



Autumn/Winter 2011

Rights News



ABOUT THE ICCL

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) is Ireland’s leading independent human rights watchdog, which monitors, educates and campaigns in order to secure full enjoyment of human rights for everyone. Founded in 1976 by Mary Robinson and others, the ICCL has played a leading role in some of the most successful human rights campaigns in Ireland. These have included establishing an independent Garda Ombudsman Commission, legalising the right to divorce, securing more effective protection of children’s rights, decriminalising homosexuality and the introduction of enhanced equality legislation. We believe in a society which protects and promotes human rights, justice and equality.

What we do

- We advocate for positive changes in the area of human rights.
- We monitor government policy and legislation to make sure that it complies with international standards.
- We conduct original research and publish reports on issues as diverse as equal rights for all families, the right to privacy, policy reform and judicial accountability.
- We run campaigns to raise public and political awareness of human rights, justice and equality issues.
- We work closely with other key stakeholders in the human rights, justice and equality sectors.

How you can help

You can help us to continue our work to monitor, train, conduct research, campaign and lobby for changes in legislation to ensure our rights are protected and promoted.

Please visit our website: www.iccl.ie or phone us on 01 799 4504 to make a donation.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead

It has been a most eventful autumn for the Irish Council for Civil Liberties.

Members and supporters will be aware of our successful campaign against the 30th amendment to the Constitution, which is featured on the cover and inside pages of this edition of Rights News. Our campaign launched only a week before the referendum vote and some commentators legitimately queried whether this would be too late to affect the outcome. In fact, the window of time in which the ICCL could have intervened was very short. Parliamentarians rushed the amendment proposals to give themselves more powers through the Oireachtas in a week. Draft legislation was only published in October and prior to the ICCL’s intervention there had been little real debate or public consultation on the 30th amendment. The ICCL intervened precisely at the moment that most people were beginning, for the first time, to think about how they might vote.

Polling figures indicate that public opinion began to shift very rapidly after the launch of the NO campaign, with the first post launch poll showing a 14% fall in support for the amendment. Campaign momentum was boosted by the publication of a letter from eight former Attorneys General setting out their opposition to the Government’s proposals, and by the dismissive reaction of Ministers to their valid objections. However it is clear that the sustained and extensive ICCL campaign, which included blanket coverage in all print and broadcast media, mobile billboard advertising and posters, played a major part in securing a swing to the NO camp of more than 30% in less than a week. On polling day, over 900,000 people voted against the amendment and the majority for the NO campaign was more than 100,000 votes.

What can we learn from this?

First, that – as Margaret Mead memorably put it – we should never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Secondly, politicians underestimate the discernment of the Irish electorate at their peril and civil society organisations such as the Irish Council for Civil Liberties Association have a valid role to play in providing information when our political institutions fail in their democratic duties. Thirdly, the need for a genuinely independent human rights watchdog such as the ICCL is just as great as it was 35 years ago, when the organisation was founded by Mary Robinson and others.

Of course, the success of the campaign came at a price. Not a cent of income received from trusts and foundations for charitable purposes was expended on the referendum. It was entirely funded by subscriptions and donations received from members and supporters of the Association. Now we need to rebuild our campaign funds, in order to be sure that, if necessary, we can intervene decisively in future referenda with a rights dimension. So if you appreciated our 30th amendment campaign, please help us by donating to our work.

October also saw Ireland appear before the United Nations Human Rights Council for its first-ever Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Regular readers will know that the ICCL has been leading the Your Rights Right Now Civil Society UPR Coalition and you will also find full details of our recent UPR work in these pages. The impact of the Your Rights Right Now work is clear from the fact that 33 of the coalition’s 36 suggested reform proposals resulted in recommendations to Ireland from other United Nations member states, 90% of which the Government has agreed to act upon or seriously consider. The most important part of the UPR process is the full implementation in Ireland of the commitments given to the United Nations by the Government. The ICCL will continue closely to monitor and report on Ireland’s human rights progress between now and March next year, when Government representatives next appear before the Human Rights Council.

