

Human rights and the peace settlement: Mapping the Rollback?

Fourteen years have now passed since the signing of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. CAJ, in taking no position on the issue of constitutional status also took no position on the Agreement itself. CAJ did however make substantial efforts to ensure human rights were mainstreamed into the peace settlement and Agreement. We achieved considerable success in this regard. A cursory search of the text of the Agreement shows that the words 'right' or 'rights' appears 61 times. The then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson noted "...the Good Friday Agreement is conspicuous by the centrality it gives to equality and human rights concerns." The agreements that followed between the two sovereign governments to implement and take forward the settlement (Weston Park Agreement 2001, Joint Declaration 2003, St Andrew's Agreement 2006) also contained a range of human rights commitments. CAJ has long pressed for enforcement to ensure that the elements of the peace settlement which protect human rights are, and continue to be, implemented.

In recent times, an 'end of history' narrative has emerged which seeks to project the idea that following the devolution of justice and the Assembly completing a full term, the final blocks of the peace settlement had been solidly put into place. In contrast to this, increasing concern has been expressed by CAJ and other human rights organisations that there are, at present, persistent attempts at a 'rollback' by the state or elements within its institutions, of the human rights provisions of the Agreements. This includes commitments made as part of the settlement which have never been implemented and areas where institutional and policy gains were made which are now being undermined. In the run up to the fifteenth anniversary of the Agreement, CAJ finds itself in a position whereby our work is increasingly framed around mapping and challenging the rollback of the gains which had been realised or promised by the settlement.

The following paragraphs list *just some* of the matters committed to which are either still awaited, or are under threat:

Protection of Rights:

- The 1998 Agreement committed to the '**incorporation** into Northern Ireland law' of the European Convention on Human Rights (**ECHR**); the Human Rights Act 1998 is currently under threat from the Conservative party who wish to see its repeal;
- The 1998 Agreement provided for a **Bill of Rights** for Northern Ireland and the 2003 Joint Declaration again committed the British government to introducing legislation at Westminster to bring it in. This has not been done. The absence Bill of Rights protection over matters such as the right to housing without discrimination makes it more difficult to challenge acutely detrimental policies, such as the recent high profile decision reducing housing provision on the Girdwood barracks site.
- The 1998 Agreement provided safeguards against the devolved institutions acting incompatibly with **international obligations**. However, this power has rarely been used. In relation to the UK's commitment to introduce an **Irish Language Act** under the 2006 St Andrews Agreement, the UK government has in fact sought to defer to the devolved institutions rather than implement its international commitments;
- Opportunities have not been taken to give further effect to **rights 'affirmed' in the 1998 Agreement** including:
 - The "right of women to full and equal participation" could have been taken forward by the UK fully implementing the subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security to the post-conflict situation in Northern Ireland. The UK is yet to do so.

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- The incorporation of the “right to freedom from sectarian harassment” into legislation on parading was recommended by the Strategic Review on Parading (itself a product of the St Andrew’s Agreement) and subsequently the 2010 DUP-Sinn Féin Agreement at Hillsborough Castle. This has not been legislated for.

Equality

- The 1998 Agreement led to the introduction of the **statutory equality duty under Section 75 (s75)** of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. However there are concerns that the duty has never been fully implemented by government and that it risks further regression. Where s75 is used, it is often applied after a policy has been decided upon or even adopted, or with other irregularities which undermine its effectiveness. For example, public authorities often apply s75 in a procedural, as opposed to substantive manner and do not analyse underlying data. In addition, there is often a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of equality of opportunity, where ‘universal application’ is believed to achieve a positive or neutral impact on all equality groups. Finally, it is difficult to enforce s75 effectively, due to a lack of political will, a weak complaints mechanism and limited opportunity for judicial review.
- The second arm of the statutory duty in the 1998 Agreement, which aimed at promoting equality of treatment for the identity and ethos of the two main communities (“parity of esteem”), was instead reframed as a largely undefined ‘**good relations**’ duty; CAJ has expressed concerns that at times this has been used to actively undermine equality commitments;
- St Andrew’s Agreement affirmed the UK government’s belief in a **Single Equality Bill** and committed to preparatory work so the NI Executive could take forward legislation at an early date. Whilst section 5 of the 2010 Agreement at Hillsborough Castle sets up a process to progress the outstanding unimplemented matters from St Andrew’s, the NI Executive is yet to take forward single equality legislation.
- The 1998 Agreement envisaged “a range of measures aimed at combating unemployment and progressively eliminating the **differential in unemployment** rates between the two communities by targeting objective need.” Despite evidence to the contrary published by CAJ, an official attitude has subsequently developed that the differential has been resolved.
- Recognising many disadvantaged areas where predominantly loyalist or nationalist commitments were made in the 1998 Agreement including “a strategic and integrated approach aimed at the progressive regeneration of those areas of greatest disadvantage,” St Andrew’s provided for an **anti-poverty** strategy to tackle deprivation on the basis of **objective need**. However, not only is such deprivation still widespread, there has also been some shift away from a framework emphasising objective need to one emphasising a shared future and spaces.

