

Defend Sean Garland Campaign



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Sean Garland, former President of The Workers Party and current member of the Party Ard Comhairle, was arrested as he was about to enter the Party Head Office on Mountjoy Square on Friday last, 30th Jan. The arrest was carried out by Gardai on foot of an extradition request from the United States of America. The Workers Party wishes to draw to your attention several issues of concern about this.

1. Sean was first arrested in October 2005 whilst attending the Party Ard Fheis in Belfast. At that time he strenuously denied any wrongdoing, expressing his concern at the manner of his arrest under the UK/US extradition treaty of 2003 and its draconian terms which, in effect, denied him any possibility of defending himself in a UK court against the extradition request. With the permission of the court in Belfast Sean returned to Dublin to receive medical treatment there. After much consideration of his situation, and in the face of little or no legal protection available to him in the UK under extradition arrangements there, he decided not to return to Northern Ireland.

2. At the time Sean repeated in a public statement his continuing denial of any wrongdoing and his willingness to defend himself against the generalised allegations against him. He also, through his legal representatives in Dublin, informed the Gardai of his home address, the fact that he would be residing there, and of his availability at any time should they wish to speak to him. Since then, just over 3 years ago, he has carried on his political activities, including meetings at the Forum on Europe, meetings with members of the Oireachtas, and other public engagements.

3. We are concerned therefore at the manner of Sean's very public arrest outside the Party offices in Dublin. We believe the Garda action was unwarranted and unnecessary as Sean was available to them at anytime. Some subsequent press coverage, rehashing much-worn sensationalist material, is deliberately designed to blacken Sean's name and to prejudice any future proceedings.

4. The request for extradition was signed by Condoleezza Rice on the 21st November 2008. There is no doubt in our minds that this represents a vindictive act by the outgoing discredited Bush/Cheney administration in the continued persecution of Sean Garland. At a time of much hope and

optimism that the election of Barack Obama heralds a new and more open approach to international relations and human rights standards in particular, one can only conclude that this was only one of probably many attempts by the outgoing administration to frustrate a new beginning by Obama and his team.

5. At present Sean is being held at Cloverhill Prison Dublin. An application for bail is being prepared by his legal representatives led by Michael Forde SC. There is a garda objection to bail, something we believe to be totally unreasonable. Sean has publicly stated his reasons for not honouring bail in Northern Ireland, and we are confident his legal representatives will deal with that matter in court. We are also awaiting the completion of specialist medical reports dealing with Sean's serious health problems – to which we will return. As soon as that is complete, which we are working to do as quickly as possible, an application for bail will be made and we are confident that no reasonable person under the circumstances would object to the granting of bail.

6 Sean's medical wellbeing is a matter of grave concern to us. In October 2005 the Belfast court, in recognition of his ill health, allowed him to return to Dublin to receive urgent medical treatment. His situation has got worse since then. As well as suffering from Diabetes he has developed Cancer since 2005, for which he is receiving continuing treatment. This continuing persecution of a 75 year old man in very poor health is an affront to any sense of humanity.

7. It appears the documents served on Sean by the American authorities are the same ones as served in Northern Ireland. At the time they were published in much of the media, the now infamous indictment from the District of Columbia, and presented and extensively broadcast on the now discredited Panorama programmes. We made the point then and repeat now, that Sean denies all these allegations. One also has to ask the question, why wait for 3 years to reissue the same proceedings?

8. In October 2005 Sean received strong support from a wide spectrum of political, trade union and public figures concerned at the manner in which he was been treated. Such support not only reflected the gravity of the injustice perpetrated against him but also the high esteem in which he himself

is held. We are heartened that many of those same people have declared their continuing support and have pledged to do whatever is necessary now to halt this latest attempt to deprive Sean Garland of his human rights.

9. We are calling on the Irish Government to refuse this extradition request from the discredited Bush/Cheney administration. On a political, humanitarian, moral, legal and human rights basis the request is an affront to common standards of decency. Any continuation of these unjust proceedings represents a serious threat to Sean Garland's health and well being. What purpose is there to be served by this continued persecution of Sean Garland?

10. This is the first bulletin of the Defend Sean Garland Campaign, which we intend to publish regularly to update you on the situation.

Former Lord Mayor of Dublin and member of the Dáil, Tomás MacGiolla has launched an on-line petition in support of Sean's case. We would in the meantime invite you to sign this petition (www.seangarland.org).

We can be contacted at the addresses below.

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Further information
www.workerspartyireland.net
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www.petitiononline.com/sgarland