I hope that we will be able to count on your continued enthusiasm and support for our work as Ireland’s truly independent human rights watchdog.

Mark Kelly

ICCL LEADS ‘No to the 30th Amendment’ CAMPAIGN



‘Vote No’ kangaroos canvassing on Grafton Street on 26 October 2011

In October 2011 the ICCL led the campaign for a No vote on the 30th Amendment to the Constitution. The results of the poll confirmed that the amendment had been defeated by a margin of 53.3% against to 46.7% for – demonstrating a swing from ‘Yes’ to ‘No’ of over 30% since the launch of the ICCL’s campaign.

The Amendment’s stated intention was, on the face of it, a desirable one – the enhancement of the Oireachtas’ abilities to hold inquiries in the public interest. However, the wording of the amendment failed to strike the right balance between the public interest and the rights of persons appearing before Oireachtas Committees. In addition to providing for Oireachtas inquiries which could make findings as to the conduct of individual persons, the wording further provided that the extent to which “fair procedures” should apply when striking an “appropriate balance between the rights of persons and the public interest” would be a matter solely for the Houses of the Oireachtas to determine. Judge McMahon, the Independent Chair of the Referendum Commission made clear that “it is not possible to state definitively what role, if any, the courts would have in reviewing the procedures adopted by the Houses”.

A Rushed Proposal

The Government published draft legislation related to the amendment on 6 October, while it was only on 11 October that the Referendum Commission launched its public information campaign. Right up to polling day, there were widespread reports that members of the public had yet to receive their referendum information booklets.

The ‘No’ campaign launched with a press conference in Dublin, featuring speakers including Catherine Murphy TD (Ind), Senator Rónán Mullen (Ind), Mary O’Rourke (Former Fianna Fail TD, Senator and Minister), Professor Gerry Whyte (Associate Professor of Law in Trinity College Dublin), Donncha O’Connell (NUI Galway School of Law) and Oisín Quinn (Senior Counsel and Labour Party Councillor).

The launch of the ‘No’ campaign garnered a good deal of media attention, and a Sunday Times poll the following Sunday, 23 October, indicated a 14% fall in support for the amendment, and a clear increase in the momentum behind a No vote. This was boosted by the publication in the national press on Monday 24 October of a letter from eight former Attorneys General opposing the amendment.

The letter from the Attorneys General coincided with the launch on 24 October of the ‘No’ campaign’s poster and billboard campaign, marked by a photocall outside Dáil Éireann involving lifesize kangaroos, which garnered wide coverage in television and in the press. A public meeting the following day saw former Senator and Northern Ireland Ombudsman Maurice Hayes and ‘Abbeylara’ solicitor Peter Mullan add their voices to the ‘No’ campaign. The impact of the ‘No’ campaign was at this point clearly being felt in the ‘Yes’ camp with the Government hastily deploying ‘yes’ posters to counteract the ‘No’ camp’s strategic ‘Kangaroo Courts’ poster campaign.

A ‘Yes’ photocall and press conference by the Taoiseach and Tánaiste, held on 25 October to coincide with the ‘No’ campaign’s public meeting with Maurice Hayes, saw the Taoiseach attempt to dismiss the ICCL’s concerns as ‘nonsense’. This dismissive treatment of genuine public concerns for civil liberties, along with ad hominem attacks by Ministers Shatter and Howlin on opponents, undoubtedly contributed to public scepticism surrounding the 30th Amendment.

The referendum result confirmed that a clear majority of the people were not convinced that the Government’s proposals struck the right balance between the public interest and the rights of persons called before Oireachtas Committees. It also was a firm warning to the Government that its decisive majority in parliament does not entitle it to bounce the public into an ill-thought-out and potentially dangerous reworking of hard-won constitutional protections.

The ICCL looks forward to participating fully in consultations on the shape of the Constitutional Convention, and hopes that this forum will include consideration of an amendment that will strengthen the powers of Oireachtas Committees, while protecting the human rights of those who appear before them.

