

Just News

Human Rights in Northern Ireland

Port in a storm?

Colin Port, the senior English detective who was brought in to lead the investigation into Rosemary Nelson's murder has resigned. Colin Port had formally written to the family of Rosemary Nelson recently indicating that he was leaving the investigation for personal reasons.

Port has informed the family and CAJ that the investigation is ongoing and that there will be no let up in the search for those who murdered Rosemary and indeed this has been the public position of the Chief Constable of the PSNI who has indicated his intention to appoint a new head of the investigation. To those who have been following the investigation closely however it has grown increasingly clear that the chances of the investigation leading to charges in relation to Rosemary's murder are slim.

Immediately after Rosemary Nelson's murder, the then RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, called in David Phillips, the Chief Constable of Kent to lead the investigation. Members of the FBI were also called in by Flanagan at that early stage. However, it quickly became apparent that David Phillips was not intending to be the "hands on" head of such a controversial investigation and, within weeks, Colin Port had been appointed while Phillips was maintained in what was largely a fictional supervisory role. The FBI also quickly left, but not before issuing a statement claiming a clean bill of health for the investigation up to that point (it appears that the statement had not been cleared with FBI HQ in the States).

For the last three and a half years Colin Port has led the murder investigation using a combination of RUC and non RUC personnel. He has made a number of arrests and a number of serious charges have been brought including charges of murder. None of the charges however have related to the murder of Rosemary Nelson. Port maintains that he has not found evidence of collusion in the murder although one of the key suspects he arrested was a serving soldier at the time of the murder. It has also emerged that Port did not question those RUC officers who Rosemary believed had issued death threats against her.

Rosemary's family and many of the NGOs working on the case have allowed the Port investigation to proceed, in the hope that those responsible for the murder would be

brought to justice, while maintaining that ultimately the only way of getting to the truth of the murder would be a full public inquiry. Port's resignation has strengthened those demands.

Attention now turns to the process being led by Judge Peter Cory, the retired Canadian Supreme Court judge appointed by the Irish and British governments to determine if there should be public inquiries in six controversial cases, including the Rosemary Nelson case.

Rosemary's family issued a public statement on 17th December stating that since April 2001, it had been evident to them that Mr. Port would not convict anyone for Rosemary's murder. They said that they had expressed their concerns to him and little had been done to allay those concerns.

CAJ would like to wish everyone Season's Greetings!

They also highlighted their suspicion that the murder investigation ground to a halt some time ago and they doubted they would ever come face to face with Rosemary's murderers.

They concluded their press statement by asserting that "there remains only one avenue to establish the truth and that is the setting up of a fully independent judicial inquiry to which we are entirely committed."

CAJ agree with this assessment. It is now imperative to ensure that the Cory process leads to a successful conclusion in Rosemary's case. Our efforts will be directed to that end.

Contents

Rights in Action - from the global to the local	2
Ban the bullet	3
Seasonal wishes for a Bill of Rights for all!	4/5
The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: A Commentary (review)	6
Under the Spotlight	7
Civil liberties diary	8

Rights in action – from the global to the local

Readers of Just News may recall previous articles outlining CAJ's involvement in an all-island conference on "Participation and the Practice of Rights" in June 2001. Following the conference and a series of regional meetings, the five groups who have facilitated some of the work in this area – Combat Poverty Agency, CAJ, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Irish Council of Civil Liberties and Community Foundation NI (formerly NIVT) - were encouraged to continue working together to make more effective alliances and connections between people working on human rights and poverty.

The next step in the project is to look in more detail at how international, regional and national tools can actually be operationalised at the local level. To this end, the first in a series of seminars was held on Thursday 5th December in the Carrickdale Hotel, Co. Louth, entitled "Rights in action – from the global to the local". The purpose of the event was to take some of the recommendations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, following their recent examinations of both Ireland and the UK, and explore how they could be given practical effect at the domestic level, and even more importantly within very local communities.



