

The Death Knell of Article 2?

Readers of Just News will be familiar with the rapidly changing law surrounding the conduct of inquests in Northern Ireland. The latest development has come in the form of the judgment of the NI Court of Appeal in *Re McCaughey and Grew's application*.

Martin McCaughey and Desmond Grew were shot dead by the SAS on 9th October 1990 in circumstances that raised fresh "shoot-to-kill" allegations. The inquest into their deaths is one of a number of outstanding inquests into deaths caused by the security forces here during the conflict. As readers of Just News will know, a key hitherto unresolved issue in the inquest is the role of the police in providing material to the Coroner in advance of an inquest. In common with the inquests which are ongoing in Dungannon, the families of Martin McCaughey and Desmond Grew are concerned that the Coroner in their case has not been provided with all the material necessary to conduct the inquest. In addition, they complained that the police had edited some of the documents given to the Coroner, deleting material that they (i.e. the police) considered might attract public interest immunity.

The case was therefore concerned with the question of whether there is, in law, a duty on the police to provide material to the Coroner in advance of an inquest and if so, the extent of that duty. The High Court had previously held that there was such a duty and that it could be found by giving a wide meaning to section 8 of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959. The Court of Appeal disagreed and, allowing an appeal by the police, decided that:-

- ✍ There is no duty on the police to disclose information to a Coroner once their initial duty to inform him/her of a death immediately has been fulfilled;
- ✍ Section 8 of the Coroners Act could not be read in a way that imposed such a duty;
- ✍ Section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998 could not be employed to interpret section 8 in a manner that is compliant with Article 2 ECHR on the grounds that the Human Rights Act does not apply where the date of death is prior to the coming into force of the Act;
- ✍ That the earlier decision of the Court of Appeal in the case of *Jordan* (delivered on 10th September 2004) was incorrectly decided insofar as it ruled that section 3 was of general application and not dependent on the assertion of the rights of an individual.

The McCaughey and Grew families are currently seeking leave to appeal to the House of Lords. But if the Court of

Appeal's decision stands it has a number of implications for the legal system here. First, it is an extension of the principles outlined by the House of Lords in the case of *McKerr* in that it closes down any possibility of individuals invoking the Human Rights Act in domestic courts where the death in question occurred before 2nd October 2000.

Secondly, the judgment has implications for the conduct of inquests here. It appears that a "twin-track" inquest system is emerging and that inquests into deaths which occurred before the coming into force of the Human Rights Act will be held according to the "old" system. This means that the scope of such inquests will be limited to "*ascertaining the identity of the deceased, the time and place of death and how, in the sense of 'by what means', the deceased met his death...*". While an amendment to the Coroners Rules means that, unlike before, a person suspected of causing a death is a compellable witness, the House of Lords has recognised (in the case of *Middleton*) that an inquest with this limited scope will not always comply with Article 2 (right to life). It seems therefore that the inquest into the death of Patrick Shanaghan, already condemned as in violation of Article 2 by the European Court of Human Rights, would be conducted in the same manner today.

Many of the outstanding inquests which raise issues under Article 2 relate to deaths raising politically sensitive questions and allegations about the actions of servants or agents of the state. It is beginning to look like deaths such as those of Pearce Jordan, Dermot McShane and Roseann Mallon will be conducted according to the "old system" and be severely limited in scope. In a number of cases such an inquest will certainly not be enough to discharge the state's Article 2 obligations. Will the families in those cases be forced to take their cases to the European Court of Human Rights, some of them for the second time?

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Basic Principles for a truth process in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee launched another important study recently into the topic of “Reconciliation: Ways of dealing with Northern Ireland’s past”. The Westminster based parliamentary committee has already received testimony from internationally renowned expert, Priscilla Hayner of the International Centre for Transitional Justice, and is now beginning to hear from a range of individuals and groups across Northern Ireland.

CAJ was invited to testify before the Committee and submitted a short two-page paper. The paper offers no clear model for tackling the legacy of the past but summarises the key principles that should be the benchmarks against which to measure any proposed model. Traditionally, CAJ turns to international human rights principles and good practice to see what can and cannot be applied to the Northern Ireland situation. To date, however, we have found few clear international parallels, so our contribution has been limited to an elaboration of principles, rather than proposals for specific models.