Article 15.10 of the Constitution states:
“Each House shall make its own rules and standing orders, with power to attach penalties for their infringement, and shall have power to ensure freedom of debate, to protect its official documents and the private papers of its members, and to protect itself and its members against any person or persons interfering with, molesting or attempting to corrupt its members in the exercise of their duties.”
The 30th Amendment proposed to renumber this as 15.10.1° and to insert the following subsections:
• 2° Each House shall have the power to conduct an inquiry, or an inquiry with the other House, in a manner provided for by law, into any matter stated by the House or Houses concerned to be of general public importance.
• 3° In the course of any such inquiry the conduct of any person (whether or not a member of either House) may be investigated and the House or Houses concerned may make findings in respect of the conduct of that person concerning the matter to which the inquiry relates.
• 4° It shall be for the House or Houses concerned to determine, with due regard to the principles of fair procedures, the appropriate balance between the rights of persons and the public interest for the purposes of ensuring an effective inquiry into any matter to which subsection 2° applies.

%
Thank you!

We couldn't have done it without you and other members and supporters like you, who helped to spread the word online by email, Facebook and Twitter, as well as traditional campaigning methods including telephoning friends and family and leafleting neighbourhoods.

Crucially, this campaign was funded entirely through membership subscription fees and additional donations to the ICCL Association.

We spent wisely, balancing the goals of educating people about the problems with the Amendment and also targeting the areas where we knew we had to make the most ground.

While this was a win for human rights in Ireland, we know that other challenges will arise. It is vital that we continue to have the resources required to meet these challenges. And we can't do it without your help.

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70

60

50

40

30

20

10

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4 Oct
Irish Times Ipsos MRBI

18 Oct
Sunday Times B&A

L-R: Mark Kelly (ICCL), Donncha O'Connell, Oisín Quinn SC, Mary O'Rourke, Prof Gerry Whyte, Catherine Murphy TD, Sen Rónán Mullen



L-R Maurice Hayes, Deirdre Duffy (ICCL), Mark Kelly (ICCL), Solicitor Peter Mullan



Maurice Hayes addressing the ICCL's 'Vote No' public meeting in Dublin's National Library on 25 October 2011



53.3%

46.7%

27 Oct
Electorate

Please join the ICCL as a member or send a cheque or postal order today.

Or you can make a donation directly to the ICCL Association. If you choose to donate in this way, please let us know so that we can thank you.

Irish Council for Civil Liberties Association Bank Details:

Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2
Account Number: 93272880
Sort Code: 90-00-17

Thank you! And thank you for your continued support of the ICCL. We are so grateful.



Mary O'Rourke at the launch of the ICCL's 'No to the 30th Amendment' campaign, 21 October 2011



Kangaroos unveil our nationwide poster and billboard campaign outside Leinster House on 24th October 2011



Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore encounters 'Vote No' campaigner Aoife Ward out on the canvass in Dublin on 25 October 2011.



The ICCL's Stephen O'Hare meets Presidential candidate Gay Mitchell on the canvass in Grafton Street, 26 October 2011



Senator Ivana Bacik encounters our 'Vote No' kangaroos outside Leinster House



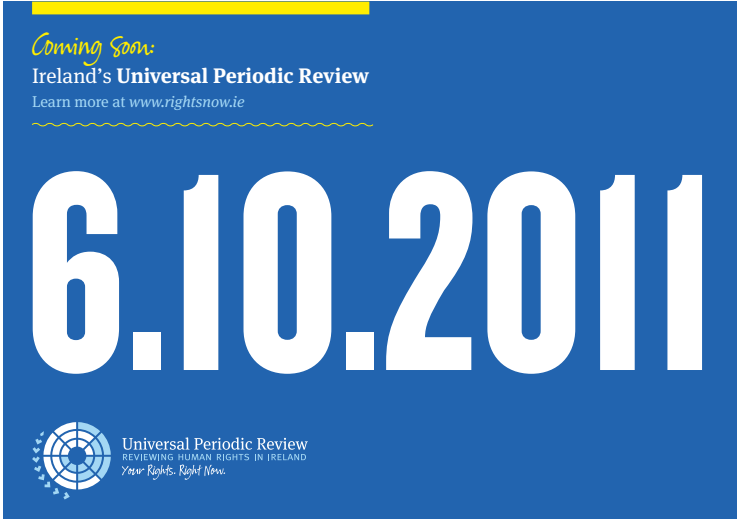
Amendment opponent Eamonn Ryan of the Green Party speaks to the press outside Leinster house



