# PPS finds insufficient evidence for terrorism charges despite UVF links in firearms case



The Public Prosecution Service has determined that there is “insufficient evidence” to charge Winston 'Winkie' Irvine and Robin Workman with terrorism offences, despite their recent convictions for firearms violations. In a statement, the PPS addressed misleading media coverage, clarifying that while UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) paraphernalia was discovered at both men's residences, this did not establish a direct terrorist connection to the weapons seized from Irvine’s vehicle in June 2022.

During a routine police stop in the Shankill area of Belfast, officers uncovered a cache of firearms, including a long-barrelled gun and two suspected pistols, alongside numerous magazines and ammunition. Both defendants, admitting their involvement, received sentences of five years for Workman, who transferred the weapons, and 30 months for Irvine, whose sentence reflected “exceptional circumstances” such as his community work, according to Judge Gordon Kerr KC. Remarkably, these sentences fall below the statutory minimum of five years typically mandated for such offences.

The PPS elaborated on the criteria necessary for prosecuting individuals under terrorism charges, stating that there must be admissible evidence confirming that a defendant is a member of a proscribed organisation, rather than merely an associate. The PPS maintained that public speculation or media assertions regarding a defendant's alleged affiliations do not constitute sufficient evidence for prosecution. This legal distinction underscores the complexities involved in handling charges related to terrorism, particularly in a region like Northern Ireland, where the legacy of conflict continues to influence contemporary politics and law enforcement.

The Director of Public Prosecutions is currently reviewing the sentencing to determine if it will be referred to the Court of Appeal, on the grounds of potentially being “unduly lenient.” This scrutiny highlights ongoing concerns regarding the seriousness of firearm offences in Northern Ireland, where community safety and the historical implications of paramilitary activity remain paramount issues.

In addition to the legal ramifications, there are broader implications for community funding. A cross-border funding initiative, which has previously allocated close to £900,000 to peacebuilding efforts associated with Irvine, has remained silent on whether it will continue its support following his convictions. This silence raises important questions about the balance between facilitating peace initiatives and the potential repercussions of associations with individuals like Irvine, whose convictions have sparked renewed debate around loyalty and security in post-conflict Northern Ireland.

As the context continues to evolve, it remains critical to monitor both the legal proceedings and the societal implications stemming from this case, particularly within the framework of community relations and the long-shadow cast by past conflicts in the region.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/insufficient-evidence-to-prosecute-winston-winkie-irvine-with-terror-offences-after-weapons-find-pps-says-SV2Y7OJQGZFV7MNMS3GZGPNTL4/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/insufficient-evidence-to-prosecute-winston-winkie-irvine-with-terror-offences-after-weapons-find-pps-says-SV2Y7OJQGZFV7MNMS3GZGPNTL4/> - The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) announced insufficient evidence to charge Winston 'Winkie' Irvine and Robin Workman with terrorism offences after their conviction on firearms charges. The PPS addressed media inaccuracies, stating that while UVF paraphernalia was found in both men's homes, there was no terrorist link to the seized weapons. The PPS emphasised the need for admissible evidence to prosecute for terrorist offences, which was lacking in this case. Both men pleaded guilty to firearms charges and received sentences of five years for Workman and 30 months for Irvine, both split between custody and licence periods.
3. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/winston-irvine-conviction-funding-body-aware-of-link-to-community-groups-but-wont-say-if-it-will-take-action-HMCUUJNDGVHCZKZACNTKHKTB7Y/> - A cross-border funding group, which provided nearly £900,000 to 'peacebuilding' organisations linked to leading loyalist Winston Irvine, has declined to comment on whether it will continue funding these groups following Irvine's guilty plea to firearm charges. Irvine, 49, and co-accused Robin Workman, 53, were due to go on trial at Belfast Crown Court but entered guilty pleas to possessing firearms and ammunition in suspicious circumstances. The sentencing was postponed due to a strike by criminal barristers, with a new date set for March 11.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/new-date-for-loyalist-winkie-irvine-sentencing-for-possession-of-firearms-BTBMUM26XFGFPAS56W3V7KZCGQ/> - Judge Gordon Kerr KC has rescheduled the sentencing of leading loyalist Winston 'Winkie' Irvine and co-accused Robin Workman for firearm and ammunition offences to March 11. The sentencing was previously delayed due to a strike by criminal barristers over Legal Aid fees. Irvine, 49, and Workman, 53, were due to be sentenced on January 23 but the hearing did not proceed. The case has been ongoing for some time, with the new date set for March 11.
5. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/leading-loyalist-winston-winkie-irvine-pleads-guilty-to-guns-and-ammunition-charges-NFTEYF6HYFG4XBDOMCXHS2BK6A/> - Leading loyalist Winston 'Winkie' Irvine and co-accused Robin Workman have pleaded guilty to firearm and ammunition offences. Both men were due to go on trial at Belfast Crown Court but entered guilty pleas to possessing firearms and ammunition in suspicious circumstances. The sentencing was postponed due to a strike by criminal barristers, with a new date set for March 11. The case has been ongoing for some time, with the new date set for March 11.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c255ey1rr5zo> - Winston Irvine has been ordered to stand trial after guns and ammunition were found in the boot of a car two years ago, a judge has ruled. The 48-year-old from Ballysillan Road in the city denies the charges relating to weapons seized in the north of Belfast. Co-defendant Robin Workman, from Shore Road in Larne, allegedly transported guns in his van to a meeting at Glencairn Street. A short time later police detained Mr Irvine at Disraeli Street in the city.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-62094971> - Robin Workman, 51, from Shore Road in Larne, is accused of taking part in the alleged handover on 8 June. He is charged with possession of a firearm in suspicious circumstances and possessing a prohibited firearm. Mr Workman is further charged with possession of a handgun and possession of ammunition without a certificate. A judge earlier this week also granted bail to his co-accused, Winton Irvine. Ruling that Mr Workman can be released from custody, Mr Justice O'Hara said: 'Police concerns are not unreasonable, nor are they exaggerated, but he is entitled to the presumption of innocence'.