Policing, Security and Justice Reform

- The 1998 Agreement provided for the Independent Commission on Policing (Patten review) which led to significant **reform of policing**. There are, however, a number of areas where there are concerns of retrogression. For example, Patten emphasised accountability, yet responsibility for one of the most risk-laden areas of policing – covert policing and the running of national security agents - has been substantively transferred to MI5 which falls outside the accountability arrangements. CAJ has emerging evidence that safeguards set out in the St Andrew’s Agreement regarding the transfer to MI5 have not been implemented;
- With some caveats, the 1998 and subsequent Agreements foresaw demilitarisation and an end to emergency legislation – including the 2003 Joint Declaration which envisaged the “**repeal of counter terrorism legislation** particular to Northern Ireland” by April 2005. Whilst NI-specific emergency legislation was repealed, the Justice and Security Act 2007 simply reintroduced many emergency powers permanently – including provision for non-jury trials, and stop, question and search powers for soldiers; UK-wide legislation also reintroduced emergency-type powers into NI on a permanent basis;

Dealing with the Past

- The 1998 Agreement did not provide for a transitional justice mechanism to deal with the past, although there was some provision made for services to victims. Commitments were made under the 2001 Weston Park Agreement to hold public Inquiries into six controversial cases, should an international judge recommend that this is necessary. The main deficit in this commitment remains the recent u-turn over the commitment to hold an Inquiry into the death of human rights defender, Pat Finucane. The UK Government also substantively undermined the commitments by the introduction of the Inquiries Act 2005 which, replacing other legal basis for Inquiries, allows government ministers unprecedented powers to intervene in Inquiries.

CAJ facilitates discussion at Corrib Gas Dispute Solidarity Event, Erris, Co. Mayo

In March this year, CAJ's Human Rights Programme Officer, Adrienne Reilly, was asked by Aid from Ireland AFri, a Dublin based NGO, to host a facilitated discussion engaging with some of the community residents most affected by what has become known as the Corrib Gas Dispute. This dispute is also generically known as the Shell to Sea issue although Shell to Sea are only one of a number of campaign groups in the community that oppose construction by Royal Dutch Shell, Statoil and Vermilion Energy Trust of a refinery intended to refine the natural gas from the Corrib Gas field. The others are Poball Chill Chomáin and Pobal Le Chéile. AFri have supported the local residents' campaign for the last decade.

The aim of all the local campaigns is to have the gas refined at sea, rather than inland, as is done in Ireland's only other producing gas field off County Cork. Residents, supported by expert research reports, maintain that the proximity of a natural gas pipeline is of risk to them and their families. In fact, according to the Government-sponsored Advantica Report, a problem with unprocessed gas with no smell could cause a 'transient fireball' which would kill everyone within a 200 metre radius if it exploded. Despite this, the project is still proceeding in a way that residents feel is a threat to their lives and livelihoods.

Throughout the duration of this ten-year campaign by local residents, there have been ongoing issues related to policing of protests and demonstrations. CAJ was asked to conduct a facilitated discussion around these policing concerns and share our expertise on policing issues that arose when policing communities during the conflict in Northern Ireland. CAJ also shared this platform with Denis Halliday, former UN Assistant Secretary General who spoke on 'Government, Big Business and Community Resistance'; and Sonny Jacobs and Peter Pringle, both victims of miscarriages of justice, having been sentenced to death, and who spoke on 'Surviving the Struggle.'