Paul Hunt, member of
UN Ctte on Economic,
Social & Cultural Rights

The organising groups were very fortunate in securing the assistance of Paul Hunt – the New Zealand member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – who spoke to the audience about the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee process, and the role of NGOs and wider civic society in this process - as well as the actual recommendations themselves.

Paul emphasised that the Committee itself is reliant on receiving critical information and submissions from NGOs and civic society. Without this, they can only judge a state's performance by the report the government itself has submitted, which unsurprisingly does not always provide the most candid picture. Most importantly, international human rights norms, and particularly the recommendations made by the Committees, need to be operationalised and made real at the grassroots level if they are to be in any way meaningful. In particular, he urged the audience to consider ways in which one might measure how rights protected by the Covenant were actually protected at a local community level over a certain

period of time (for example, in the four or five year period which elapses between examinations of a country by the Committee). He suggested that this could be done if the community itself crafted its own set of indicators and benchmarks, appropriate to their particular context.

In concluding, he highlighted what he thought to be the importance of human rights in terms of the value they can bring: norms, obligations and accountability – they are a set of globally legitimised *norms* and standards, which impose *obligations* on governments, which in turn are useless if they are not accompanied by some mechanisms for *accountability*.

Questions from the floor illustrated a very positive response to this presentation, especially to the idea of creating indicators for local communities to measure the protection of rights in their areas. This was also seen to be an important way of measuring "progressive realisation" – and in this way turning around the current use of this phrase (which governments so often use as a delay or escape clause) so that it has a more positive meaning of monitoring the realisation or protection of these rights.

Following Paul's presentation, a number of experts from north and south looked briefly at some of the main issues at a domestic level in the areas of housing (Padraic Kenna, NUI Galway and Ricky Rowledge, Council for the Homeless NI), domestic violence (Noirin Clancy, Women's Human Rights Project) and poverty (Frances Dowds, NI Anti-Poverty Network and Robin Hannon, EAPN Ireland). Workshops then studied what

the main obstacles to the realisation of socio-economic rights at the local level, and how the UN recommendations could help to address these obstacles and otherwise be built into existing agendas.

At the end of the day, Paul Hunt summed up on what to him were the main reflections from the day and emphasised that while many people were new to this whole area and perhaps all intimidated, the process of making a submission to the Committee is very simple.

The organising groups are now considering ways of working with inner-city groups from north and south to look at what indicators and benchmarks could be drawn up and used to empower them in challenging the governments on the implementation of international standards at a local level.

More information on the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is available at www.unhchr.ch

Ban the bullet

CAJ recently hosted a small working session with a number of other groups working actively on the issue of plastic bullets. Given the recent decision by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urging the UK “to abolish the use of plastic baton rounds as a means of riot control”, there was a feeling that there must be a re-doubling of efforts to try and rid this lethal weapon from the armoury of the security forces in Northern Ireland. Recent pronouncements make this campaign all the more important.

Firstly the army guidelines on the use of plastic bullets were put into the public domain in October for the first time. The fact that a court case was underway may have been a relevant factor in the ministerial decision to publish the guidelines when all previous campaigning seemed to fall on deaf ears. The Civil Secretary when forwarding the guidelines to CAJ suggested that there was little that had not been previously communicated to people, but in fact we found the full text of the guidelines to be very worrying.

They are much shorter, less rigorous in their legal detail, and seem more ambiguous than the equivalent police guidelines. The guidelines envisage that the army can fire in situations of “potential” violent disorder, and do not require that the violence be of a “serious” nature posing a threat to life – as do the police guidelines. Army warnings vary from the warnings to be given by the police, and no reference is made to either the particular risk of this weapon for children or the accountability mechanisms which come into play after the firing of a bullet. Perhaps most seriously of all, the army guidelines allow for the targeting of “perceived ringleaders and troublemakers”. In the confusion and uncertainty of public disturbances, the risk seems very high that an army gunner might thus single out a community worker or political representative by mistake, thinking that they were exacerbating the situation when they were genuinely trying to defuse tensions.

