

Just News

Human Rights in Northern Ireland

International Human Rights Day!

December 10th is the day when people around the world gather to celebrate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year was its 55th anniversary, and worldwide celebrations included the launch of an illustrated handbook of the main international human rights instruments in Guinea Bissau and a workshop on human rights and HIV/AIDS in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The United Nations – sponsoring body of the Universal Declaration – awarded a number of human rights prizes to those who have dedicated their lives to protecting human rights. This year's recipients included the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights who tragically lost his life in Iraq earlier this year, as well as the founder of the China Disabled Person's Federation and the President of the Association of Plaza de Mayo Grandmothers, who since 1977 have been highlighting the fate of those disappeared by the Argentinian military during the junta.

This year, the Acting United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a message to mark the day, which pleaded for stronger measures of protection nationally, regionally and internationally, and in particular called upon each Government to review the adequacy of its protection mechanisms at home (see www.unhchr.ch). Here in Northern Ireland, the Human Rights Consortium echoed this message.

In keeping with the festive theme, the Consortium invited representatives of all the political parties here to join them in assembling a "Tree of Hope". Members of the Consortium, who represent the entire range of Northern Ireland society from Save the Children to Help the Aged and community groups from Donemana to Lisburn, were expressing their hopes and dreams for a better future for all the people of Northern Ireland by hanging images on the "Tree of Hope".

These images not only made a colourful display; they also symbolised the interests of each organisation and the need for a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights to protect these interests.

Members of the media turned up to witness this display and the mood among those present was buoyant as they posed for numerous photos. Large cards spelled out the words "A



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"BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ALL" and attracted the attention of passing pedestrians and motorists. The Consortium hopes that its positive message will have had an impact on those who witnessed it!

10th Anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

It is interesting to note that this year also marks the 10th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, where the United Nations and its member states

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Bits and Pieces



The Policing Board launched a major document on 15 December - Monitoring PSNI compliance with the Human Rights Act 1999. This document prepared for the Policing Board by their Human Rights Advisor, Keir Starmer QC, outlines how the Policing Board will comply with its statutory responsibility to monitor the human rights performance of the police. At first sight, the document seems to address the task of human rights monitoring in a very detailed and practical way, and the early priorities of looking at operations and policies of the police are most welcome. CAJ had submitted a number of detailed proposals at an early stage in the consultation process, and many appear to have been taken on board. We do however have some concerns at the ability of the Advisor, and the Board, to undertake this heavy work programme without a much wider engagement with, and involvement of, the wider public (see CAJ comments on the work to date of the Policing Board - November 2003 Just News).



Making Connectons: Mental Health and Human Rights is the most recent report issued by the NI Human Rights Commission. The report was co-authored by Gavin Davidson, Maura McCallion and Michael Potter on behalf of the Commission and the findings and recommendations have been endorsed by the Commission.

✂ One or both reports are likely to be reviewed and discussed in forthcoming issues of Just News.



Queen's University, Belfast are holding a short course in Human Rights and Equality aimed at anyone interested in these issues, including NGOs, community and voluntary groups, or in the public sector. Topics covered include:

- ✂ The Human Rights Act;
- ✂ Anti-discrimination Law;
- ✂ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland act;
- ✂ The Role of the Human Rights and Equality Commissions; and
- ✂ Debates around a Bill of Rights and a Single Equality Act.

For more information, please write to Rory O'Connell, Law School, 29 University Square, QUB, Belfast or email: r.oconnell@qub.ac.uk



Kerr appointed LCJ

It was recently announced that the High Court Judge, Mr. Justice Brian Kerr has been appointed to be the new Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland. His predecessor Lord Justice Robert Carswell has been appointed to the House of Lords following the retirement of former Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Brian Hutton.



'The impact of the Article 2 judgement in the North'

The Pat Finucane Centre is hosting a seminar on the implications of the European Court Article 2 judgement of May 2001. (Jordan, McKerr, Shanaghan, Kelly & others)

Paul Mageean, Legal Officer with the Committee on the Administration of Justice and Fiona Doherty, BL have agreed to lead the discussion. Venue: **The Gasyard Centre, Lecky Rd in Derry**
Date: **Saturday, January 31 between 11-4pm**
(the Bloody Sunday weekend commemorations)

Why? No single judgment in the past thirty years has had such a profound effect on the criminal justice system as the Article 2 ruling. The NIO, PSNI, MoD, DPP and Coroners Courts now face unprecedented challenges for access to information that was denied as a matter of routine until recently.

