

Sectarian/racist expression and restricting parades to protect the rights of others: implications of *Vona v Hungary*

On 9 July 2013 the European Court of Human Rights issued its judgment in the case of *Vona v Hungary* relating to a supremacist organisation engaged in military-style assemblies. The authorities had ultimately dissolved the organisation following its attempt, blocked by police, to march through a street inhabited by Roma families. In the context of protecting the rights of the Roma community from racist expression, the Court found this action against Magyar Gárda was compatible with the ECHR.

The grounds on which states may restrict assemblies and association under Article 11(2) of the ECHR, when lawful and proportionate to do so, are not limited to the 'prevention of disorder' but also include the 'protection of the rights and freedoms of others'. Parade-related and other expression can be restricted on this ground, which refers to the recognised human rights of others and not for example parades which 'offend, shock or disturb', as it has been long established that the ECHR protects such expression (*Handyside v UK*, 1976). The more complex question has always been the threshold question of when a state is permitted, or even obliged, to impose restrictions.

In March of this year a *Just News* article examined the judgment in *Fáber v Hungary* (2012). This case related the seizure of Árpád-striped flag associated with the fascist 1944/45 Arrow Cross regime being held by a counter protestor to an anti-racist demonstration. Despite the demonstration taking place on the banks of the Danube where large numbers of Jews had been massacred by the regime the European Court held it had not constituted intimidation, and the arrest and fine against the protestor for the mere display of the flag had been disproportionate. This set a high threshold for sanctioning protestors in the circumstances of that case.

The case of *Vona* also relates to a group with affiliations to the Arrow Cross regime. A Magyar Gárda movement and association had been set up with the stated aim of preserving Hungarian traditions and culture, but engaged in clear racist discourse targeting the Roma minority in 'defence' of the 'ethnic-Hungarian' majority. A number of military-style parades and rallies had been held across Hungary often targeting areas with Roma populations. The case focuses not on the assemblies per se but on the drastic subsequent sanction of the ordering the dissolution of the organisation, following its attempt to march past Roma homes in the village of Tatárszentgyörgy. The Court, in the particular context of the case, unanimously found this action was compatible with ECHR Article 11. A lengthy concurring opinion from Judge Pinto de Albuquerque emphasises international obligations to sanction racist expression, and the Court had already held, in *Asku v Turkey*, there is a positive duty on states to protect persons against racist expression. **The principal Council of Europe treaty body dealing with anti-racism has characterised sectarianism in Northern Ireland as a form of racism.**

Given this and the interface between free expression, assembly and association the judgment therefore
contd...

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provides some interesting material as to what thresholds and contexts of sectarian expression are likely to be accepted as legitimate grounds to restrict assemblies.

As well as the ECHR protecting ideas which could shock and disturb, the Court in *Vona* did reiterate groups could not be restricted on the basis they created 'uneasiness' in groups of citizens or that some may perceive them as disrespectful.

Rather such action should only be taken when organisations were a 'hotbed for violence' or incarnated a negation of democratic principles, such as the promotion of discrimination or ethnic division. A domestic court held Magyar Gárda "had made a programme about discrimination between people and expressed it by way of marches in several cases" and the European Court shared the view of the domestic courts citing that the activities and expressions of the group were targeted at the Roma. Notably the domestic courts had held this despite Magyar Gárda not being explicitly constituted as a racist group but rather given it had created an anti-Roma atmosphere by its actions. The European Court concurs it "may only be in light of the actual conduct of such demonstrations that the real nature and goals of an association become apparent", indicating a mere denial that a groups aims or actions are racist will not suffice.

In relation to the impact of the form of expression the domestic courts considered the marches, given the military-style appearance of their participants, as having amounted to a "demonstration of power and to threatening others." The European Court cited the domestic judgements regarding Magyar Gárda as having "created an anti-Roma atmosphere by verbal and visual demonstrations of power" and held public authorities are entitled to take restrictive measures "if the right to freedom of assembly is repeatedly exercised by way of intimidating marches involving large groups" and the measures are necessarily needed to avert large-scale, coordinated intimidation related to the advocacy of racially motivated politics. The Court held, particularly when ethnic groups are singled out, the state can protect the right of targeted groups to live without intimidation. The Court emphasised that although there was no actual violence at the march, its paramilitary nature was problematic given as this means the groups discriminatory message was "accompanied by the physical presence of a threatening group of organised activists" and hence that it was capable of "conveying the message to those present that its organisers had the intention and the ability to have recourse to a paramilitary organisation to achieve their aims, whatever they may be." The Court contextualised this threat to the historic associations and context of its association with the past racist violence of Arrow Cross, and held in that context the reliance of an association with paramilitary demonstrations, accompanied by racist discourse, "must have an intimidating effect on members of a racial minority."