Secondly, the Independent Assessor of Military Complaints issued on 10 December (Human Rights Day) a review of the military use of baton rounds. CAJ was very pleased to see that the Assessor was also critical of several of the provisions in the army guidelines, though he did not conclude – as we did - that they need to be completely revised.

Several of his assertions were not however, in our view, borne out by his own research. For example, he confirms that there are “no grounds for believing that the army is being used to fire Baton Rounds instead of police officers doing so” (our emphasis). Yet his own statistics show that the army fired less than 1% of all plastic bullets fired in 1999, 20% of all plastic bullets fired in 2000 and 2001, and 30% of all the bullets fired in the first ten months of 2002. Clearly the proportion of total bullets fired by the army as opposed to the police has significantly increased, and that requires explanation.

Moreover, police firing of plastic bullets are subject to a whole range of safeguards. Overhauled plastic bullet guidelines, a new Code of Ethics, a specific commitment to upholding human rights, a more effective ID system and a new training programme are all relevant to policing public order situations.

Even more important are the possibilities created for much greater oversight by the establishment of the Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman, who has agreed with the Chief Constable that she

investigate all police firing of plastic bullets. The army have no equivalent level of external scrutiny, and it is this fact that is particularly worrying when noting the increased role they are taking on in public order situations.

The Assessor also asserts that all the firing he studied (102 plastic bullets) was done in accordance with the guidelines, and implies that the situation is satisfactory. This however appears to ignore some of the testimony that CAJ and others drew to his attention and the fact that the guidelines themselves leave a lot to be desired.

And, just recently, a new statement from the Defence Scientific Advisory Council was issued alleging that previous reports on the safety of the weapon were being wrongly interpreted to suggest that the weapon was more dangerous than its predecessor.

CAJ reviewed both statements but is still extremely worried about the safety of the new bullet. While it may be true that the bullet is safer in certain conditions, experience would suggest that the necessary pre-conditions are not always met. Everyone agrees that if someone is hit in the head, the head injury is likely to be more serious with the new so-called ‘safer’ bullet.

CAJ and others will continue to engage with all these public authorities trying to improve the guidelines and strengthen the scrutiny mechanisms - but the only truly satisfactory way forward is to ban this lethal weapon entirely. Given the recent United Nations recommendation, perhaps we can hope for some movement in this direction.

Seasonal wishes for a

On International Human Rights Day, Tuesday 10th December, members of the Human Rights Consortium gathered outside City Hall to spell out their call for a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights. The NI Human Rights Commission were presented with a gift containing the hopes and wishes for the Bill of Rights from all the many thousands involved in the Human Rights Consortium (see centre photo).

Groups on the Consortium – and some of their members – braved the freezing cold conditions along with the Chief Commissioner Brice Dickson, a number of other Commissioners and Commission staff members, for a media photo opportunity to celebrate Human Rights Day. A spokesperson for the Consortium, Patrick Corrigan, explained: “At this time of year we reflect on the past, plan for the future and wish each other good wishes for the year ahead. Part of a peaceful and prosperous future for Northern Ireland must be a Bill of Rights which protects everyone who lives here, whether Catholic or Protestant, black or white, young or old.... People in Northern Ireland have been divided for too long; the Bill of Rights is a marvelous opportunity to unite behind a common vision of a shared future. That’s our Christmas wish.”

The event proved to be a great success, with Consortium members being filmed and interviewed by BBC, UTV, Downtown/Cool FM and Citybeat Radio, and photos and articles on the presentation were featured in the Irish News, Newsletter and Belfast Telegraph. This also helped the Consortium to launch and distribute our Media Pack which contains details and resources for the media on the Consortium, its members and the Bill of Rights process. Indeed, all the media who turned up were carrying their Pack and making good use of it!