What ? The aim of the seminar is to provide a comprehensive update on the ongoing implications of the Article 2 judgement. This seminar will be an opportunity for the legal community, human rights NGOs and relatives to share information, ideas and strategies. One possible outcome may be agreement on an online database on Article 2 cases.

Lunch and crèche facilities will be available. Programme details will be provided in early January, Contact Stephanie English by email, post or phone www.serve.com/pfc for further details on the Art. 2 judgements.pfc@iol.ie, Tel 02871 268846 PFC I West End Park, Derry BT 48

CAJ would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone Season's Greetings and a Peaceful 2004.



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confirmed the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all rights. Unfortunately, here in Northern Ireland, we are still hearing arguments that social and economic rights are “different” from civil and political rights, and as such should be subject to different levels of protection. At this juncture, it is worth recalling the words of the Vienna Declaration (which both the UK and Irish governments signed up to!):

“All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

The Consortium’s “Tree of Hope” was not the only event marking International Human Rights Day in Northern Ireland. CAJ used the occasion to officially launch the long-awaited fourth edition of “**Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland – the CAJ Handbook**”. Members, colleagues, contributors and politicians gathered at Linenhall Library to hear the Handbook’s co-editors, Brice Dickson and Martin O’Brien introduce the book and thank all those who had been involved in its production. These included the numerous volunteers who indexed and proofread the book at various stages. A special vote of thanks was given to Liz McAleer, without whose tireless work there would be no handbook. This edition of the Handbook is especially dedicated to her late husband Gerry McAleer, who was a great friend to all in CAJ.

Those present also heard from Mike Posner, Executive Director of the New York based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. Mike praised the book and the endless work on the protection of human rights that is carried out daily in Northern Ireland by CAJ and others. He recalled his earlier visits to Northern Ireland when he had come to support those working in the human rights field to argue against emergency

legislation as an abuse of fundamental human rights. As an American-based organisation, the Lawyers Committee now finds itself struggling daily to highlight the abuse of human rights in America – not least the raft of so-called anti-terrorist and security legislation that has been passed since September 11th, and the appalling treatment of those being held in Guantanamo Bay. He asked for solidarity to be shown by others around the world, and especially in Northern Ireland.

This edition of the Handbook is much bigger than previous editions and contains 23 chapters on topics such as Victims Rights, Powers of the Police and Army, Education, Housing, Social Security, etc. There are some new contributors, and new chapters on Equality, Mental Health and Environmental Rights. The book is cross-referenced throughout so that it is more than just a collection of essays on individual topics. Each chapter is designed primarily to explain the current law rather than give a critique, and as far as possible contributors have attempted to state the law as it stood as of 1st March 2003.

In his foreword to the book, Lord Lester of Herne Hill, QC, comments that:

“This handbook provides accurate and practical help and advice to those who most need it. All who have contributed to its production should feel justifiable pride. It deserves a very wide audience and should serve as a model for similar handbooks in England, Wales and Scotland.”

Copies of the 600-page book are available for the very reasonable price of £9.50 from the CAJ office and all good bookshops.



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A number of the contributors who attended the launch, (back row) Neil Faris, Ciaran White, Liz McAleer, Michael Hamilton, Maggie Beirne, Paul Mageean, (front row) Brice Dickson, Anne Grimes, Martin O’Brien, Anne McKeown and Stephen Livingstone



Commentary on the new Justice Bill

The Government has this month published a new Justice (NI) Bill aimed at amending the shortcomings of the Justice (NI) Act 2002 and advancing implementation of the Criminal Justice Review. The Bill has had its second reading before the House of Lords and will proceed to Committee stage in January 2004. It is due to become law by Spring/Summer 2004.

Background to the Justice Bill

The main purpose of the Joint Declaration of the British and Irish Governments of April 2003 was to provide a basis for advancing the full implementation of outstanding elements of the Good Friday Agreement, including reform to the criminal justice system. It was acknowledged that, in spite of the Government Implementation Plan of November 2001 and the Justice (NI) Act 2002, relatively little progress had been made in terms of giving full effect to the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review. Accordingly the Joint Declaration contained a number of measures to enhance implementation of the Review.

