised, dizzy with headaches, body aching, in terror, possibly concussed; aware that, historically, detectives had murdered over 20 prisoners in custody in the year of their inauguration in 1922 and got away with it and believing I would be murdered, my attempts at logic disrupted, I signed an untrue inculpatory statement, written by Gardaí.
- They failed to force me to name other innocent people. But I was in such fear that I might do so, and in the face of threats that I would be further interrogated, for that specific purpose, that, when returned to my cell, **I contemplated and planned how to hang myself**. The arrival of a solicitor sent in by my family probably saved my life.
- I initiated a **Habeas Corpus** application. By the time I arrived in the High Court hearing I had been detained 5 consecutive times, having been released and immediately re-arrested as my solicitor was sent away. Another 2 arrests were to follow.
- On the back of a medical examination in the court building I was sent to hospital. On release the following day I was arrested yet again outside the hospital, despite being under the protection of the High Court.
- The High Court having ordered my release, I was arrested outside the court, formally charged before the District Court and sent to Mountjoy Prison and, the next day, to Portlaoise Prison. I was bailed some weeks later and I initiated a civil action against the State and gardai.
- Independent medical evidence, from a number of sources to the Court, supported my claim that bruises on my body were incompatible with self- assault but consistent with the evidence I gave of garda beatings.

VERDICT

As the Sallins Case became the longest trial in Irish criminal history, the trial court gave its response to the trial within a trial (the *voire dire*). This would decide if the statements would be admitted against us. It was the only evidence against us.

- The Court said: While my second arrest was illegal, in fact unconstitutional, it was **not deliberate**. All subsequent detentions and arrests were **inadvertent**, they said. Therefore, this did not invalidate my alleged statement being introduced in evidence against me.
- While I did ask for legal counsel and it was not facilitated by gardaí, it was **not deliberate**.
- Although, according to agreed evidence, I had never been in anyone's company except in the company of the police I had **not been assaulted by gardai** (the inference being that I beat myself up).
- The court said I had **lied** and the Gardai had told the **truth**.
- **The statement would be admitted.**

The main trial then continued, its result a foregone conclusion. I steeled myself for a very long campaign.

In fact, the campaign continues to this day, unabated, health permitting.

NICKY KELLY

It was too much for traumatised co-accused **Nicky Kelly**. If there was any hope of an acquittal in his mind it was gone now. Believing the State's injustice had been adequately exposed, and conviction inevitable, he disappeared.

Gardaí checked hospitals, ports and known haunts but could not find any sign of him. He could have jumped bail or be suffering ill-health or the victim of some other mishap. But there was proof of nothing.

Nevertheless, the Court had no problem **continuing his trial in his absence** and sentencing him to 12 years penal servitude.

We were sentenced to a total of 33 years between us.

CONVICTIONS QUASHED

Some 18 months later, my appeal and that of my co-accused, McNally, was heard before international observers I organised. They found:

1. The Court refused to investigate the torture allegations.
2. They quashed our sentence and conviction.
3. They found that the trial court was not entitled to be satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the alleged confessions obtained from us, nor the alleged verbal confession from McNally were voluntary, or that the manner in which they were made satisfied the basic requirements of fairness.
4. The statements were the result of oppression.

Remember, torture is defined as oppression by either physical or mental means.

No state inquiry has followed to this day.

PRESIDENTIAL PARDON

Subsequently, Nicky Kelly voluntarily returned to the jurisdiction to clear his name. The Supreme Court refused his appeal. Only after an international campaign and a **37-day hunger strike** was he released on humanitarian grounds and subsequently granted a Presidential Pardon.

Multiple independent scientific linguistic analysis, about this time, showed that all our statements were **not written by any of us**. In fact,

the analysis identified the individual gardai who wrote them but, again, no state inquiry followed.

A CIVIL CASE

Another co-accused, John Fitzpatrick took a civil action against the State. He had been tortured in the Bridewell at the time I was, having been coshed about the head and left with impaired hearing for life.

The case was heard before the infamous Judge Kevin Lynch of Kerry Babies infamy. Neither Fitzpatrick's legal team nor the jury were informed of the DPP's 1983 Review which specifically **exonerated Fitzpatrick** from any involvement. In fact, the jury was encouraged to consider the opposite and Fitzpatrick lost his case.

During the case, I ear-wigged two detectives at the back of the court discussing the jury. One jury person was pointed out as being a plant. I couldn't identify which jury person they were referring to. The gardai noticed my presence and clammed up.

In 1993 The High Court estopped me suing for assault and battery relying on Lord Judge Denning's infamous 'appalling vista' judgement in the Birmingham Six case.

My civil case was settled, alongside others, with State **male fides** as **we were never given the crucial 1983 DPP Review via discovery**, and perhaps other relevant documentation.

I would **not** have settled in the face of that evidence being available to drive a public inquiry.

IN CONCLUSION

A **petition** will be lodged to the **United Nations Committee Against Torture** asking them to initiate an inquiry into my case (and that of others) in face of the Irish Government's **ongoing refusal** to hold an impartial public inquiry.

It points out the breach of some 10 Articles and is supported by all human rights organisations in Ireland.

Another similar petition led by the ICCL is being submitted to the **Minister for Justice** but will probably end up with the **European Court of Human Rights**. It alleges breaches of 9 Articles.

The Sallins Case frame-up and ongoing corrupt cover-up could not have happened without political instructions, without the draconian Offenses Against the State Act (OASA), without the Special Criminal Court.

The OASA continues to be a threat to every Irish citizens.

As the 1972 version of the Special Criminal Court was being inaugurated in 1972, I was 22. I picketed the Four Courts in opposition to it, never thinking I would find myself before it.

Over the past 45 years, on the Sallins Case alone, I have been tried five times; spent approximately a year in court on my criminal case; 17.5 months in jail; two months in solitary confinement; 17 years pursuing my Civil case; a cumulative total of over 300 days in court appearances in relation to pursuing my civil action over those 17 years; 45 years in treatment for PTSD; 45 years campaigning for a public inquiry as dictated by international conventions and law.

I did and do all this because all the ingredients are still there ensuring a case similar to the Sallins Case can happen again tomorrow.

Beirim buíochas libh agus don Irish Council for Civil Liberties.

Thanks for your attention and to the ICCL for the opportunity to address you.

ENDS