After the photo opportunity, the Consortium hosted a Human Rights Day reception of mulled wine and mince pies in the Linenhall Library (much needed after the near-arctic conditions outside!). This also served as an opportunity to preview a video about the Mary Robinson lecture hosted by the Consortium in May. Again, the reception was very well attended by political representatives and others, and allowed us to distribute many of our materials.

The video from the Mary Robinson event, entitled “Making right relationships an everyday practice” lasts for 18 minutes and contains highlights from her address, as well as contributions from members of the Consortium on why we need a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights.

The video would serve as a very useful educational tool for groups or schools – so for example it could be used in training sessions on the Bill of Rights, but would also serve as a more general resource on human rights.

Another of our recent publications is a booklet on “Frequently Asked Questions on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland” which was produced in November 2002. This short booklet attempts to answer some of the more common questions which Consortium members and others often hear in the debate around a Bill of Rights. So, for example, how should a Bill of Rights reflect the “particular circumstances” of Northern Ireland as required by the Good Friday Agreement? Is there a tension between human rights and responsibilities? Why do we need a Bill of Rights now? Why should economic, social and cultural rights be included in a Bill of Rights? We intend to distribute this booklet widely among politicians and other interested groups in the coming weeks.

It can be seen therefore that the Consortium has been busy in recent months, making the most of a bit of a lull in the process to prepare the ground for the next, arguably more challenging phase as we engage with the political parties and wider civil society. For example, we have held a stall at all the recent party political conferences, and again used this opportunity to meet and engage with representatives not previously encountered. Many were interested in our work and materials, and were impressed at the breadth of membership now involved.

We also met in recent months with NIO Minister Des Browne to discuss with him the government’s plans for the Commission’s advice when it is produced. The minister

Bill of Rights for all!

highlighted some of the questions they felt need addressed but gave assurances that the government remain committed to an open and full debate on the proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and no decision had already been taken to rule out the inclusion of social and economic rights. The meeting was a very positive and constructive one and we intend to maintain contact with the Minister as the process unfolds.

We hope to hold similar meetings with local political parties here, to press home the message that the Bill of Rights offers *everyone* in Northern Ireland a better future and provides common ground for people of all persuasions.

As a further part of our work with politicians, we are planning a half-day event in the Long Gallery in Stormont. Politicians will be invited to hear presentations from Consortium members to the Human Rights Commissioners on some of the more topical issues in the debate, namely, what are the particular circumstances of

Northern Ireland; why should socio-economic rights be included in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and how can a Bill of Rights best be enforced? Politicians will then have an opportunity to engage with Consortium members on these issues.

But the issue is not only to involve politicians more effectively. As already mentioned, there has been a feeling that there has been somewhat of a lull in the Bill of Rights process of late, while the Human Rights Commission tries to grapple with how it can deal with the many responses it has received, encourage discussion around some of more contentious issues, and ensure involvement by political parties.

To move this debate on, the Commission recently held a seminar in Malone House, the purpose of which was threefold: (a) to update people on developments in the Commission's consultation process; (b) to discuss key issues, particularly those already identified by the Commission as requiring further consideration; and (c) to outline the Commission's proposals for next steps in the process and receive feedback/comments on these. This event was very well attended and a useful discussion was held. Workshops and plenary discussions allowed for those in attendance to express their views on how the Commission should proceed and the Commission is expected to announce their plans in the very near future. An important obvious consideration will be how best to ensure that political parties are involved in this next phase, as Westminster have made it clear that they will not act on any advice that does not have the support of all communities here. So we have a formidable challenge ahead.

All in all, these are interesting times for all of us who are involved in the Bill of Rights process. The Consortium is going from strength to strength and now has almost 100 members. We look forward to pursuing our campaign in 2003 for a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights, and hope we can rely on CAJ and its members for their continued support.