While not ignoring the past, the opening preamble of the Agreement says that it is to honour those who have died, been injured, and their families, that we must “*dedicate ourselves to a future of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the rights of all*”. With hindsight, there is increasing doubt, as to whether it is either desirable or possible, to fully commit to a shared and peaceful future, without some addressing of the legacy of the past.

From CAJ’s perspective, we have worked for many years with families who have lost loved ones during the conflict - we have campaigned on individual cases; we have worked to improve the inquest system; and we have successfully taken cases to the European Court of Human Rights. Any proposal for dealing with the past must build on these experiences, must be in accordance with domestic and international human rights standards, and must properly engage with the rights of victims and others.

While CAJ’s mandate relates only to the actions of the state, we believe that it is self-evident that any examination of the past must take place in the context of a full and informed examination of the actions of all relevant actors.

Obvious principles against which proposals must be measured include:

1. Independence

Any process must be completely independent of all parties to the conflict, including the state.

Those who are charged with facilitating the process must be persons of sufficient standing in the international human rights community to command respect across the community in Northern Ireland.

2. Transparency

Cooperation on the part of the state must include full disclosure of material including documents relevant to the conflict. Nothing should be exempted from this undertaking, save information which would clearly put someone’s life in danger. Any process must involve public hearings.

3. Accountability

The process should be primarily about ensuring that institutions and individuals are held accountable for their actions or inactions. This need not necessarily be about punishment or actual imprisonment, and a range of accountability measures could be considered.

4. Procedures should be article 2 and 3 compliant

In the *Jordan et al* cases, the European Court of Human Rights laid down a series of tests to ensure that any investigation into violations of the right to life should be compliant with article 2 of the Convention. Similarly the European Court of Human Rights has laid down tests for article 3 investigations. Any acceptable process must meet these standards.

5. There can be no impunity or blanket amnesty

Truth processes which grant unqualified amnesty for those accused of serious violations are in violation of human rights law. So, while there is a growing legal debate about what - short of a blanket amnesty - is an acceptable compromise when reconciliation and political stability are major concerns, there can be no blanket immunity.

6. The process should be voluntary

Victims should retain the option of pursuing their case through the normal legal process if they so choose, and ought not be forced to take part in a truth and reconciliation process.

7. Acknowledgement of wrong-doing

There must be acknowledgement from the state and all parties to the conflict that wrongs were committed, and there must be undertakings from all parties to cooperate with a fair and impartial truth seeking mechanism.

8. Integrity of criminal justice process should be upheld

The conflict in Northern Ireland has warped the criminal justice system

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and undermined public confidence in the system. We believe any truth process should not repeat this pattern, and instead should restore confidence in the criminal justice system by making recommendations for improvements.

9. Must comply with international human rights law

As stated, any truth and reconciliation process examining deaths or allegations of torture or ill-treatment should comply with articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights; however, other relevant international human rights standards should also be part of the parameters for any such process.

10. No hierarchy of victims

Victims of the conflict should be self-defined. There should be no discrimination as between different classes of victims.

The process should culminate in a published report which, in addition to describing the work undertaken, will make recommendations to ensure that such violations do not recur. Where appropriate, the process should be capable of making reparations.

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Update



The New York Bar Association have published its critique of the Inquiries Bill entitled:

An Analysis of the UK Inquiries Bill and US Provisions for Investigating Matters of Urgent Public Concern. This can be found on www.abcny.org



Christine Chinkin, Professor of International Law, London School of Economics gave the 9th Torkel Opsahl Memorial Lecture, in December 2004, in Belfast on "**Peace Processes, Post-Conflict Security and Women's Human Rights: The International Context considered**". A report from the event is now available from Democratic Dialogue, 23 University Street, Belfast. Telephone: 028 90220050 or visit their website on www.democraticdialogue.org



A case of alleged political discrimination taken by two republican ex-prisoners has come to a halt after three days. The Tribunal chair revealed that one of the panel members had made a comment which indicated that they had "a close connection to a victim of the Troubles". The chair further stated that "certain comments had been made which gave rise to a concern that the panel would no longer be fair and impartial". Given the requirements under Article 6 of the ECHR in relation to the right to a fair trial, the case will have to be re-run in front of a new panel.

