

**NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**Minutes of the 39<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting**

**Held on Monday 4 March 2002**

**At 2.00 pm in the NIHRC Offices, Temple Court,  
39 North Street, Belfast**

**Present:** Brice Dickson, Chief Commissioner  
Christine Bell  
Tom Donnelly  
Christine Eames  
Tom Hadden  
Paddy Kelly  
Frank McGuinness  
Kevin McLaughlin  
Patrick Yu

**In Attendance:** Paddy Sloan, Chief Executive

**Apologies:** Margaret-Ann Dinsmore  
Harold Good  
Inez McCormack  
Chris McGimpsey

**1.0 Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of 11 February 2002 were amended at point 3.7 to read, "Correspondence with this organisation was tabled. Staff concerns have been referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and an anti-harassment and staff safety policy will be drafted for agreement by the full Commission.
- 1.2 The minutes were then agreed as an accurate record.

**2.0 Matters Arising**

- 2.1 There were no matters arising that would not be addressed through the agenda.

**3.0 Chief Commissioner's Report**

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner's written report was noted by Commissioners as were the additional points reported orally. After discussion of the Commission's policy concerning the translation of documents, two Commissioners agreed to try to prepare a new policy for consideration at a future meeting of the Commission.
- 3.2 Peter Hosking's Evaluation is eagerly awaited by Commissioners. If a final draft has not arrived at the Commission by the end of this week (8 March 2002) the early draft which has been sent to the Chief Executive and Chief Commissioner is to be circulated to all Commissioners.

**4.0 Chief Executive's Report**

- 4.1 The Chief Executive's report was noted by Commissioners. There was some discussion regarding the Business Plans that had been submitted for 2002-2003 and 2003-2006.
- 4.2 A formal response from the NIO outlining their particular concerns with the 2002-2003 Business Plan was received on 27 February. A response will be prepared.

**5.0 Committee Reports**

*At this point development staff joined the Commission meeting.*

5.1 Bill of Rights Report – Children and Young People

The report was noted and the children and young persons worker was congratulated on the level of recent activity with children and young people.

5.2 Casework Committee Report

There was some discussion on the Casework report, which was then noted and accepted. The Chief Commissioner reported that the Government had now indicated that it did wish to apply to intervene on our behalf in the case pending before the House of Lords concerning our powers.

In relation to the case concerning policing at Holy Cross school, it was agreed that the costs involved would be monitored on a monthly basis.

5.3 Committee for Victims

The report was noted and accepted. The report on the Victims' Rights Project is anticipated within the next month and was to be circulated to all

Commissioners on completion. Information on restorative justice had been received from Shankill Alternatives and was being examined.

5.4 Education Report

The report was considered and noted.

5.5 Information Worker's Report

The report was accepted and noted. It was acknowledged that the third edition of *Human Wrongs, Human Rights* may not now be published before the end of March.

5.6 Legislation and Policy Committee

After some discussion the report was accepted and noted.

*At this point staff left the meeting.*

It was agreed that, given the pressure of time, two particular items would be brought up the agenda at this point.

**6.0 Report on Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson**

6.1 A report had been circulated by Frank McGuinness on the current issues relating to the Commission's position on the Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson murders.

6.2 In addition a copy of the speech made by Rosemary Nelson's sister, Caitlin McVeigh, at the Frontline conference in Dublin on 17 January 2002 was tabled.

6.3 Frank spoke to his paper which was the culmination of work carried out in consultation with Paddy Kelly and Christine Bell. It summarised the Commission's considerations of these two murders over the last three years.

6.4 Commissioners spent some time discussing the information provided by Frank's report.

6.5 The decision facing the Commission is whether or not to call for a public independent judicial inquiry into Rosemary Nelson's murder.

6.6 After considerable discussion it was agreed that the Commission would not reach a conclusion on this issue until it had once more met with Colin Port, who is conducting the investigation into Rosemary Nelson's murder. This meeting will take place on 21 March 2002. Commissioners will revert to this issue at the April Commission meeting.

**7.0 Bill of Rights Update**

A copy of the letter to be circulated to political parties was tabled. Commissioners were invited to submit their comments on it so that an amended version could be posted to political parties on 5 March 2002. One Commissioner tabled copies of part of the Constitution of Finland which he felt would be of interest to the Commission.

**8.0** At this point various Commissioners had to leave the meeting for other commitments and the Commission was no longer quorate. It was therefore agreed that the remaining items on the agenda would be considered at the April Commission meeting.

**9.0** The meeting closed at 5.30 pm.