The Court considered that the repeated organisation of the rallies was capable of intimidating others and affecting their rights, it elaborated that this was "notably given the location of the parades" which had been held in proximity to Roma populations. *Vona* referenced a concept emphasised in the domestic courts that Roma residents were a 'captive audience' of the parades and, given their locations they "had not been in a position to avoid the extreme and exclusionary views" which they articulated. The judgement concurred that the intimidating effect of the actions of the Magyar Gárda on the Roma minority was particularly the case when they were in their homes as a 'captive audience', indicating proximity is a relevant consideration.

Vona held it that actual individual violations of the rights of others or actual disorder did not have to take place in order for the state to justify action against Magyar Gárda. Rather that the state could take preventative measures if the prejudice to the rights of others (in this case the Roma, and the potential impact of further racial segregation) was sufficiently imminent. The Court held the Magyar Gárda activities, as well as being anti-Semitic, were quite clearly targeted at Roma minority and in such circumstances authorities cannot be required to await further developments before intervening for the protection of the rights of others.

On a number of levels *Vona* therefore does take forward ECHR jurisprudence on the 'threshold' questions regarding the factors and contexts of where protected freedom of expression ends and where unprotected racist expression begins. It has evident implications for Northern Ireland.

CAJ at the UN: Using CEDAW to address rollback on women's rights

Welfare reform, cuts to public services and general austerity measures will have a direct and adverse impact on women in all of their multiple identities and roles. Through the use of treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) issues of complex discrimination as this can be highlighted on a much wider scale with positive results.

CAJ has been working on the impact of welfare reform, challenging the regime of cuts and austerity since 2011. Its aim is to urge the Government and public authorities to take an equality and human rights-based approach by using the existing equality laws to safeguard those who are most vulnerable. It was for these reasons that CAJ included the socio economic rights of women as a key point in their shadow report to the CEDAW Committee, in July 2013 (See full submission S411 on the CAJ website). CAJ believe there are significant concerns about the regressive impact of welfare reform on women. The benefits overhaul does not take into account those in work poverty, a % of whom include women who have low paid, high risk, part time jobs. Women also account for two thirds of the public sector workforce in NI and hence public sector cuts will likely have a significantly greater impact on women. Northern Ireland currently has no childcare strategy in place which the Equality Commission has regarded as a 'primary barrier to women's equality and participation.'

The welfare reforms are taking place in the absence of a Bill of Rights as committed to in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement or a Single Equality Bill, both of which are currently outstanding. Both of these mechanisms could have provided the extra safeguards to protect women and the most vulnerable in relation to welfare and austerity.

In light of all of this CAJ made the following recommendation to the CEDAW Committee: **To ask the UK to review and mitigate against the gender impacts of the welfare reform and public sector cuts in Northern Ireland, and implement single equality legislation and the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights.**

CAJ were able to meet informally with individual Committee members to discuss discreet issues affecting Northern Ireland. Committee member Niklas Brun was particularly interested in discussing the equality duty with the NI representatives and how this could safeguard against the impact on women and how it could be better implemented including more rigorous data collection.

During the hearing Committee members asked about welfare reform measures and the UK responded that they felt it was 'hard to assess the impact of the changes on women' but that they would work with the sector to identify this. The Chair of the CEDAW Committee Nicole Ameline urged the UK to strengthen their dialogue with women and to be particularly mindful of vulnerable women. Welfare reform was described as the 'disempowerment of women' by a member of the CEDAW Committee. The concluding observations are now available - the theme of austerity and welfare reform is clear. The Committee urged the State party to:

- Mitigate the impact of austerity measures on women and services provided to women, particularly women with disabilities and older women. It should also ensure that Spending Reviews continuously focus on measuring and balancing the impact of austerity measures on women's rights. It should further review the policy of commissioning services wherever this may undermine the provision of specialised women's services.
- Provide affordable childcare and to mitigate the impact of the proposed reforms of the welfare system on the costs of childcare for low income families and the increased burden for care on women.
- Adopt preventive measures against potential exploitation of the Universal Credit system by an abusive male spouse.