Despite initial resistance, the British Government agreed to appoint an independent Oversight Commissioner to provide independent scrutiny of the Government's decisions on the Review. The Government also reaffirmed its commitment to "major transformational change" (as later detailed in the Updated Implementation Plan of June 2003) and announced its intention to introduce a new Justice (NI) Bill to amend the Justice Act 2002.

Content of the Justice Bill

CAJ welcome the publication of the new Justice (NI) Bill. In particular, we are encouraged by the fulfilment of the Government's commitment in the Joint Declaration, to bring forward the introduction of the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) in advance of the devolution of justice powers to Northern Ireland. While the Review had considered that the JAC would operate in the context of devolved justice powers, it is important that, in the absence of the imminent devolution of justice powers to Northern Ireland, the reforms to the judicial appointment process, by means of the JAC, should proceed.

Clause 2 of the Bill introduces two other welcome amendments to the Justice Act in relation to the requirements for membership of the Judicial Appointments Commission. In future, all members of the JAC, not just the lay members, will be required to be reflective of society and limits on the

duration of membership of the Commission will apply equally to both judicial and lay members.

Also on the positive side, the Bill removes the requirement of the Lord Chief Justice's consent for the establishment of a tribunal to remove or suspend a member of the judiciary. The Justice Act had far exceeded the recommendations of the Review by conferring this effective veto power on the Lord Chief Justice. The Bill also makes provision for the creation of a new offence of attempting to interfere with the Prosecutor. This had been recommended by the Review (recommendation 46) but had been rejected by the Government in the first Implementation Plan as unnecessary and did not therefore receive expression in the Justice Act.

Problems with the Bill

There are however three aspects of the Bill that we are particularly concerned about, in the sense that they depart from the guarantees given by the Government in the Updated Implementation Plan of June 2003 and moreover, do not wholly reflect the relevant recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review. These are clauses 4, 6 and 8 in relation to the procedure for the appointment of the Lord Chief Justice and Lords Justices of Appeal, the duty of the Director of Public Prosecutions to refer certain matters to the Police Ombudsman and guidance for criminal justice organisations on human rights standards.

Appointment of Lord Chief Justice and Lords Justices of Appeal

With regard to the appointment of the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Justices of Appeal, the published Bill has failed to meet the expectation raised in the Updated Plan that the Prime Minister will appoint persons to these positions "based on the recommendations of the First and Deputy First Minister". Instead the Bill has diminished the role of the First and Deputy First Minister by requiring the Prime Minister only to "consider" any recommendation for appointment made by the First and Deputy First Minister. This falls short of the Criminal Justice Review recommendation on this point which the Government purported to accept without qualification in the first Plan. The Review had provided that responsibility for making recommendations for the appointment of the Lord Chief Justice and Lords Justices of Appeal would lie with the Prime Minister, but on the basis of recommendations from the First and Deputy First Minister (recommendation 75).

Indeed it is even clear from the Explanatory Notes to the Justice Bill, prepared by the NIO, that the Bill amendment does not give full effect to the Review. Rather in the words of the NIO:



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“This amendment brings the procedure for appointing the Lord Chief Justice and Lords Justices of Appeal more closely in line with the Criminal Justice Review’s recommendation (recommendation 75, paragraph 6.96).”

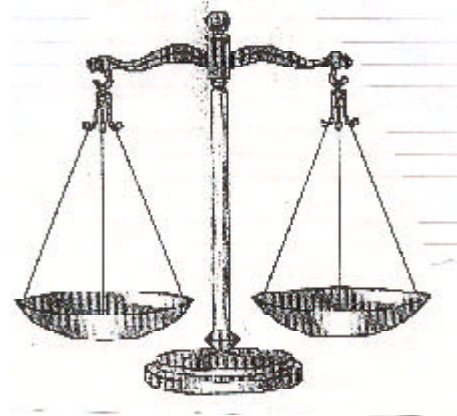
Duty of Director of Public Prosecutions to Refer Certain Matters to Police Ombudsman

Clause 6(3) of the new Bill, on the duty of the Director of Public Prosecutions to refer matters of police malpractice to the Ombudsman, also falls short of the Review and of what had been promised in the Updated Plan. The wording of the clause confers an excessive degree of discretion on the Director to decide whether a matter is one which must be referred to the Ombudsman. The degree of subjectivity involved in this assessment could make it very difficult to judicially review the Director on this matter.

