



## Last paramilitaries jailed before GFA awaiting release

([Irish News](#))

Stephen McClean and Noel McCready are the last two paramilitaries jailed for offences prior the Good Friday Agreement still awaiting release from prison.

The LVF men were among hundreds of republicans and loyalists who stood to benefit from early release after 1998, but remained behind bars because they were deemed a danger to the public.

They were also the last prisoners to transfer to other jails from the Maze as it was emptied ahead of its eventual demolition.

The LVF was created when a faction of the UVF in Portadown, led by Billy Wright, rejected its decision to declare a ceasefire in 1994.

Under Wright's leadership the LVF committed itself to the belief that the nationalist community could be terrified into submission by a campaign of random sectarian murder.

Angry at the Portadown loyalist's act of defiance, the UVF tried to order him out of Northern Ireland.

This move backfired when thousands of loyalists turned out at a rally in support of him.

Wright was killed in 1997 inside the Maze prison by two INLA prisoners armed with a smuggled handgun.

His death is currently subject to a public inquiry.

Despite the LVF having no political wing or clear political agenda, it became the first paramilitary group to decommission weapons in 1998.

However, the gesture was dismissed as a cynical attempt to secure early release for its prisoners as the guns handed in for destruction were old and formed only a small part of its arsenal.

This article appears thanks to the *Irish News*.  
Subscribe to the [Irish News](#)

[HOME](#)

[History](#)

[NewsoftheIrish](#)

[Book Reviews & Book Forum](#)

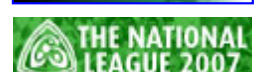
[Search / Archive](#)  
Back to 10/96

[Papers](#)

[Reference](#)

[About](#)

[Contact](#)



In October 2005, following mediation to end a feud between the LVF and UVF that claimed four lives, the dissident loyalist paramilitary group announced it had 'stood down' its members.

However, in April of this year the Independent Monitoring Commission said the LVF continued to be involved in seriously criminality including drug dealing and counterfeit currency.

It also noted that the terror group had yet to decommission its remaining weapons.

In July this year 41-year-old convicted drug dealer Martin Morgan was murdered in his home close to the Ballycraigy estate in Antrim town.

Homes of men associated with the LVF were searched by police during a follow up investigation and four men arrested.

All were later released without charge.

Under guidelines set out by the Sentence Review Commission, anyone who is believed to be a supporter of the LVF does not qualify for early release.

However, this criteria can be changed at any time by a serving secretary of state.

September 15, 2007

---

This article appeared first in the September 14, 2007 edition of the [Irish News](#).

[BACK TO TOP](#)

---

[About](#)

[Home](#)

[History](#)

[NewsoftheIrish](#)

[Books](#)

[Bookstore](#)

[Contact](#)