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The Early Release of Paramilitary Prisoners in Northern Ireland

Dr Adrian Grounds

Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

Thursday 12th February 2009, 5.30pm

Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology,
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA

The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a political concord that aimed to end thirty years of conflict and violence in Northern Ireland. One of the most controversial but critical aspects of the Agreement was a scheme for the early release of prisoners convicted of terrorist offences. Specific legislation (Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998) was passed setting forth statutory criteria for early release, and providing for the appointment of Sentence Review Commissioners to determine whether they were met. The paper will describe how the early release scheme was implemented, review published data on the outcomes of the process, and reflect on some wider issues including challenges of risk assessment, prediction, and post-release resettlement.

Dr Grounds is University Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychiatry at the Institute of Criminology. He was appointed as one of the Northern Ireland Sentence Review Commissioners in 1998.

This seminar is part of the IoC Public Seminar Series, and is open to all interested in attending. If you wish to be added to the seminar mailing list, please contact: Joanne Garner, on:

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