These concluding observations will frame some of the lobbying work done on welfare reform by CAJ, the Equality Coalition and wider NGO groups before legislation comes back to debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly in the autumn of 2013. We will continue to collectively urge the Government to robustly monitor and report on the impact of welfare reform and provide alternative arrangements to prevent roll back on the equality of women and the human rights of the most vulnerable.

Amnesties and Prosecutions in Northern Ireland

Amnesties are exceptional measures frequently adopted in periods of transition from conflict or dictatorship to address the past. The word ‘amnesty’ can often be construed as enabling impunity by preventing the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of crimes and serious human rights violations, commonly referred to as blanket amnesties. However in recent years, amnesties have often been used to encourage individuals to come forward to tell the truth, disarm, or provide reparations to victims in exchange of staying prosecution, so called conditional amnesties.

As part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project Amnesties, prosecutions and the public interest in the Northern Ireland transition, led by Professor Kieran McEvoy, Dr Louise Mallinder and Professor Gordon Anthony, we are providing information on the international, historical and legal context to amnesties, prosecution and the public interest in order to ensure that the public debate is as well informed as possible. Working alongside our partner organisation Healing Through Remembering, we have been holding private briefing sessions with key actors, roundtables with interested groups, and held a conference in May 2013 with speakers including the key legal and criminal justice actors.

This project builds on a previous AHRC funded project entitled Beyond Legalism: Amnesties, Transition and Conflict Transformation, in which McEvoy and Mallinder (with Professor Brice Dickson) conducted a comparative examination of the use of amnesties in Argentina, South Africa, Uganda, Uruguay, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In all of those contexts the use of amnesties was controversial in different ways and indeed lively conversations concerning the utility, viability and desirability of past-related prosecutions were key themes.

Under international law amnesties are not strictly prohibited, and many states continue to adopt them in the aftermath of conflict, particularly in line with other transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions or reparation programmes. In addition, while states are under an obligation to prosecute individuals responsible for international crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, these are unlikely to apply to the Northern Ireland conflict, and only require states to prosecute those ‘most responsible’.

Northern Ireland is no stranger to amnesties, which have often been used to facilitate public interest issues of the day. In 1969 an amnesty was adopted to cover those arrested and imprisoned for their involvement in public disturbances, including civilians, members of the RUC, and notably former First Minister, Ian Paisley. As part of the negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement a number of amnesties were introduced to encourage paramilitaries to decommission their weapons and enable the early release of paramilitary prisoners. A further amnesty related measure can be found with the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims’ Remains, which encouraged individuals to provide information to the Commission on the location of those individuals disappeared on the basis that it would not be used as evidence against them. Similar measures have been used in public inquiries, such as into the deaths of Robert Hamill and Billy Wright, as well as the Bloody Sunday Tribunal, whereby testimonies provided by individuals could not be used against them as evidence in criminal proceedings. In its final report, the Consultative Group of the Past also suggested that such immunities for evidence could be used as part of a wider truth recovery process, but not a blanket amnesty which would prevent investigation and prosecution.

Nevertheless, while amnesties could be used to incentivise individuals to tell the truth, such measures need to be compliant with the European Convention of Human Rights. Since 2001 the European Court has delivered thirteen judgments related to the conflict in Northern Ireland on contentious deaths of individuals by the security forces, finding in each case procedural violations of Article 2 on the right to life. In these cases the Court outlined procedural obligations binding on the UK government to carry out prompt, independent, effective, and transparent investigations into the deaths of individuals as a result of state

forces' actions. These judgments resulted in the UK government creating the Historical Enquiries Team, Police Ombudsman's Office, and reforming the prosecution service and coroners' inquest system. Yet in the latest judgment of the European Court in July 2013 in the case of *McCaughey, Grew and Hemsworth v United Kingdom*, the Court noted the continued delays in current investigative process of the Northern Ireland inquest system, with Judge Kalaydjieva being 'unconvinced that the domestic investigation was intended to "lead to the identification and punishment of those responsible."' There has been frustration at the current investigative mechanisms on the Northern Ireland conflict, which have been long, legalistic processes, with very little truth emerging over the past fifteen years from the Good Friday Agreement.