Fiona Murphy

AI, Co-convenor of the Human Rights Consortium

If your organisation would like details about becoming a member of the Consortium, or you would like to order copies of the Media Pack or Frequently Asked Questions booklet (free) or the Mary Robinson video (£5), please contact the Consortium on 90961128.

© Photoline/Kevin Cooper (NUJ)

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 at the office.

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

At the end of one of the bloodiest centuries in human history, the international community adopted a treaty creating the world's first independent and permanent International Criminal Court (the ICC). This body is able to investigate and prosecute those individuals accused of crimes against humanity, genocide, and crimes of war. The ICC complements existing national judicial systems and will step in only if national courts are unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute such crimes. The ICC will also help defend those who, experience tragically illustrates, are particularly vulnerable to the most egregious of human rights abuses - women and children.

The Statute outlining the creation of the court was adopted at an international conference in Rome on July 17, 1998, after five weeks of detailed negotiations. This negotiation process had to balance the competing objectives of trying to achieve strong and progressive provisions within the treaty, while at the same time not alienating states that have traditionally zealously guarded their sovereign criminal jurisdictions. Seen then in historical perspective, stretching back at least to the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals, it is hoped that the ICC will ultimately represent the end of the culture of impunity which the leaders and planners of international crimes have often enjoyed to date.

In the end 120 countries voted to adopt the treaty. Only seven countries voted against it (including China, Israel, Iraq, and the United States) and 21 abstained. 139 states signed the treaty by the 31 December 2000 deadline. 66 countries — 6 more than the threshold needed to establish the court — ratified the treaty on 11 April 2002. This meant that the International Criminal Court became a reality of international law on July 1, 2002.

This major reference work is an attempt to address fundamental current issues in international criminal law in the light of these developments. One of the main strengths of this Commentary is, in fact, the strength and diversity of its contributors. Some of the most eminent academics and practitioners in the area of international law rank among these. While clearly all of the contributors would be too numerous to mention, nevertheless, by way of a general flavour of their calibre; Antonio Cassese, is a former President of the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture, former judge and President of the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former

Yugoslavia and is currently Professor of International Law at Florence University. Another contributor, for example, is James Crawford, Professor of International Law, former member of the International Law Commission, and U.N. Special Rapporteur on State Responsibility. In terms of practitioners, many other contributors have worked as legal advisers or counsel in the ad hoc War Crimes Tribunals for Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia.

All of these individuals bring their knowledge and experience to produce what are often surprisingly concise explanations of the law and also clearly structured arguments in areas where it is seen as being deficient, unnecessarily opaque or where it may not achieve its purpose. This is supplemented by a detailed set of reference materials.

The title of this Commentary is something of a misnomer - It would be wrong, to think that this work only deals with the Rome Statute itself - it doesn't. It is in fact an attempt to revisit the whole of international criminal law in the light

of the Rome Statute. It doesn't attempt to offer a blow-by-blow account of the various sections of the treaty (thankfully!...); instead it adopts the more readable style of a thematic commentary. This enables casual readers to select the areas they are most interested in for perusal, rather than becoming entangled in the undergrowth of the more technical areas. As well as this care is taken to place events and laws in context, whether its historical, political or legal context. This means that a much

fuller picture emerges of the trends, processes and dynamics at play in international criminal law. It also recognises that this area of fast developing law cannot be grasped adequately without acknowledging the intensely political arena in which the struggle for its continued development takes place.

Clearly, this very comprehensive commentary is not going to be a light addition to bedtime reading. It is a detailed and profound examination of what is currently one of the most important and fastest growing areas of international law. It is perhaps not an over-statement to say that the ICC, has the potential to herald a new beginning in the way the international community responds to violations of human rights on such a vast scale that they amount to crimes against all of humanity. This makes the subject matter of this commentary not only compelling, but also immensely interesting and timely. So while these books may not be light bedtime reading, they're certainly not a cure for insomnia either.