Watch this space for CAJ's forthcoming publications:

- ✍ Commentary on the District Policing Partnerships including a report on a conference which took place in 2004.
- ✍ Commentary on the work of the Police Ombudsman's office

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The Truth of

More than thirty years on, Bloody Sunday casts a long shadow in the history of the conflict and remains a source of controversy, debate and pain, compounded for many by the outcome of Widgery's Inquiry, which reported in March 1972 and effectively exonerated the state. The failure of Widgery to properly investigate Bloody Sunday and to apportion blame appropriately caused great damage to the legal process and the rule of law in Northern Ireland and was symptomatic of the state's response to the conflict. Bloody Sunday and its aftermath is a case-study in the on-going contestation of truth, law and history.

As the long-running second Inquiry under Lord Saville winds to a close, there are lessons to be drawn from it which may have particular resonance for any future inquiries. If the UK government has its way, the principal legacy of Saville will be the abolition of the Tribunals of Inquiry Act and the abandonment of the public inquiry. The Inquiries Bill currently before Parliament is the progeny of the state's obstruction of the truth of Bloody Sunday.

Purpose of the Inquiry?

In one way, those who set up the Inquiry and those who sought it were at odds from the start. Many in Derry took the view that they already knew the truth about Bloody Sunday. For them, the purpose of the Inquiry was therefore not so much to find out the truth, but to establish that truth and have the official record reflect that truth. The Inquiry's purpose, in their eyes, was not therefore an inquisitorial one, but one of acknowledgement, of correction of the official version to reflect the truth.

But was this Inquiry ever capable of finding the truth? This is a key question and one which can only be authoritatively answered when we see the Inquiry's report, due in the Autumn. Nonetheless, it is possible now to make some assessment now of how this particular Inquiry worked.

Despite the euphoria which greeted the institution of a second Inquiry into Bloody Sunday, no-one can have been deceived for long that the new Inquiry arose from altruism on the government's part. Governments do not hold public inquiries into allegations of serious wrongdoing by the state unless they are reasonably confident that the inquiry will exonerate them. Thus, it might be argued, governments set up inquiries not to expose truth, but to obstruct it.

Obstruction of truth

Despite the experience and evidence which support this view, the notion that the state might try to obstruct truth is remarkably controversial. It is a particularly controversial view about Northern Ireland, where all the powerful elites - government, judiciary and media - combine to deny the truth of some human rights abuses, but also to demonise anyone who dares to say anything different. What has been remarkable about the furore over the recent photos of abuse in Iraq, for example, has been the willingness of the media and sections of the political establishment to believe them, whilst continuing to deny the reality of the state's record in Northern Ireland. Even the recent landmark judgment of the House of Lords in the Belmarsh detainees' cases - (see page 7) possesses the same blind spot. There the court enthused about how alien the practice of internment is to British law, whilst failing to notice that alien or not, it was practised in Northern Ireland. It is a neat, if not particularly happy point: the Bloody Sunday march in 1972 was a demonstration against internment.

A very important question about the Bloody Sunday Inquiry is whether it served the British state and its ruling political class or did it do its best to find out the truth? The holding answer at the moment has to be that it did both in parts. The Inquiry in good faith did its best to understand the very different society it was being sent to investigate. It uncovered huge volumes of material: no-one could accuse this inquiry of a failure to be complete. It did its best to honour the families, something which cannot be underestimated, and it treated them with humanity and respect. The Inquiry tried to do the right thing on key issues such as anonymity and venue, but was confounded by the power of the British state and that blind spot. The English courts, with that same blind spot, backed the soldiers and their lawyers every time. That they appropriated the language of human rights in so doing is a particularly important point.

There were other flaws in the Inquiry, but until the final report is published, it is unclear just how serious these are. One particular problem is the failure of the Inquiry to frame what happened on Bloody Sunday as part of an overall policy of impunity for state violence. Repeatedly, the Inquiry stopped lines of questioning of soldiers and others about their behaviour, views and activities prior to and after Bloody Sunday. The purpose of this was to avoid "the excavation of satellite issues" but its effect may well have been to erase the context of near complete impunity which pertained. In that environment, it was possible to shoot 13 people dead, and know that you would probably get away with it.



Bloody Sunday

More recently, the imprisonment of Martin Doherty has raised grave concerns locally. It appears that the only person likely to do time in jail for Bloody Sunday is a local man jailed because he refused to give evidence. Meanwhile, 13 people were murdered and a number of others saw their lives shortened as a result of their wounds. Hundreds of people were assaulted and abused, but not one British military soldier has been charged with anything. One can see how this might appear to the local population and why they might be outraged.

Of course, one might dismiss such outrage by explaining this is simply the legal process running its course: after all, the families encouraged people to give evidence and they would no doubt want soldiers or others pursued for contempt if they refused to testify.

