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‘Chilling’ calls to female council members

■ Man claiming to be paedophile asks politicians to ‘challenge him’

Louise Burne
Political Correspondent

A man claiming to be a paedophile with an interest in pre-teen children has been bombarding female councillors across the country with disturbing and persistent phone calls seeking to “make a confession”.

Councillors across political parties have received dozens of calls from a man asking them to “challenge him”. The Association of Irish Local Government said it has not received any reports of male councillors receiving these calls.

Gardaí confirmed that the matter is being “investigated at national level by An Garda Síochána’s special detective unit”.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin described the reports as “deeply disturbing”, while Simon Harris described the calls as “chilling”.

Of Ireland’s 949 councillors, 261 are women.

At least 70 female councillors have reported receiving dozens of calls from a private number, with the male caller suggesting that he is a paedophile who likes children aged between 11 and 13.

He tells the councillors he wants to make an “admission”, before saying that he is “willing to be challenged”.

Independent councillor for Tipperary Máirín McGrath told the *Irish Examiner* that the man claimed to have downloaded 247 pornographic images of young girls and printed some of them in a local pharmacy.

Angie Bailey, a Fine Gael councillor in Tralee, told RTE’s *LiveLine* she was first contacted by the man last week and received five calls on Wednesday.

“He said that he wanted to make a disclosure to me that he was identifying as a paedophile and wanted to be challenged,” she said.

He claimed to have “downloaded paedophile pornographic material” and explained how he “pleasured himself watching such material”.

“He said as a community representative, we needed to be responsible for community safety, and that is why he was ringing local representatives,” she continued.

Ms Bailey said that, since the call, she has made sure all her doors and windows are locked at night, expressing concern that he could “rock up” to her house.

“Thinking back on it, it is a lot more terrifying, especially as he seems to have made a full-time job of ringing people,” she added.

A garda spokesperson said: “Any threats against elected representatives or political candidates are taken seriously and will be investigated.”

They said liaison inspectors have been appointed in each division to “help keep all those participating in political life safe”, adding that they are “available to take a report of any incident involving elected representatives”.

Mr Martin said it was “deeply disturbing that female public representatives around the country are being targeted by persistent, harassing telephone calls”.

“No one should be subjected to any form of harassment, intimidation, threat, or abuse while just trying to do their job,” he said.

“We want more women to get involved in politics, and unfortunately shocking incidents like this undoubtedly have a chilling effect.”

“The closeness in Irish politics between public representatives and the people they represent is something that must be cherished and protected. Behaviour like this is completely unacceptable and cannot be tolerated.”

Mr Harris, meanwhile, said that “abusive and threatening calls to any citizen is extremely distressing and concerning”.

“When those citizens are also public representatives serving their community, it is particularly chilling,” he said. “We can never tolerate that in our democracy.”

Housing minister James Browne, who has responsibility for local government, told the *Irish Examiner* he condemns “any behaviour which deliberately sets out to harm, frustrate, or upset any publicly elected representative of any party and none” and that it cannot be “tolerated or normalised in any fashion”.



Leah Hoey of Roscommon Town and Jamie O'Grady of Tuam taking a selfie at the Galway Racing Festival in Ballybrit yesterday.

SEE: Sport, Page 26

Picture: James Crombie/Inpho

Victim’s kindness ‘repaid with betrayal’

Liam Heylin

The hospitality and kindness shown to a man who was given a roof over his head was repaid with cruel savagery as he murdered a man who showed him only generosity.

Daniel Hourigan, aged 33, who is originally from Farnree in Cork, was given the mandatory life sentence for murdering 61-year-old Michael Foley on February 1, 2024, at his home at Annville, Barrett’s Place, Macroom, Co Cork.

One of the late Mr Foley’s four daughters, Caroline Foley, said of her late father: “He taught us kindness. He believed that everyone deserved another chance. If someone was struggling, he never looked the other way. He opened his heart and his home to people when others wouldn’t. That was the man he was.”

“The deepest pain we carry is knowing that his kindness was repaid with betrayal.”

“You [Hourigan] accepted his generosity. You accepted his trust. You accepted the roof he gave you over your head. Then you repaid the man who helped you in the most unimaginable way possible. That betrayal has left wounds that will never heal.”

Ms Justice Siobhán Lankford echoes those sentiments, saying that Michael Foley provided a safe haven for Hourigan when he was trying to come off heroin, letting him stay at his home in Macroom for several weeks.

“His hospitality and kindness were repaid cruelly with a savage death — 11

stab wounds, 19 incised wounds, and 34 blunt force wounds. It was by any reckoning a savage attack.

