

RELEASE IN FULL

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Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2009 3:19 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Government denies reports bomber to be freed

From: Riggs, Susan J
To: NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-EUR; NEWS-NEA
Cc: SES-O_Shift-III
Sent: Wed Aug 12 19:21:46 2009
Subject: Government denies reports bomber to be freed

EDINBURGH (AP) - Sky News and BBC television reported Wednesday that Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi was to be freed from his Scottish prison on humanitarian grounds, but the minister in charge of deciding al-Megrahi's fate denied that any such decision had been made. Neither news network cited a source for its report. Scottish Justice Minister Kenny MacAskill, who was due to decide whether to release al-Megrahi, told a local television station he had yet to make up his mind. A call and an e-mail sent to al-Megrahi's Scottish lawyer were not immediately returned late Wednesday. "The decision will be made next week," MacAskill told Scottish Television late Wednesday. Two spokeswomen for the Scotland's devolved government dismissed the BBC and Sky reports as speculation. "Absolutely no decision has been taken on that," a spokeswoman for the Scottish Executive said. "Categorically no decision has been made at this stage."