But that outrage is more understandable if instead of viewing the legal process as neutral and untainted you see it for what it often is. It's a game, heavily weighted in favour of those in power. Thus many members of the British military and political classes were content to come to give evidence to an Inquiry set up and run according to the rules of the British legal system. It is not that any of the individuals associated with the Inquiry are anything other than decent upright people. It's that the system in which the Inquiry operates is one which, after all, is one which is sustained and enhanced by the cultural, political and social prejudice that Britain is right and those who resist its policy of Ireland are wrong.

A neutral benign state?

This predisposition towards the state and its official discourse is a telling factor in the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. Here, just as elsewhere in the legal system, the norms which operate are those which presume the state to be neutral and benign. Despite this, they are not the general public norms which operate in parts of Northern Ireland and particularly not in Derry. Further, it was the refutation of these norms by the creation and defence of 'Free Derry' that directly led to the state's actions on Bloody Sunday. This presumption, that the state is 'good' and those who oppose it are 'bad', is a pervasive thread in the Inquiry's proceedings.

Thus, there is a hierarchy of codes and values at work in the Inquiry. For example, British military and political values are deemed worthy and are deferred to, whereas local customs and codes of honour are questioned. So IRA codes of conduct - forbidding for example the disclosure of the location of arms dumps in 1972 - do not trump the quest for truth, but British government assertions of national security do. This has resulted in requirement of civilian

witnesses, former IRA members and journalists to disclose everything so that truth can be found, but a much more limited obligation – limited, of course, in 'the national interest' - on ex-soldiers, generals and former Prime Ministers.

Conclusive lessons about the legacy of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry can only be firmly drawn after the Inquiry reports. Nonetheless, some of us watching its processes cannot help having an uneasy feeling that we were all suckered in taking part something which was unfair from the start and which has sapped our energy and smothered our resistance. The most important lesson to draw from the Bloody Sunday Inquiry may be that we should strive to prevent human rights campaigns becoming purely legal processes.

Law as a tool

In the end, we should remember how the truth about Bloody Sunday was really arrived at - not through law, but through struggle. Thus campaigns, commemorations, art, poetry, plays, film, song and solidarity activities are all as important as law. This is not a rejection of law, but a plea to rather to see law for what it is: a tool. Those in power use law to protect themselves, and to shore up that power. Those of us who oppose that abuse of power must continue to use law as a tool to expose those abuses and to bring about change. But law is just one instrument in our toolkit. We must not abandon struggle for law, but instead ensure that law is put at the service of peaceful struggle.

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In the Headlines

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Reigning In Emergency Powers

When faced with a threat governments often invoke extraordinary powers to safeguard the state, but equally often, these powers without care, may endanger human rights. Emergencies require that the courts and parliament be especially vigilant. The Law Lords ruling in *A v. Secretary of State for the Home Department* is a very welcome example of the value and importance of such scrutiny.

Article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) balances the competing demands of rights and security in an emergency through the concept of *derogations*. During an emergency, states are allowed to derogate (make exceptions) from their normal obligations, subject to certain clear safeguards. The requirements relevant to the "A" case are that:

- ✍ There must be an *emergency threatening the life of the nation*
- ✍ The measures must be *strictly necessary* to deal with the situation
- ✍ And the measures must not infringe the state's other international obligations

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled on several derogation cases from Northern Ireland. Internment without trial in the 1970s and later seven-day arrest without charge, required the UK to derogate from the Convention and were challenged in the Court. The Court accepted that both these measures were strictly necessary to meet the emergency in Northern Ireland (in the latter case as recently as 2001).

In response to September 11th, the UK government announced a new derogation covering Part IV of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act. Part IV responded to decisions of the European Court of Human Rights which prohibited deportation of a foreigner from the UK, even if he/she was suspected of being a terrorist, where there was a threat of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment being inflicted abroad. Part IV allows the government to detain such foreigners without trial on reasonable suspicion of being international terrorists; alternatively, detainees could obtain their freedom by agreeing to leave the UK. The Act provides for review of these executive decisions by the Special Immigrations Appeal Commission (SIAC). SIAC's procedures allow persons to be detained on evidence which the detainees cannot see and special advocates are listed who can see the closed evidence but cannot discuss it with the detainees.