Misrule of Law

CAJ chose to focus on its Misrule of Law report, which addresses the policing of events of the summer of 1996 in Northern Ireland. The events of the summer of 1996 were disturbing to all those concerned about the protection of human rights. There was a serious breakdown in law and order, with damage to property, serious personal injury, and even death and over 6000 plastic bullets used. What was lacking in most of the reporting of events was any detailed analysis of police tactics. To instigate facilitation of the discussion in Mayo, CAJ went through how our 60 impartial independent observers worked on the ground at over 20 contentious parades and demonstrations between late June and early September, as well as policing tactics, attitudes towards observers, charges of sectarianism, and the conclusions identified by CAJ from the observer reports as requiring further study for policing parades and demonstrations.

Concerns in Erris in relation to the Corrib Gas Dispute

A wide variety of issues were raised during the facilitated discussion which followed from CAJ's overview. These included the current reports of lawlessness by the Gardaí in relation to how they were obstructing the community going about their daily business to facilitate the multi national business interests; how communities had engaged with lobbying, awareness raising, judicial review, review of planning decisions; and the Barrington Report commissioned by Front Line. This report teased out issues related to the right to defend human rights in the context of the Corrib Gas dispute following several requests from protesters and others over a number of years. The report specifically examined whether those engaged in protest could be considered to be human rights defenders and whether there were any legitimate human rights concerns regarding the policing of the dispute. This report concluded that there is a situation of human rights defense to which the UN Declaration of Human Rights Defenders is applicable. It also highlighted a number of concerns in relation to the policing of the protests and the conduct of private security agents.

Despite all of this and much more, the main concern from the communities is about the ongoing reported lawlessness of the police, the failure of the State to protect, and failure of the media to accurately report on this issue. An outcome of this engagement was that there might possibly be a facilitated session by CAJ for the communities to perhaps produce a 'lessons learnt' document, particularly in light of the ongoing concerns around 'fracking' that are emerging in Ireland at the moment, and how communities who have never had to engage in human rights defense might possibly be able to have a useful tool from the Erris experts.

CAJ presents at the 2012 FRP Meeting

On 19 and 20 April 2012, the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union ('FRA') hosted the fourth meeting of its civil society counterpart, the Fundamental Rights Platform ('FRP'). CAJ is the only organisation in Northern Ireland which is a member of FRP. CAJ, represented by its Equality Programme Officer, Debbie Kohner, was invited to attend and present at the meeting, where she engaged with FRA and many FRP members from across Europe.

The meeting began with an overview of FRA's work from its Director, Morten Kjaerum, and the Chair of its Management Board, Ilze Brands Kehris. The FRA collects evidence on the status of fundamental rights in the EU, advises the EU institutions on the same and informs EU citizens about their rights. Ylva Tivéus, of the European Commission, then discussed current work on the Europe for Citizens Programme, which aims to support participation, including that of NGOs, at a time when trust in formal political engagement is waning across the EU.

The second plenary session discussed the potential for cooperation between NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions ('NHRIs') and equality bodies in relation to victims' rights and access to justice. The panel included representatives of EQUINET (the European Network of Equality Bodies), the European Group of NHRIs, European NGOs and the FRA. There was recognition that civil society organisations are essential to help support those who have experienced hate crimes, who might not be willing to access (quasi-) statutory bodies. Given their work on the ground, NGOs' experience is invaluable to NHRIs and equality bodies.

The participants then attended various workshops hosted by members of FRP. CAJ hosted a workshop which built upon the second plenary session by unpacking the meaning of 'cooperative working' and how it can add value in the human rights sphere. It was recognised that different types of collaboration will suit different contexts, cultures and subject matters. The choice of structure, and whether the collaborative element provides joint, supportive or representative services, depends on the funding available and the extent of autonomy sought by the organisations involved. While it is helpful to embed the collaboration within each organisation, a central driving force can also ensure progress.

In order to illustrate the different types of cooperative working, four examples of successful collaborations were considered. Emphasis was placed on the Equality Coalition which, on minimal funding, provides information sharing, capacity building, mutual support and advocacy for over 80 non-statutory organisations in Northern Ireland. As the Coalition includes representatives of over ten different equality groups, the members learn about multiple identity issues and support each other for a more equal society for all. This avoids undue competition and any perception of hierarchy between equality groups.