Guidance for Criminal Justice Organisations on Human Rights Standards

The third area where the Bill has failed to sufficiently reflect the Review and the guarantee in the Updated Plan is in relation to the role of international human rights standards in the reform process. The Updated Plan stated that all criminal justice agencies would be under a duty to have due regard to international human rights standards. This has translated rather differently however in the published Bill. The Bill proposes a curious and convoluted formulation whereby it will be for the Attorney General for Northern Ireland to issue guidance, as and when he or she thinks fit, to the listed criminal justice agencies, on the exercise of their functions, in light of relevant international standards. It is concerning that this provision has been drafted in terms of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, since that suggests that the clause will only come into effect on the devolution of justice powers to Northern Ireland. Given the huge degree of uncertainty over when justice powers will be devolved, it seems highly inappropriate that this section of the Bill on the role of international human rights standards should be made dependent on the creation of the local Attorney General.

It is also worth commenting that Section 8(8) of the Bill exempts the Prosecution Service from having any regard to human rights guidance issued by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland where that guidance would be inconsistent with a code of practice issued under section 37 of the Justice Act. It is difficult to foresee how the new and first ever code of practice for the Prosecution Service



(which is due to be published in draft form this month, long before the operation of this new Bill) would be inconsistent with international human rights standards.

Conclusion

It is important that these three clauses are amended during the passage of the Bill in order to fully reflect the Criminal Justice Review and meet the promises made by the Government in the Updated Plan. Some of the political parties have already addressed their concerns about the new Bill to Government and there is hope too that the Criminal Justice Oversight Commissioner will, in exercise of his terms of reference, scrutinise the passage of the Bill to ensure that it truly reflects the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review. While we are happy that a second Justice Act will see the light of day we do not want a third.

In the Headlines

**CAJ holds newspaper clippings
on more than 50 civil liberties and justice issues
(from mid 1987- December 2000).
Copies of these can be purchased from CAJ office.**

**The clippings are also available for consultation
in the office.**

**Anyone interested in this service,
should phone (028) 9096 1122.**



Another in the series of short articles on the work of our sister organisations in Britain and Ireland

The work of the Irish

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) is CAJ's sister organisation, and together with Liberty and the Scottish Human Rights Centre, we all form the British-Irish panel of the International Federation of Human Rights. As part of an occasional series on the work of panel members, we have asked the ICCL to write something about their current programme of work. The following article outlines their newly developed strategic plan which identifies 10 key strategic policies which will be the focus of the ICCL's research work and campaigns over the next five years.

The full strategic plan, which is available from the ICCL office and on the ICCL website, addresses issues relating to funding, staffing, membership and management of the ICCL. This article sets out the ten strategic objectives that the ICCL has set itself; the ten objectives have been further divided into three themes:

Theme One

Strengthening the Human Rights Culture and Democratic Structures

Objective One: To achieve broad based Human Rights legislation incorporating civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights

The advent of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Act 2003 is the first time that Ireland has taken measures to give direct effect in domestic law to an international human rights treaty. We view this as a start to a broader campaign for further legislation which will give effect in domestic law to Ireland's other international human rights obligations.

The first step in this campaign is to make a success of the ECHR Act. We therefore intend to engage in a widespread public awareness campaign about the ECHR, and to provide training on the Convention and its application. We will also look to support legal cases under the Act which challenge flaws and gaps in Irish law. Finally, the ICCL will be lobbying for improvements to the legislation, unilaterally and with others, who have criticised the many flaws in the Act.

In the longer term, we will focus on Ireland's commitment to provide at least equivalent rights protection as exists in Northern Ireland, our international obligations, and developments such as the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights to lobby for further and better legislation which gives effect to our rights beyond those in the ECHR.

Objective Two: to assess Ireland's quality of democracy from the perspective of the level of protection and enjoyment of rights.