Part IV required a derogation from Article 5 of the European Convention (right to liberty) as that article prohibits preventive detention by the executive. The detainees challenged Part IV before SIAC, asking that the legislation be declared incompatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Such a declaration would leave in force the Anti-Terrorism Act, but would mark a violation of the Convention.

SIAC concluded that there was a genuine emergency, and the measures were strictly necessary to deal with it. However they decided that the measures discriminated against foreigners and so violated Article 14 of the Convention on non-discrimination. The Court of Appeal reversed this finding but, in December 2004, a special nine judge panel of the House of Lords, announced by 8 votes to 1 that the measure was incompatible with the Convention.

Eight Law Lords upheld SIAC's opinion that there was a genuine state of emergency, arguing that SIAC had approached this question in the right way and this was a political decision, and the politicians were entitled to deference on this point. Further, Lord Bingham noted that the first case of the European Court of Human Rights indicated a rather low threshold of violence was required to trigger Article 15 (*Lawless v Ireland*, 1961).

The next question the Law Lords addressed was whether the measures are strictly necessary to meet the emergency. The right to liberty is an important one where the judges have a special competence, so intense judicial scrutiny is appropriate. The Law Lords found the measures were disproportionate and irrational.

"Indefinite imprisonment in consequence of a denunciation on grounds that are not disclosed and made by a person whose identity cannot be disclosed is the stuff of nightmares, associated whether accurately or inaccurately with France before and during the Revolution, with Soviet Russia in the Stalinist era and now associated, as a result of section 23 of the 2001 Act, with the United Kingdom."

The Lord relied not just on the arguments of counsel but also the opinions of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, the Privy Council review of the Anti-Terrorism Act and the views of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights.

The willingness to accept there was a genuine emergency without looking at the government's secret evidence is unsettling, as is the Lords reliance on the early decision of *Lawless v Ireland*. Yet the Law Lords ruled that merely citing "national security" does not excuse executive action from meaningful scrutiny. This is the task of any responsible watchdog, and it is significant that the ground had been well prepared by critical comments from independent reviewers, the Council of Europe and a parliamentary committee, which underlines the importance of not relying solely on judges to protect human rights.

Rory O'Connell
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Government Spending: Targeting Social or Political Need?

In 1992, in response to an internal memorandum confirming that on all major social and economic indicators, Catholics were worse off than Protestants, the TSN initiative was introduced. The purpose of the Targeting Social Need (TSN) measure was two-fold: to ensure that both Protestant and Catholic disadvantage were effectively addressed while also reducing community differentials between the two groups. The core principle was targeting resources to those areas in greatest 'objective need', regardless of their real or perceived religious or political affiliations.

There have been consistent doubts expressed about the extent to which government has in fact operationalised this measure, since no special money was forthcoming. Now, recent government announcements are leading to questions being asked about the extent to which political expediency rather than objective need is driving government thinking.

Last week, John Spellar announced that he is to extend research into the position concerning equality of opportunity for Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The press statement referred to interventions made by "elected representatives from the Unionist community (who) have raised their concerns about perceived inequality in the labour market and the effect this has on good relations". Apparently, "elected representatives from the Nationalist/Republican community have emphasised the importance of making progress on equality of opportunity in the context of building better community relations", so the Minister feels combined political pressure for movement.

But what should the government do? Some of the crucial data about current inequalities and community differentials is to be found in the Social Needs Indicators report. Unfortunately, thirteen years after the leaked memo which led to TSN, it still seems that the proportion of children who are in workless households where the Head of Household (HoH) is Catholic, is consistently higher than that of households where the HoH is Protestant. Employment rates are lower for Catholics, unemployment

rates are higher, the proportion of school leavers achieving no qualifications is higher among Catholics, the proportion of economically active working age adults who are long-term unemployed is higher among Catholics, as is the working age economic inactivity rate.

Other figures highlight serious problems in housing provision generally and in housing allocation. An "allocation list differential" is every bit as unacceptable as any "unemployment differential".

These same data sources highlight that there is serious disadvantage in many Protestant areas. The Protestant population is older on average and is particularly disadvantaged in health terms. There are extremely high levels of educational under-achievement in loyalist areas. As the Profile on North Belfast indicated (see Just News January), the experience of disadvantage and inequality is very different but very serious in both Protestant and Catholic wards. There is no way that government should be looking for a "one size fits all" policy, so it will be interesting to examine how the "extended research" referred to by John Spellar addresses these issues.