At the workshop, the group considered the advantages of cooperative working, including the efficiencies of learning from one's peers and supporting each other's initiatives. The strength in numbers is more likely to engender a response from policy makers and to highlight issues of multiple discrimination. However, conflicts often arise in collaborative working, due to different organisational approaches, cultures or strategic directions. It was recognised that such conflicts are not always negative, as cooperative working should not be used as a vehicle to stifle a diversity of views. This concern, in combination with the slow reaction times of cooperative projects, often require that collaborations limit unified action to a narrow subject matter, while allowing for individual views elsewhere.

The participants were very interested in CAJ's work on the Equality Coalition and considered possibilities for future collaborations within their own jurisdictions. The discussion recognised that cooperation should not be forced upon organisations and the cost-benefit ratio should be carefully considered in each context. CAJ also attended workshops on the accountability of NHRIs, the implications of 'hate speech' laws on freedom of expression and discrimination laws in Europe.

The third plenary session shone a spotlight on multiple discrimination, and the need to mainstream intersectionality into fundamental rights work. The panel included testimony from a participant who had experienced multiple discrimination, as well as contributions from the European Commission, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, European Disability Forum and FRA.

The discussion highlighted the lack of legal provisions across Europe to litigate against multiple discrimination. The distinction between multiple discrimination and intersectionality was considered, in addition to the tensions between specialisms and broad understanding among both NHRIs and NGOs.

The FRA then hosted several thematic workshops to present its current work and receive feedback and other input from the FRP members. The themes of these workshops included access to justice, children's rights, violence against women, Roma communities, disability, asylum and migration, as well as FRA's approach to its work programme, methodologies and communications. Finally, participants voted in the new Advisory Committee of the FRP.

Throughout the meeting, CAJ had an opportunity to meet many stakeholders working throughout the EU and inform them of our work in Northern Ireland. Looking forwards, we will continue this exchange of information and ideas to help promote and protect fundamental rights.

Refusal to Grant Serviceman Parental Leave Constitutes Sex Discrimination

On 22 March 2012, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) delivered its judgment in the case of *Konstantin Markin v Russia*. The case concerned a Russian military serviceman who had been denied parental leave, unlike his female counterparts. The Court found that Russia had violated Article 14 taken in conjunction with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention).

The Applicant brought a claim before the Court alleging that he had been discriminated against on grounds of sex. At the material time, the Applicant was a military serviceman and a single parent with a new-born child. He applied for three years' parental leave and his request was rejected because three years' parental leave was available only to female military personnel.

The Court held that there had been a violation of Article 14 taken in conjunction with Article 8 of the Convention. In reaching its decision, the Court considered that the main issue to be ascertained was whether the difference in treatment between servicemen and servicewomen was objectively and reasonably justified.

The Court found the government's assertion that its policy in respect of parental leave amounted to positive discrimination to be misplaced, stating that it did not have the purpose of removing women's disadvantage and had the effect of perpetuating gender stereotypes, and was disadvantageous both to women's careers and men's family life. The Court rejected the idea that prevailing traditions and the perception of women as primary child-carers and men as primary breadwinners, could amount to sufficient justification for such a difference in treatment.

The Court acknowledged the "special armed forces context" of the case, which is "intimately connected with the nation's security", meaning that the state is afforded a particularly wide margin of appreciation. It also found that while it may be justifiable to exclude from the entitlement to parental leave any personnel, male or female, who may not easily be replaced in their duties, in Russia the entitlement to parental leave depended exclusively on the sex of the military personnel:

Such a general and automatic restriction applied to a group of people on the basis of their sex must be seen as falling outside any acceptable margin of appreciation, however wide that margin might be, and as being incompatible with Article 14 (para 148).

In relation to the Government's argument that by signing a military contract the applicant had waived his right not to be discriminated against, the Court also concluded that:

In view of the fundamental importance of the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex, no waiver of the right not to be subjected to discrimination on such grounds can be accepted as it would be counter to an important public interest (para 150).