Not all information about the conflict can be recovered, as challenges remain in investigating and prosecuting the past in Northern Ireland. Evidentially, as the conflict in Northern Ireland began over forty years ago evidence has degraded, witnesses have died, memories have faded and forensic labs have been blown up, reducing the likelihood of securing prosecutions in the majority of cases. The European Court has not been oblivious to the realities of investigating the past, acknowledging in the *Finucane v UK* case that an effective investigation is unlikely due to the passage of time. Even if there is sufficient evidence, those paramilitaries prosecuted will only serve two years under the early release scheme. As members of the security forces are unable to avail of the early release scheme, they will serve longer prison sentences.

Investigative processes have tried to overcome these challenges by encouraging suspects to tell the truth, such as the resurgence in the use of supergrass trials. In addition, the recent HMIC report into investigations by the HET revealed that investigators were acting as prosecutors by forgoing the possibility of prosecution by not cautioning suspected soldiers, on the basis that to do so would recover as much truth as possible for victims' families. In addition, current investigations only deal with individual cases, rather than examining the wider context in which atrocities happened, as would occur in a truth commission. Together these challenges seem to support a re-examination of a more holistic approach to discovering the truth about the Northern Ireland conflict of which an amnesty measure may be a useful tool.

The European Court of Human Rights has not directly addressed the legality of amnesty measures in its jurisprudence, but has agreed with earlier findings of the European Commission in the *Dujardin v France* case, that amnesties can be introduced in exceptional circumstances, such as transitioning from conflict, where they effectively balance the legitimate interests of the state and the rights of individuals. Thus the Court is willing to defer to the discretion of the state in such sensitive policy matters if it is in the general public interest, provided that such amnesty laws are exceptional and protect the rights of individuals. In such instances the protection of individuals' right to life under Article 2 would suggest that such a legislative system would require effective investigation of the death. This could be achieved under the auspices of a truth recovery process, while offering the widest possible discovery of the truth by incentivising individuals to provide information in exchange for a stay of prosecution.

In the face of continuing strain of the inquest system, as well as public confidence issues with the investigatory capacities of the HET and Police Ombudsman, there is mounting pressure for a more holistic and effective mechanism to deal with the past in Northern Ireland. Amnesties can be carefully crafted as useful tools in encouraging individuals to tell the truth, whilst aiming to provide more effective access for victims to truth and reparations. If amnesties are legally compliant with the European Human Rights Convention, the question for all of us: is it in the public interest to stay prosecutions for crimes committed during the conflict and engage with a more comprehensive examination of the past through a truth commission?

Dr Luke Moffett is the research fellow on the AHRC funded Amnesties, Prosecution and Public Interest in the Northern Ireland Transition project. l.moffett@qub.ac.uk
More information on the project and videos from the conference can be found on our website: go.qub.ac.uk/amnesties

Widely-drafted police powers: clarity required?

In May 2013 the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in *Fox, McNulty and Canning* [2013] NICA 19 found the emergency-type ‘section 21 and 24’ stop, search and question powers in the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 were incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), unless and until there were further safeguards regulating their use in the form of a Code of Practice.

As had been alluded to in the 2012 CAJ stop and search report ‘Still Part of Life Here’ there was inevitability to the above finding. The powers are very similar to those in the former ‘section 44’ Terrorism Act 2000 powers which, in the case of *Gillian and Quinton v the UK*, failed the legal certainty test under ECHR Article 8 (right to private and family life). In *Gillian* the European Court held the powers were “neither sufficiently circumscribed nor subject to adequate legal safeguards against abuse” and to prevent arbitrary or discriminatory use powers could not be ‘unfettered’ but rather the legal framework should set out with “sufficient clarity the scope” of any discretion afforded to police officers in their use.

In *Fox* the Court of Appeal concluded that a broadly drafted non-suspicion question power “cannot be properly exercised in the absence of a valid and effective code of practice which ensures Article 8 compliance” noting “the kind of safeguards against potential abuse or arbitrariness envisaged by the Strasbourg case law” were not present in the absence of a Code of Practice which effectively regulated their use. In the view of the Court therefore such a Code is required to satisfy the minimal requirements of Article 8 for such powers. The Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation David Anderson QC has expressed similar views in his recent annual report arguing that “at the very least, it is necessary that officers should have clear guidance as to how to exercise their discretion...” to prevent, at worst, ‘random’ use of the powers.