Conor McCarthy

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: A Commentary (Edited by Antonio Cassese, Paola Gaeta and John R.W.D. Jones)
Oxford University Press
ISBN 0 19 829862 - 5.

*The Rome Statute
of the International
Criminal Court:
A Commentary*

The Westminster Joint Committee on Human Rights recently held an inquiry into the functioning of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The first hearing was held in Belfast at Castle Buildings, while the second hearing took place in London when evidence was taken from Des Browne the relevant Minister in the Northern Ireland Office.

The Joint Committee is uniquely made up of members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords and includes Kevin McNamara MP, Lord Lester QC, and Vera Baird MP. It is chaired by Jean Corston, MP.

The first session of evidence which was held in Belfast took place on the 28th November. The Human Rights Commission was represented at the hearing by Chief Commissioner Brice Dickson, Commissioners Tom Hadden and Patrick Yu, and Chief Executive Paddy Sloan. The Commission representatives outlined to the Joint Committee much of the work that the Human Rights Commission has done since its inception. The Chief Commissioner pointed to some of the work they are intending to undertake in the future and spent some time discussing the consultation process they had engaged on around the Bill of Rights document.

In addition, the Commission highlighted the many problems it faces in trying to establish credibility as an organisation which can impact positively on the human rights situation in Northern Ireland. The Joint Committee was told of the paltry amount of core funding which the Commission receives and also received details of the way in which applications for additional funding are dealt with by the NIO.

The extent of NIO involvement gives observers grave cause for concern, in that the process for supplementary bids risks undermining the independence of the Commission.

Under the Spotlight

The NIO will only grant supplementary monies if they are satisfied as to the necessity of the work that the supplementary bid is designed to fund.

A key principle at the international level for the effective functioning of national human rights institutions is their ability to act independently of government. Financial accountability and probity are clearly essential but the dividing line between these principles and day-to-day interference in the inner workings of the Commission must clearly be jealously safeguarded.

In addition the representatives of the Commission outlined the areas where they felt that their powers could be improved, most particularly in the area of investigatory powers.

Overall, however, while accepting that their work was clearly constrained by the limits placed on their funding and powers, the Commission felt that they were discharging their functions effectively. On the Bill of Rights specifically they indicated a willingness to engage with everyone who had views on the content of the Bill, but felt that the Commission should continue to play the lead role in the debate, given their statutory duty to provide advice to the Secretary of State on the topic.

The Commission's evidence was followed by formal evidence from Inez McCormack and Christine Bell, two Commissioners who have recently resigned their positions on the Commission (a third Commissioner, Angela Hegarty, had resigned some time previously). The two ex-Commissioners outlined their concerns about the Commission and the background to their resignations.

Christine Bell criticised the apparent lack of strategic direction in much of the Commission's work, citing the absence of a co-ordinated strategy

across all the Commission's work - casework, research, investigations, education etc. Internal management problems were also alluded to, as was poor morale both at staff and Commissioner levels.

In relation to the Bill of Rights, Inez McCormack argued strongly that the Bill of Rights had the potential to create some important cross-cutting alliances which could be crucial to the development of a proper human rights culture in Northern Ireland. She said the process should not be a narrow one controlled by the Commission but should encompass representatives of the political parties and civil society.

The hearing at which the NIO gave evidence in London was interesting in that it featured an NIO Minister (Des Browne) asserting the important role which the Commission should play in terms of protecting human rights in Northern Ireland. CAJ has in the past been critical of the relatively indifferent attitude of a number of Ministers to the Commission, particularly when it was under attack for spurious reasons. While there were several aspects of Des Browne's evidence which are not borne out by the facts (for instance his assertion that the Commission were effectively consulted on all relevant legislation), it was a relatively new experience to read a ministerial statement which exhibited a positive attitude to the existence and work of the Commission.

It is unclear what follow up is likely from these hearings, but it will be fascinating to read the conclusions of the Joint Committee and the detailed written evidence that they have been provided with by groups and individuals across Northern Ireland.