CAJ success on Framework Convention on National Minorities

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ('FCNM') was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1994 and ratified by the UK in 1998. Its application is monitored periodically for each State Party by the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee to the Committee of Ministers ('Advisory Committee'), which is a panel of independent experts. Last year, the Advisory Committee reviewed the UK, and CAJ informed it of issues arising in Northern Ireland ('NI'), through meetings, a written submission and key recommendations. A few months ago, the Advisory Committee released its Third Opinion on the UK, which included most of the key points advocated by CAJ.

The Advisory Committee agreed that there was insufficient information on NI in the UK's State Report and found that 'the lack of participation of the authorities also prevented NGOs and minority representatives from being involved in the reporting process.' It regretted that 'this failure was due to a lack of political consensus in the devolved executive on minority and human rights-related issues'. It is noteworthy that the UK's official comments on the Third Opinion did not respond to any of the extensive references to NI, except in relation to continued Irish language broadcasting and immigration controls at the North/South border, for which London retains responsibility. The Advisory Committee also noted, in line with CAJ, that the UK's scope of application for FCNM has an 'over-reliance on the "racial group" criterion, [which] may result in *a priori* exclusions.' It therefore recommended 'a more flexible approach to the criteria used to determine the scope of application of FCNM.' However, in its comments, the UK confirmed that it will continue to use the legislative definition for 'racial group' (colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins) as the criterion for FCNM's scope of application in the UK. This is regretted, as certain religious minorities might not be included, including Muslim communities.

Article 3 – Right to self identify

The Advisory Committee agreed with CAJ that the fair employment monitoring in NI continues to be beneficial, but recommended that the 'authorities should continue to review regularly the duty for employers to determine the community background of their employees in the context of work force monitoring against its relevance to the objective of securing equality in the field of employment.' It also recommended that they 'consider including persons belonging to minority ethnic communities in workforce monitoring, while fully respecting the right to free self-identification.'

Article 4 – Full and effective equality

CAJ also made strong arguments for a Single Equality Bill and Bill of Rights for NI. The Advisory Committee noted that 'the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement of 1998, as well as the St Andrews Agreement (2006), introduced a duty for the authorities to develop and adopt such legislation and the lack of progress on these issues, due to a lack of consensus within the devolved executive, is to the detriment of persons belonging to minorities.' It urged the 'authorities to adopt harmonised, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation for NI'; indeed, this was one of its key recommendations. It also called for 'resume[d] progress towards adoption of a Bill of Rights, reflecting the particular circumstances of NI.'

Article 6 – Mutual respect, understanding and cooperation

The Advisory Committee took on board CAJ's concerns that NI's integration policies, such as Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI), risk worsening inequalities and community relations, as they do not take into account the prior inequalities suffered. It stated that CSI is 'limited to mutual accommodation rather than mutual respect and understanding and that it does not adequately address the concerns of minority ethnic communities.' It regretted that 'the CSI Strategy fails to draw on existing human rights standards' and 'developed the concept of "good relations", apparently to substitute the concept of intercultural dialogue and integration of society.... as justification for not implementing provisions in favour of persons belonging to minorities, such as the erection of bilingual signs.' It recognised the pressing need for a Single Equality Act and a Bill of Rights for NI in this regard.

CAJ also recommended a more inclusive approach to teaching religion in schools, and the provision of alternative instruction for pupils who opt-out. The Advisory Committee was also concerned that, 'in NI, the curriculum of religious education remains predominantly Christian-centred, despite the increasing participation of pupils from different faiths at school'. It called on NI to 'take further steps to develop curricula that cover the non-confessional and multi-perspective elements in religious education.' It also invited NI 'to ensure that existing practices concerning religious education do not result in imposing a religion on pupils from another faith group.'

Article 10 – Right to use minority language

As pointed out by CAJ, the Advisory Committee was ‘deeply concerned by the failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the NI Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that this was a commitment taken by the Parties to the St Andrews Agreement of 2006.’ It included, as an issue for immediate action, the need to ‘develop comprehensive legislation on the Irish language in NI and take resolute measures to protect and implement more effectively the language rights of persons belonging to the Irish-speaking community.’

