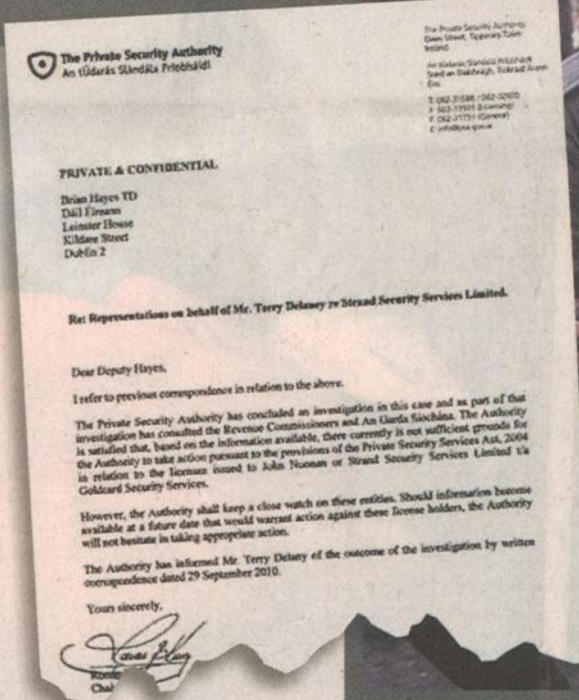


# Terrorist allowed to be bodyguard



Noonan escorts Bono at a gig. Inset, a letter from the Private Security Authority saying that there are no grounds

**IRA member chased by Criminal Assets Bureau for €1.5m is told he can keep licence. By John Mooney**

A CONVICTED IRA terrorist who obtained a government licence to work in the security industry, while being pursued by the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) for €1.5m, will be allowed to keep his permit.

An inquiry ordered by Dermot Ahern, the justice minister, into the possession of a Private Security Authority (PSA) licence by John Noonan, a paramilitary figure from Dublin, has found "insufficient grounds" to revoke it.

A spokeswoman for Ahern said the minister has asked the PSA and the gardai to hold discussions to ensure inappropriate persons were not in a position in the future to secure licences in the sector.

This appears to clash with a recent statement Ahern made in the Dail, when he said he had been assured by the PSA that it had sufficient powers to check applicants. The PSA declined to comment, citing privacy and data protection laws.

Noonan's PSA licence is due for renewal next month and is likely to be extended.

Noonan, who is in the process of becoming a bankrupt, a move thought to be in response to his CAB bill, has been arrested twice on suspicion of organising an attack in south Dublin.

The justice minister is known to have made inquiries about Noonan earlier this year after representations from the family of Robert Delaney, a father-of-two who was shot in the face as he looked out of an upstairs window at his home, two years ago.

A gunman rang the doorbell of an apartment and fired a shot when the 28-year-old postman opened a window to see who was calling.

Detectives investigating the shooting believe Delaney was targeted because he had tried to stop a fight in a pub some weeks earlier. He is not expected to make a recovery and is likely to remain in a coma for the rest of his life.

Delaney's family and opposition TDs were informed in writing of the PSA's decision earlier this month.

"There are not sufficient grounds for the authority to take action pursuant to the provisions of the Private Security Services Act 2004, in the relation to the licences issued to John Noonan," the letter said. It advised that the authority

"would keep a close watch" on Noonan and the security companies with which he has links.

Brian Hayes, a Fine Gael TD from Tallaght who raised the case in the Dail, said the decision highlighted Ahern's "utter failure" to confront organised crime and paramilitarism.

"How on earth can someone who is being pursued by the CAB for a large amount of money obtain, and then get to keep, a government licence to work in the security sector? It's an embarrassment to the industry, Dermot Ahern and his government," he said.

"If the PSA are not willing to do their job, [the minister] should step in and take action. What is the point in having an alleged independent authority that is not prepared to do its job. This affair is also an embarrassment for them.

"How many more criminals and paramilitary figures are working in the security sector? It's not good enough for the PSA to hide behind bureaucracy and data protection laws by refusing to comment."

Pat Rabbitte, the Labour party spokesman on justice issues, described the case as an "embarrassment".

"This has now exposed a defect in the PSA legislation. No one who is being pursued by the CAB should be allowed to work in the security industry. It's nothing short of scandalous," he said.

The PSA was established in 2005 to prevent people connected to crime and terrorist organisations from working in the security industry.

Noonan, who worked with Strand Security, a Dublin firm which provides security guards to film and television productions, was given the licence in 2008, two years after CAB began investigating his finances. The bureau believes that he controls the company, although he is not listed as a director.

Noonan became a priority target for the bureau when it linked him to Martin Hyland, a notorious drugs dealer who was murdered by members of his own gang as he slept in a house in Finglas.

Undercover gardai had watched Noonan meet Hyland some weeks earlier.

Noonan initially offered to reach a CAB settlement without a legal confrontation,

but has since refused to hand over any money.

Last week, he declared himself a bankrupt at a sitting of the Dublin High Court. The case is significant given that the CAB is attempting to get hold of Noonan's assets. His case is up for mention again on November 1.

At one point, Noonan's property portfolio was estimated to be worth about €1.5m, but the value has now fallen because of the recession.

A former Sinn Fein election candidate, Noonan was the adjutant officer of the Provisional IRA's Dublin brigade. He also played a leading role in the Concerned Parents Against Drugs organisation in Dublin.

He is now considered "persona non grata" by the republican movement.

The Sunday Times could not reach him for comment.

The Private Security Authority  
An (údarás Slándála Fríocháil)

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Brian Hayes TD  
Dail Finnan  
Leinster House  
Kilmore Street  
Dublin 2

Re: Representations on behalf of Mr. Terry Delaney re Strand Security Services Limited.

Dear Deputy Hayes,

I refer to previous correspondence in relation to the above.

The Private Security Authority has concluded an investigation in this case and as part of that investigation has consulted the Revenue Commissioners and An Garda Síochána. The Authority is satisfied that, based on the information available, there currently is not sufficient grounds for the Authority to take action pursuant to the provisions of the Private Security Services Act, 2004 in relation to the licence issued to John Noonan or Strand Security Services Limited via Goldcard Security Services.

However, the Authority shall keep a close watch on these entities. Should information become available at a future date that would warrant action against these license holders, the Authority will not hesitate in taking appropriate action.

The Authority has informed Mr. Terry Delaney of the outcome of the investigation by written correspondence dated 29 September 2010.

Yours sincerely,

*John O'Connell*  
John O'Connell  
Chair

The Private Security Authority  
Egan Street, Tollymore Park  
Cork  
An tArdán Síochána  
Egan Street, Tollymore Park  
Cork  
T. 021 2188 1000  
F. 021 2188 1000  
E. info@psa.gov.ie  
www.psa.gov.ie