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A 24-year-old Dublin man who served less than two weeks of a three-month sentence for driving offences which led to the death of the Dublin teenager, Ms [REDACTED] was released to make way for other prisoners. the Dail was told.

The Minister for Justice, Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn, said that the man, and others, were released on March 16th last for "purely operational reasons". This was done to ensure that sufficient prison spaces would be available over the bank holiday and the following week to accommodate all new committals.

"The decision, in other words, was taken in the context of making optimum use of available prison spaces under general guidelines which have been operating for years under successive Ministers for Justice. There were no improper motives or other pressures involved," she added.

The official who sanctioned the release, said the Minister, did so in what he saw as a correct application of existing criteria and against a background where the advice available to him, including Garda advice, was that the release did not pose a threat to the public.

'The matter was raised on the adjournment, by the, Fine Gael spokesman on equality and law reform, Mr Alan Shatter, who described the involvement of the Department of Justice with the [REDACTED] family as "a litany of ham-fisted, thoughtless, bureaucratic bungling".

He added: "It has been added to by the Minister's refusal to tell the family the full story and her callous use of the family to cover up both her and her Department's own ineptitude, and by her seeking some worthless personal publicity in calling in the family for a meeting with her oil the day the story of the release of the driver responsible for their daughter's death hit the papers."

Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn said that she had met the [REDACTED] family and had subsequently informed them that she did not think it would be helpful to them if she were to go into detail about the circumstances of the man's release.

I do not, for one moment, expect that by outlining the background circumstances to the House I will in any way ease the grief and sense of loss experienced by those who were

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