It also picked up on CAJ’s reference to the ‘Administration of Justice (Language) Act 1737, which has been interpreted so as to ban the use of Irish language in courts.’ It noted that ‘the general climate is not conducive to promoting the use of this language in public life’ and regretted ‘that measures to promote the visibility and use of this language have often been opposed with the justification that they constitute a discrimination against other groups of the population.’ The Advisory Committee called on ‘the authorities to develop and implement measures to promote the use of the Irish and Ulster Scots languages in Northern Ireland, in close cooperation with representatives of the groups concerned and based on adequate needs analysis’

Article 15 – Effective participation

CAJ had explained that the lapsing of the police 50:50 recruitment policy could lessen Catholic representation in the Police Service of NI, which is already proportionately low. The Advisory Committee called on the authorities ‘to monitor carefully recruitments in the Police Service and to take effective measures, as appropriate, to ensure that equality between the two main communities, as well as with other minority ethnic communities, continues to be a guiding principle.’ Finally, CAJ underlined the economic inequalities suffered by national minorities in NI and the risk that, in times of austerity, their economic participation could worsen. As an issue for immediate action, the Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities take measures to ensure that ‘budgetary cuts are kept at a minimum and do not have a disproportionately negative impact on the situation of persons belonging to minority ethnic communities, by means of impact assessments of ongoing and planned cuts and careful monitoring.’

CAJ T-Shirt competition winner announced!

We are delighted to announce that Sinead Farry won the adult category T-shirt design competition!

Sinead is pictured below (right), with CAJ Human Rights Programme Officer, Adrienne Reilly (centre) and Director, Brian Gormally (left).



Civil Liberties Diary - March 2012

5 March

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission released a report highlighting human rights concerns within nursing homes. They emphasized concerns about toileting procedures and lack of access to food and liquids. The Commission recommended that an independent and accredited advocacy service should regularly visit the facilities.

7 March

Documents released by Prime Minister David Cameron's office have indicated that the Good Friday Agreement's early release scheme does not apply to Bloody Sunday soldiers. These documents suggest that offences committed before 1973 were not covered in the early release scheme, nor were soldiers intended to be covered by the scheme. The Public Prosecution Service is currently considering the implications of the Saville Report's finding all of the killings and injuries on Bloody Sunday were unjustifiable.

8 March

Figures published by the Policing Board's Human Rights Annual Report revealed that children as young as six are being detained by police under stop-and-search laws. These laws, based on the Terrorism Act, the Justice and Security Act, and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, allow the PSNI to stop and search members of the public.

9 March

The Policing Board has recommended that future PSNI job advertisements should welcome applications from qualified candidates regardless of 'gender or gender identity' so as to encourage applications from

the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. The Board made 17 other recommendations, including suggested amendments to the PSNI's equal opportunities policy.

20 March

The number of children in Northern Ireland on the Child Protection Register, and therefore determined to be 'at risk', has risen by almost 50% in the last five years.

20 March

Judge Peter Smithwick announced that he is adjourning his investigation into claims of Garda/IRA collusion in the deaths of Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Bob Buchanan. He will reopen the tribunal when he receives information that UK authorities have so far been unwilling to disclose.

23 March

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has brought a legal challenge to the High Court in an attempt to allow gay and unmarried couples to adopt. The ban on adoption is unique to Northern Ireland and is not in line with the rest of the UK.

A girl with Down's Syndrome was granted leave to challenge the denial of a place at the high school of her family's choosing. Her family argued that the case is about inclusion and allowing her to be integrated with other students. A barrister for the tribunal contends that the school of her family's choosing is not equipped to deal with pupils with Down's Syndrome. The case will move forward next month.

27 March

The Northern Ireland Prison Service has agreed to reforms intended to overhaul the service. This move is in response to a report published last month that criticised the service, calling it 'dysfunctional, demoralised, and ineffective'. It is hoped that the changes will save £180 million over the next ten years.

28 March

The Police Ombudsman's office has received £10 million of extra funding in order to work on historical Troubles cases. This money will be used to double the number of staff, with the hope of completing its investigations into these cases.

29 March

Mr. Justice Treacy ruled that the Northern Ireland Education Board failed in its duty to identify whether a dyslexic pupil was in need of special educational provisions. He determined that the boy was in need of specialist direct literacy teaching and that this teaching should be offered sooner than the 2012-2013 school year, as had been proposed.

Diary compiled by
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from various newspapers

Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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