Civil Liberties Diary

Nov 1 The most senior soldier on the ground on Bloody Sunday admitted having suggesting that ringleaders among rioters should be shot. General Robert Ford admitted sending a memo outlining a plan to "shoot selected ringleaders" of rioters in the Bogside. However he denied suggestions that he intended that such individuals should be killed.

A new book about loyalist Billy Wright is said to strengthen the case for a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his killing inside the Maze prison. Since his death, there has been concern about apparent lapses in security, which enabled his killers to carry out the murder. Retired Canadian judge Peter Cory is currently investigating the case for a public inquiry.

Nov 2 A man was discovered nailed to a fence in an estate on the outskirts of Lisburn. The "punishment" attack is regarded as being one of the most vicious in recent years, and may leave the victim with serious long-term injuries.

Nov 7 The Police Ombudsman announced that it is investigating the allegation that police attempted to recruit a 13-year-old with special needs as an informer. In response to questions about the alleged incident Assistant Chief Constable, Alan McQuillan, said that recruitment of a juvenile would have to be approved by someone of his rank, and he had sanctioned no such action.

The Policing Board have received a report into the future of Special Branch, which was initiated after the Police Ombudsman's Omagh Bomb investigation. The Crompton report makes several recommendations concerning the extent to which intelligence gathered by Special Branch is shared with other sections of the police. It has been endorsed by the Policing Board and the Chief Constable.

Nov 8 A report into the workings of the Parades Commission has

recommended a radical overhaul of the organization. One of its main recommendations is a proposal to split the mediation and adjudication roles of the current Parades Commission. This would involve the creation of a new Parades Facilitation Agency, which would seek to involve residents and marchers in negotiations.

An unofficial inquiry has been established to investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths of six unarmed men, at least four of whom were shot dead by security forces in North Belfast in 1973. The families of the dead say that there has never been an effective investigation into the killings and called on the security forces to cooperate fully with the community inquiry.

Nov 13 The government has published details of amendments to policing legislation, based on agreements made during the Weston Park talks in 2001. The proposed reforms include a reduction in the number of board members needed to instigate an inquiry and changes to the powers of the Police Ombudsman. It is expected that the legislation will be tabled at Westminster in December.

Nov 16 The government has been criticized for failing to take sufficient action to properly implement the findings of the European Court of Human Rights in a series of cases which dealt with the use of lethal force in Northern Ireland. The criticism came in an appeal to a decision by the High Court which ruled that the failure of the Secretary of State not to hold an inquiry into the death Gervaise McKerr, was not in breach of the European Convention, despite the European Court's earlier decisions.

Nov 19 The Chinese Welfare Association condemned an horrific knife attack on a Chinese man in South Belfast. The police said that they are treating the incident as a racially motivated robbery. The Association said that the number of

racially motivated attacks against the Chinese population has been increasing.

Nov 21 More than three quarters of those who seek help from Citizens Advice Bureaux have little knowledge even of basic employment rights, according to a report published by that organization. The report expresses the concern that this lack of knowledge could result in some employees- particularly groups such as temporary or part-time employees- being exploited.

Nov 22 Figures released by the Equality Commission indicate that progress on closing the long-standing differential in the rate of employment representation as between Catholics and Protestants has slowed. However, the Commission suggested that the recent closures in traditional industries had disproportionately affected Catholics, and that long-term trends indicated more positive progress towards closing the employment differential.

Nov 30 The police officer who was leading the investigation into the murder of Rosemary Nelson has resigned from his post citing "personal reasons". (see cover story)

Compiled by Conor McCarthy from various newspaper sources.



Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

Just News is published by the Committee on the Administration of Justice Ltd.

Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, **Fionnuala Ni Aolain**, CAJ Ltd.

45/47 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2BR
Phone (028) 9096 1122

Fax: (028) 9024 6706

The views expressed in Just News are not necessarily those of CAJ.