Based on the models developed by the Democratic Audit in the UK, and IDEA in Sweden, the ICCL intends to carry out a democracy assessment (in conjunction with TASC). Democracy assessments, with a strong rights based focus, have been conducted in many countries around the world. The inter-relationship between rights and the quality of democracy is a mainstream issue at the international level of human rights and following the shift in global and local politics since the tragedy of September 11 2001, is becoming an all the more important focus point. Individual's rights, their access to democratic processes and their ownership of the decision making processes which effect their lives are a key element to a human rights based society. The assessment will help to pin point the areas where lack of access to and enjoyment of rights impacts on the quality of democracy and we will use the assessment to lobby for change in these areas.

Objective Three: To improve the protection of privacy in Irish Law

The right to privacy is one of the core, traditional civil liberties. However in 1996 the Law Reform Commission identified several gaps in Irish law in the protection of this right. Technological advances, increased central storage of information and measures pursued in the fight against crime have all provided new challenges to safeguarding individual privacy in a modern society. Unlike many other jurisdictions, Ireland has no other body that champions the broad area of privacy, and ICCL believes that it is important to tackle this challenge now - privacy when lost, is almost impossible to regain. By carrying out an audit of the privacy issues in Ireland and then identifying how they can be addressed in a way that balances all the conflicting interests of a modern society, in a human rights compliant manner, the ICCL intends to produce a comprehensive policy on privacy protection. This will then form the basis from which to pursue the necessary legislative and policy changes to guard against unwarranted erosion of privacy.

Theme Two:

Reform of the Criminal Justice System including policing and judicial accountability

Objective Four: To campaign for greater accountability structures for the Garda and reformed police and public order powers .

As one of the on-going and key areas of its work, the ICCL will continue to campaign for further reform in the democratic accountability of the Garda, greater focus on community



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Theme Three: *Deepening the Culture of Equality*

policing and mainstreaming the protection of human rights throughout the work of the Garda. In particular, we will continue to campaign for the establishment of an effective, independent Garda Ombudsman, in line with the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. In the immediate future we shall also be focusing on rights in custody such as the video recording of Garda interviews and the right to have a lawyer present during questioning, with an aim to have these safeguarded in Irish law.

Objective Five: To strengthen safeguards in the criminal justice system

The ICCL believes that there are many aspects of the criminal trial process that require scrutiny and reform. We believe that a review similar to the Review of the Criminal Justice system conducted in Northern Ireland should take place in the Republic of Ireland as part of the Irish government's obligation to provide at least equivalent rights protection in this jurisdiction. The aim of the review is to produce implementable recommendations on how our criminal justice system can be improved to protect human rights and deliver justice.

Objective Six: To seek the introduction of reforms (such as restorative justice) into the juvenile justice system

Via the Juvenile Justice Alliance, which we have formed with other organisation, such as the Irish Penal Reform Trust and the Children's Rights Alliance, we will be lobbying for effective improvements to our juvenile justice system through focusing on calls for the introduction of restorative and other alternative systems of justice. We also believe that the acceptance of alternative forms of justice in the area of juvenile justice will set the way for consideration of the use of restorative justice principles in other areas, that international practice shows can be more effective than resorting only to custodial sentencing.

Objective Seven: To seek the establishment of a system of effective judicial accountability and training

While Ireland has undoubtedly been well served in the main by our judiciary, the absence in Ireland of an effective means of holding judges to account if they do act inappropriately, directly impacts on the quality of justice delivered. The lack of appropriate training for judges in contrast to most other jurisdictions is also an issue. The ICCL believes that this should not continue and will be conducting a campaign to bring the standards of judicial accountability and training in line with best international practice.

Objective Eight: To broaden the grounds protected by current equality legislation and to seek to have equality proofing as a statutory obligation

The ICCL will work to forge an effective coalition that will lobby to protect the existing equality legislation and the resources dedicated to its enforcement. The ICCL wants to see a widening of the grounds protected from discrimination, and a statutory obligation for legislation and the delivery public services to be equality proofed.

Objective Nine: To work for the establishment of an effective advocacy system in Ireland.

Equality cannot be achieved by those marginalized, who cannot access and avail of their rights themselves. This can only be done where there is an effective advocacy system in place that works for those communities who are otherwise excluded from fighting for their own rights. The ICCL intends to work with stakeholders in the sector for the establishment of an effective advocacy system in Ireland.