One reading of the *Fox* judgment is that the Court being faced with a power which was clearly not ECHR compliant found an easy way out for the authorities insofar as the incompatibility could be rapidly remedied by the NIO issuing a Code of Practice rather than needing to change the law. (The 2012 CAJ report had recommended such a Code and the NIO had subsequently consulted on a draft, which was then rapidly introduced following the judgment. This allowed the reinstatement of the power following a brief period of PSNI-switching reliance to the revised ‘section 47A’ Terrorism Act 2000 powers.) The *Fox* ruling does however set a strong precedent in that where the police exercise any broadly-drafted powers which engage ECHR rights there could be a requirement for a binding policy-framework to reduce officer discretion. As well as addressing ECHR compliance this would also provide an objective and transparent framework for decision-making against which any allegations of bias can be tested.

Take, for example, police powers to charge persons for offences relating to un-notified parades. As well as the issue of ensuring consistency in exercising powers jurisprudence indicates that under particular circumstances (e.g. spontaneous assemblies where there was no other unlawful conduct) sanctioning persons for non-compliance with administrative notification requirements will not be ECHR compatible. As readers may recall during the flags protests the PSNI indicated they did not have powers to act in relation to a weekly unnotified march from East Belfast to City Hall. After a judicial review had been brought by a local resident (DB) the PSNI did however charge three flags-protest leaders. It also subsequently transpired that in figures given to members of the Policing Board in march that in the previous three years the PSNI had in fact charged 150 persons with unauthorised parade related offences (reported as 3 loyalists and 147 republicans).

Whilst it is now clear the police have the powers, it remains unclear in which circumstances they are used. The following table summarises this and a number of other powers and whether they have policy-frameworks:

<p>Unnotified / changed parades or counter protests</p> <p>Under sections 6 and 7 of the Public Processions (NI) Act 1998 (as amended) persons can be charged with not abiding by notification requirements for parades or counter protests to parades; or when either materially differs from what had been notified (defences are provided, including actions done under PSNI direction).</p>	<p>The PSNI presently have no Service Procedure in relation to the circumstances in which persons will be charged under this provision. There will be circumstances when charges are incompatible with ECHR rights to assembly, as well as legal certainty questions as to what constitutes a “public procession” or counter protest for the purposes of the legislation. In <i>R v Muldoon</i> an anti-racism protestor had been charged and prosecuted for an unnotified parade. The defendant contested however that following a static protest, she was involved in leading anti-racism protestors safely away, under PSNI direction, from a BNP counter protest at the BBC premises in Ormeau Avenue, and was consequently acquitted by the Court. Among other matters this case raises questions of why the PSNI and PPS had categorised this as a procession and had sought sanction in a manner likely to be ECHR incompatible. CAJ has also had representations from residents who have been charged with unnotified counter protests to parades on occasions they contest they were not engaged in any protest activity.</p>
<p>Blocking of roads and footpaths by protests</p> <p>Under Article 20 of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 there is a broadly drafted offence of “obstructive sitting, etc” which makes it an offence to wilfully obstruct traffic or other “lawful activity” in a public place (which can include notified parades).</p>	<p>The PSNI presently have no Service Procedure in relation to the circumstances in which persons will be charged under this provision. The circumstances when police and prosecutors can or will take action against protestors or facilitate protests is therefore ambiguous. There will be circumstances when the police, further to the rights of freedom of assembly, should close roads to facilitate protests, particularly where there are significant numbers of protestors making confining protestors to the pavement unreasonable. There can also be circumstances where the rights of others may be engaged when their passage is actively obstructed by protestors.</p>
<p>Incitement to hatred</p> <p>Part III of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 prohibits a number of acts intended or likely to stir up hatred or arouse fear on racist, sectarian, or (since 2004) homophobic or disablist grounds. This includes offences related to threatening, abusive or insulting words, behaviour or written material on such grounds, and other offences relating to distribution and broadcasting.</p>	<p>Despite the local context this power to protect persons from advocacy of hatred on protected grounds, is rarely used. PSNI figures record only 11 arrests from 2002-2011, around one a year. There have only been 57 charges or reports of such offences from 1987-2011 (some of which relate to multiple charges against the same person.) One reason for the lack of use of the powers is likely to be the difficulty of determining the “threshold” test on the boundary between what is protected freedom of expression and what behaviour can constitute sanctionable advocacy of hatred. There have recently been significant developments in international standards in relation to the threshold question with the UN Rabat Programme of Action setting out a six-part test which is further detailed in a December 2012 ‘Prohibiting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence’ Policy Brief by NGO Article XIX.</p>
<p>Sectarian Chanting</p> <p>Section 37 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 prohibits chanting which is of a “sectarian” nature at major sporting occasions.</p>	<p>Despite discussion during its legislative passage neither the Justice Act nor other legislation provide a definition of sectarianism. The recent “Together: Building a United Community” Strategy does anticipate legislation to define the term, subject to political consensus. Both UN and Council of Europe treaty-bodies have defined sectarianism in Northern Ireland as a specific type or form of racism.</p>
<p>Political expression on public property</p> <p>Planning law restricts the placing of materials such as flags on lampposts, there is also an interagency Joint Protocol on Flags and legislation allowing councils to fine persons for fly posting.</p>	<p>At present whilst there is legislation and a policy document in the Flags Protocol, neither appear to be being applied in relation to flag flying on lampposts, with the PSNI indicating it will only intervene when there is a threat to life. In other areas of expression CAJ is aware of incidents of persons fly-posting political posters in public places who have been subject to fines and even, in the case of anti-G8 posters, arrest. There at present appear to be no formal arrangements allowing the use of public property for political posters</p>