What is not, and cannot be, acceptable is that resources are targeted to people on grounds of their community background, rather than their genuine need. This was the genius of the TSN initiative – that it sought to reduce community differentials by addressing those most in need. Objective need would be the yardstick by which policies and resources would be

determined, and some would benefit more than others, but solely because they needed to benefit more than others, not because they were Catholic or Protestant, nationalist or unionist, settled or Traveller, male or female..... Addressing the problems of those in most need means also that the overall relative position of Catholics and Protestants improves – the "rising tide lifts all boats" scenario.

Notwithstanding the commitment to addressing poverty and reducing community differentials in the Agreement, successive evaluations have however shown that TSN was something that public bodies aspired to, but never implemented. Now, however, government has strayed even further away from the 'TSN' framework, and stopped using need as the yardstick by which to measure the allocation of resources.

In April 2004 a taskforce was established to address the needs of "Protestant working class communities". The creation of such a taskforce suggests a policy shift towards resource allocation on the basis of community, rather than on the basis of need. In recent weeks, government announced that £½million would go to Protestant working class communities to hold "community conventions". The implication is that political, rather than social, need is driving the resources agenda.

No doubt there are those who may call, in the interests of "balance" for a "Catholic working class communities task force". This would be a mistake. It does seem that government in a desire to address Protestant alienation may have created a hostage to fortune. It would be better advised to revert to its original stance – address need wherever and however it occurs. Projects such as the Greater Shankill and West Belfast Task Force was ideal - a model for the regeneration of an area which would benefit the disadvantaged of both communities in West Belfast – regardless of their religion. Why is that not top of the government priority list?



Civil Liberties Diary

Jan 5 Two UUP MLAs, Dermott Nesbitt and Esmond Birnie, walk out, of a meeting with NIO minister angered at the delay in a review of the government's equality policy. They are concerned about the perception that the equality agenda is now discriminating against Protestants.

Jan 7 Northern Ireland Commission on Children and Young People announces the body has received more than 600 responses regarding the proposed Children's Rights Manifesto.

Jan 10 Relatives of the Omagh bomb victims meet Secretary of State Paul Murphy to discuss progress in the investigation. An anonymous phone call warning of the attack is to be raised at the meeting.

Jan 11 In a case supported by the Equality Commission, Thomas Hughes successfully has the terms of his insurance policy altered so as to conform with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). Abbey National PLC could not explain why his cover was limited to exclude all forms of cancer and disease/injury to the eye.

The British Medical Association raises concerns over the fact that new medical cards which may breach patient confidentiality. A new paragraph about the availability of personnel information is to be introduced.

Jan 12 European Parliament votes to extend the Peace II Scheme for a further two years. Funding will go to Northern Ireland and the border counties.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in a study into parades (see Just News January 2005) rejects proposals to give the PSNI a greater say in deciding whether controversial parades should go ahead. As well as placing officers in greater danger, it is thought such a change could lead to the police being viewed as supporting one community over the other.

Jan 13 In the High Court in Belfast Martin Doherty is found to be in contempt of a summons ordering him to appear to give evidence at the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. He is sentenced to three months.

A representative from the Housing Executive expresses concern at reports of landlords halting black and Chinese families moving into certain areas. Calls were made for the existing legislation to be better implemented rather than new laws introduced.

Jan 17 A senior Orangeman escapes prosecution over his role in alleged public disturbances during a controversial west Belfast parade. The criminal case collapsed when police failed to obtain vital legal documentation. Nuala O'Loan blamed the breakdown on "human errors" and computer problems.

Poster campaign aimed at raising community awareness of hate crime is launched by the PSNI.

Jan 20 Ken Barrett loses an appeal to be granted early release under the Good Friday Agreement at the Sentence Review Commission.

At the launch of its strategy "Valuing Childhood - Cherishing Children" Barnados reveals that

up to 65,000 children in Ireland live in consistent poverty.

Jan 25 Conservative leader Michael Howard announces plans to withdraw from the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees if elected.

New measures to fast track asylum applications come into force in the Republic of Ireland. Unsuccessful applicants will now also face quicker deportation.

Jan 26 Dr. Lorna Lawrence alleges sex discrimination, harassment and unfair dismissal against Queen's University. At the industrial tribunal case in Belfast she accused her employers of bias in favour of male staff.

Jan 27 Holocaust Remembrance Day

PSNI Chief Constable Hugh Orde meets with widows of murdered RUC officers to discuss renewed investigations into their deaths.

Compiled by Mark Bassett from various newspapers.



Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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