Hourigan’s then girlfriend, Linda O’Flynn, who is originally from the Hollyhill area of Cork City, was previously sentenced to seven years for trying to cover up the murder.

Caroline Foley said outside the Central Criminal Court in Cork: “Today’s sentence brings a sense of justice to our family.”

“Nothing will ever bring back Dad, but we are grateful that those responsible have been held accountable.”

“We would like to thank everyone who supported us throughout the long and difficult process.”

The late Mr Foley’s sister, Molly Foley, added: “What haunts us most is thinking about Michael’s final moments. We cannot begin to imagine the fear, pain, loneliness, and suffering he endured...”

“Michael was so much more than the victim of this terrible crime. He was a loving father, a proud grandfather, a devoted brother, a cherished son, a caring uncle, and a loyal friend.

“He always put other people before himself and would help anyone if he could. Everyone who knew Michael spoke highly of him.”

“He was a quiet, gentle, and kind-hearted man who never caused trouble. He enjoyed the simple things in life — being at home, having a drink in peace and quiet, and spending time with the people he loved. He was a harmless man who opened his home and his heart to those he trusted.”

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Security circle for Kinahan return kept ‘very tight’

Cormac O’Keeffe
Security Correspondent

The circle of people with knowledge of security arrangements for the repatriation of crime boss Daniel Kinahan to Ireland is being kept “very tight”, senior sources have said.

A high-level threat and risk assessment is to be carried out on the likely extradition of the Kinahan cartel leader, which will inform the level of security that will be put in place, sources say.

There is uncertainty throughout garda sections as to when Kinahan will be coming home, with official confirmation awaited from United Arab Emirates judicial and civilian authorities.

The developments follow reports that Kinahan, who is in custody in Dubai, lost his final appeal against repatriation in the courts.

A range of senior sources told the *Irish Examiner* that the security measures in place for Kinahan, aged 48, will be at the highest level. “On the ops side, this one will be kept very tight,” one

security source said. “There will be no need for anyone else to know or be involved.”

A second source said: “Daniel Kinahan will be the most heavily secured prisoner in the country. His remand and adjournment court appearances will most likely be by video link.

“If there is any movement for a trial, it will be a significant security operation meticulously planned at every inch of the route with Air Support, ERU [emergency response unit], ASU [armed support unit], traffic, DF [Defence Forces], etc.”

A third source said a detailed threat and risk assessment will be carried out for the actual repatriation to Dublin, transport to the Court of Criminal Justice, and delivery to Portlaoise Prison.

“The whole repatriation will be carefully managed,” the source said.

This source said security planning has to consider risks that, while seemingly unlikely, could have a severe impact if they occurred.

“A cartel has deep pockets; you can’t take

anything for granted,” the source said.

Insiders in the prison system told the *Irish Examiner* last April that they had significant concerns that an armed attempt could be made to break Kinahan out, possibly by hiring in a special team from abroad.

Prison sources feared that a prisoner transport, for example to a hospital, could pose a potential vulnerability for an attack.

They pointed to a dramatic and violent ambush of a prison van in France in May 2024, in which two prison officers were shot dead during the freeing of a gang boss.

There was no armed escort in that case.

RTE reported yesterday that the Irish Prison Service has bought a bomb-proof and bulletproof van from Britain in preparation for Kinahan’s return.

For the repatriation, the air corps’ Casa Airbus C-295 will bring members of the garda extradition unit and the Garda Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau to Dubai and transport Kinahan back to Ireland.

Once the plane lands at Baldonnel Military Airbase in West Dublin, the Garda’s elite emergency response unit will take the lead protecting the convoy as it travels. The garda airplane and helicopter will provide top cover.

Kinahan lieutenant Sean McGovern was transported from Dubai back to Ireland in a similar fashion. He was jailed last month for 24 years after pleading guilty at the Special Criminal Court to directing a criminal organisation and murder.



A source claimed the security measures in place for Daniel Kinahan, above, will be at the highest level.

Picture: Collins Dublin

Traffickers use AI to fool families

Ann Murphy

Human trafficking gangs are using AI images of victims to send to their families to trick them into thinking they have good lives in Ireland.

Detective Superintendent Derek Maguire of the Garda National Protective Service Bureau was speaking at a conference on the use of technology in human trafficking organised by Cork Against Human Trafficking and anti-trafficking non-profit Mecpaths in Cork.

He told the audience on World Day Against the Trafficking of Persons that traffickers are now using AI to their advantage.

He said: “We have a case at the moment where we have identified two males from eastern Europe being exploited here. AI images are being created and sent back to their families, in which they are having a great time. These images are being sent back to show that everything is fine.”

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