Civil Liberties Diary -June/July

4 June

Stormont passed a new bill outlawing anyone with a criminal conviction of more than five years from holding a post as a Stormont special advisor. The bill passed by a vote of 56 votes to 28.

5 June

More than 1,600 people have been unable to attend official welfare assessments at the Department of Social Development due to problems with disabled access to the fourth floor offices. These 1,600 were asked to travel to Portadown or Ballymena to attend alternate appointments at a more accessible building.

11 June

The PSNI indicated that it will no longer intervene in flag disputes until agreement is reached by politicians on a shared-future strategy. The police will only remove flags if the display is such that it involves a threat to life.

13 June

Legal proceedings have been brought over marches from east Belfast to the city centre from December through February. The plaintiff, a resident of the Short Strand, is looking to judicially review the PSNI and the Secretary of State Theresa Villiers. He claims that the failure of police to stop demonstrators travelling along the parade route breached Public Prosecutions (NI) Act 1998, under which notification of marches must be given to the Parades Commission.

Child sex abuse victims have requested that the Executive widen the historical abuse inquiry so as to identify more perpetrators and offer support to those abused. The historical abuse inquiry is examining cases from 1922 to 1995 to determine whether there were systemic failings by the state to protect children under 18.

24 June

A survey by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education found that two thirds of parents in the Belfast area support a significant increase in the number of integrated primary school places. The survey also reported that eight out of ten parents think integration is a vital part of a shared future for Northern Ireland.

4 July

A report by the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary found that investigators were not rigorous enough in their questioning of members of the security forces, when examining killings by British troops in Northern Ireland. The report also found inconsistency by the Historical Enquiries Team, that it had serious shortcomings and that it failed to bring closure to many bereaved families.

5 July

The family of Pearse Jordan, a west Belfast man killed on the Falls Road in 1992, have been granted leave to seek a judicial review of the verdict of the inquest into his death. The case is one of several involving

allegations of a security forces 'shoot-to-kill' policy.

17 July

The European Court of Human Rights found that the UK failed to promptly investigate the 1990 shootings of IRA members Martin McCaughey and Desmond Grew by the SAS. Additionally it found that UK authorities also failed to promptly investigate the 1998 death of John Hemsworth, who had been beaten by riot police. The excessive investigative delays were found to be procedural violations of ECHR Article 2 right to life.

24 July

A report by the Prison Review Oversight Group found that only 16% of newly recruited prison officers are Catholic. Additionally, despite efforts at reform, the prison service as a whole is 11.6% Catholic.

Compiled by Elizabeth Super from various newspapers

Just News

Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, **Fionnuala Ní Aoláin**, CAJ Ltd.

2nd Floor, Sturgen Building
9-15 Queen Street

Belfast

BT1 6EA

Phone: (028) 9031 6000

Text Phone: 077 0348 6949

Fax: (028) 9031 4583

Email: info@caj.org.uk

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