Objective Ten: To campaign for the full recognition of partnership rights and equality within family law.

The right to full equality in Irish society for gays, lesbians and bi-sexuals has been a focus of the ICCL up to and since the publication of its seminal publication "Equality Now" in 1990. The ICCL recognises the need to continue that campaign, together with the GLBT community, in particular with a focus on the full recognition of partnership rights including family rights. In this context, the ICCL believes that partnership rights should also be recognised for heterosexual couples outside of marriage, and that inequalities in family law that fail to protect the family rights of all members of families and types of families must be tackled and brought in line with the rights of families under the ECHR.

Aisling Reidy
Director, ICCL



Civil Liberties Diary

Nov 3 Press reports suggest that Judge Cory has recommended public inquiries in a number of cases, including the murder of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane.. Judge Cory's report is expected to be made public before Christmas.

Nov 4 To mark the fourth annual Anti-Racism in the Workplace Week (organised by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Equality Authority in the Republic) calls were made for employers to implement racial equality policies in the drive to eradicate racism from the workplace.

Nov 11 A report on the policing of the 12 July Orange parade was launched by the Greater Shankill Community Council (GSCC) alleging police failures to protect the marchers.

Nov 13 Calls were made by two serving members of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Frank McGuinness and Patricia Kelly, for the resignation of Chief Commissioner Brice Dickson. The calls were made following suggestions that the action plan published in October was drafted with the help of senior figures in the Northern Ireland Office. Ms Kelly and Mr McGuinness claimed that such a consultation compromised the independence of the commission and that Mr Dickson must step down if the commission is to survive.

Nov 18 An entire wing at Maghaberry prison was kept in "inhuman and degrading" conditions for 10 days after altercations between non-paramilitary prisoners, according to William Smith of the PUP. Mr. Smith warned that relations between inmates and staff are at "an all time low."

Nov 19 Taoiseach Bertie Ahern said that the report his government had received from Judge Peter Cory was ready to be published. However, he was uncertain if the British government was ready to publish its part of the report.

Nov 20 The murder appeal concerning former UDR soldier Neil Latimer was unable to resume today due to the illness of a Crown witness, forensic psychologist Dr Michael Heap, who collapsed while giving evidence. The case of Mr Latimer has been referred back to the Appeal Court for a record third time following an investigation by the Criminal Case Review Commission.

Nov 20 The Police Service College opened its doors to mark the official launch of the landmark 'Leadership for Life' education programme. The open day is designed to give district policing partnerships and other groups an insight into police work in Northern Ireland.

Nov 21 In what could be a landmark case, Independent Unionist councillor Frank McCoubrey, with the financial backing of the public and Shankill business people, will lodge papers in the Belfast High Court seeking a judicial review of Mr Adams' conduct as an MP. Mr McCoubrey is to allege that Mr Adams failed to represent the Shankill area in the House of Commons and in doing so abused their rights.

The Belfast High Court will today hear a judicial review of the PSNI's refusal to allow the father of murdered Belfast teenager David McIlwaine access to police files and witness statements on the case. Mr McIlwaine claims that the police have protected the killers from being brought to justice.

Nov 24 Pressure on police resources and falling staff levels has prompted the use of private security staff in polling stations during elections on ~~the~~ 26th November. The use of civilian personnel is unprecedented and follows weeks of allegations and claims that there are no longer enough PSNI officers to provide adequate cover across Northern Ireland.

Nov 26 Several groups, including the Royal Institute for the Blind and the Islamic Centre in Belfast, have

criticised the lack of attention paid to minority needs in party manifestos for the upcoming elections.

Nov 28 A Catholic Territorial Army member was awarded more than £30,000 by The Fair Employment Tribunal, which held that he had suffered 11 years of sectarian abuse at the hands of his colleagues. The tribunal also highlighted the importance of an effective Equal Opportunities Policy within the Territorial Army.

The Human Rights Commission is to visit asylum and immigration detainees being held in Maghaberry Prison to hear about their experiences of access to legal advice, health care and other such basic rights.

The Government took legal action to block further strike action by prison officers in Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State Paul Murphy applied for an injunction against the union representing the warders. The injunction prevents the Prison Officers Association from inducing its members to withdraw their services.

Compiled by Sophie Orr from various newspapers.



Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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