

**BRITAIN & IRELAND
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE**

**BM BOX RAPPORTEUR
LONDON WC1N 3XX**



BRITAIN & IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

TWENTY FIVE years ago in Northern Ireland, ordinary people of all religions marched for self-respect, civil rights and justice against a sectarian state. Today, religious discrimination, legal injustice and official brutality serve as a stark reminder that promised reforms have not come.

Instead of justice, military occupation brought 'emergency' legislation and 'special' powers. Special powers permitted internment and internal exile, supergrass show trials and no-jury courts. The rule of law has come to mean a regular diet of dawn raids and daily harassment.

'Security' - as in 'security' forces and 'security' policy is a by-word for arbitrary killings, extra-judicial assassinations and summary executions. Proportionately, Northern Ireland has the largest police force and the highest prison population of Europe. Detainees have suffered torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Political violence in Northern Ireland, which has resulted in more than 3,000 deaths over the past 25 years, is inextricably linked to Britain's historic role in Ireland and its failure to complete the process of decolonisation.

Since successive governments sought to contain, rather than resolve, the conflict, the erosion of rights has spread through the fabric of society in both Britain and Ireland. Miscarriages of justice in conflict-related cases have brought both criminal justice systems into disrepute. The Irish, who constitute the largest ethnic minority in Britain, have been turned into a 'suspect community'.

In both the Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom, broadcasting restrictions curtail free expression and deny freedom of information to the population as a whole. Surveillance and intelligence gathering affect the rights of privacy of large sections of the population. Rights of democratic participation are violated through distortion of electoral rules and political vetting.

A HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

The Britain & Ireland Human Rights Centre is a London-based Non Governmental Organisation with wholly charitable aims, concerned to advance human rights protection in the context of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

The mandate of the Centre is to seek enforcement of international standards in the context of conflict and to situate the Northern Ireland issue within the international human rights agenda.

On the international field, the Centre is pressing for effective use of the human rights mechanisms established by the United Nations, Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Council of Europe and other bodies.

Domestically, the Centre works to inform and educate. It utilises the political and legal process to advance rights protection. It produces occasional "in depth" briefings on specific issues and organises training events, conferences and seminars. It is a facilitator of coalitions.

RAPPORTEUR

The *Rapporteur* is a quarterly international bulletin which provides commentary on human rights developments of relevance to Northern Ireland, reports from the United Nations and other international agencies, news of the Centre's activities and reviews recent publications.

In addition to servicing human rights lobbyists, the *Rapporteur* is an invaluable resource for media organisations, law firms, university departments, trade unions and political parties.

BY RIGHTS PRESS

In 1994, the Centre plans to launch a publishing imprint with the working title of *By Rights Press*. Under this imprint, it will commission and publish research which informs public opinion and advances the protection of human rights in the context of the conflict.

By Rights Studies will be a series of human rights monographs. Each solution-orientated study, written by an established expert, will examine a specific area or aspect of human rights protection. Studies will be politically independent, based on academic or primary research providing indispensable background and reference material.

FRIENDS OF THE CENTRE

Individuals and organisations that support human rights can identify with and support this work by becoming Friends of the Centre. In addition to providing much-needed financial support, Friends of the Centre become part of an international network. They are kept in touch with developments, are invited to special events, receive publications and regular progress reports on the Centre and its activities.

BRITAIN & IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

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BM Box "RAPPORTEUR"
LONDON WC1N 3XX

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ACTIVITIES

- ⊙ Systematic collection of information through monitoring press and media, conducting interviews, observing trials, participating in conferences and seminars.
- ⊙ Research to analyse data and trends. Drawing from international experience and identifying appropriate responses at a domestic and international level.
- ⊙ Commissioning authoritative reports and discussion papers, submissions and presentations. Publishing an international newsletter, occasional briefings and preparing to launch a series of human rights monographs.
- ⊙ Networking to develop a collective approach with other organisations in the field and specialist agencies, exchanging information on developments and seeking practical collaboration for human rights protection.
- ⊙ Training programmes organised for specialists to enable professionals and other groups to develop a better understanding of the human rights dimension to their work and identify the means by which they may contribute to the protection of human rights.
- ⊙ Providing assistance to individuals and groups who feel their rights or the rights of others are under threat - by helping identify human rights issues, by liaison with appropriate specialist agencies and by providing information about international protection.

FRIENDS OF THE CENTRE

If you agree with the aims of the Centre, why not join its supporters' network? By becoming a 'Friend', you can contribute financially and keep up to date with Centre's progress. Annual rates are as follows:

Individuals	£20.00
Reduced rate	£10.00
Overseas rate	£25.00
Corporate rate	£50.00
Affiliation	£25.00
Life supporter	£500.00

Please fill in and return the attached form. For further information phone Martin Collins ☎ (+44)(0)71 249 3626