The ICCL's Stephen O'Hare with the 'Vote No' kangaroos canvassing at Dublin's Stephen's Green Shopping Centre

NO YES

Launch of ICCL NO Campaign



The Buildup to Ireland’s UPR – the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ publicity campaign

In the late summer of 2011 ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ launched a publicity and public awareness campaign counting down to Ireland’s UPR on 6 October. The campaign plan had a number of elements, including:

- A 20 metre high ‘save the date’ banner on Liberty Hall
- Nationwide advertising through poster and postcard distribution in all major cities informing the public that Ireland’s UPR was ‘Coming Soon’, along with the key date of 6.10.11, and details of where the hearing would be webcast live online
- Active use of multimedia on the campaign website rightsnow.ie, including a ‘Countdown to Ireland’s UPR’ clock, photographs and videos
- Social media

The official launch of the campaign was the unveiling of the Liberty Hall Banner on 22 September 2011 at a photocall in which coalition members and health rights campaigner Orla Tinsley took part. Online, a time-lapse video of the banner being installed on Liberty Hall was publicised.



Health rights campaigner Orla Tinsley joins representatives from the ICCL, FLAC, the Irish Family Planning Association, the Children's Rights Alliance, the Integration Centre, Educate Together, SIPTU, Amnesty International and the Irish Traveller Movement at the launch on 22 September 2011 of the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ public awareness campaign at Dublin’s Liberty Hall.

Rights-holders – Key members of our Geneva UPR Delegation

Central to the ‘Your Rights Right Now’ campaign around the Universal Periodic Review was securing the active involvement of rights-holders in the process, including at the hearing in Geneva on 6 October 2011. Amongst the rights holders who joined our delegation were the Fox family, Lauren Donovan, a Youthreach student and the organisation Older and Bolder.



The Fox Family

The ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ campaign held a public information session in the Community and Social Enterprise Centre in Cork City on 15 February 2011, as part of its nationwide consultations in spring of 2011.

Fiona and Paul Fox, who live in Mallow, only learned about the February information session at the last minute via Facebook, but when they saw it was a chance to air their human rights issues, they jumped at the chance to attend and say their piece. At the meeting, the attendees and the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ campaign heard the story of their family’s struggle to deal with a court decision to make their 21 year old son a ward of court following a personal damages case. This decision meant that responsibility for their son’s finances and personal life are now with the court – his loving family was completely sidelined by the decision. The Ward of Court system is based on the 1871 Lunacy Act, which though long since repealed in the UK, remains in force in Ireland. Reform of this law is long overdue, and the Fox family came to the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ event to raise awareness of the issue.

The ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ campaign invited the Fox family to join the campaign delegation to Ireland’s UPR in Geneva on 6 October 2011. The trip was very important to the Fox family – an opportunity to get involved this international process and to witness the Government answer a range of questions from the international community on its human rights record, including on the question of mental capacity.

At a reception at the Irish Ambassador’s residence in Geneva, they were able to raise their concerns directly with Minister Alan Shatter, who is responsible for reforming the law in this area.



The ‘Your Rights. Right Now’/ Youthreach Human Rights Competition prizegiving, Ombudsman for Children’s Office, 27 September 2011. Back Row: Dr Dermot Stokes Youthreach National Co-Ordinator with colleagues Paula Daly, Fiona Farragher and Neville Thompson. Front Row: Thomas Larkin and Lauren Donovan from Sherrard St Youthreach with Clare King from Kiltimagh Youthreach.

Lauren Donovan – winner of the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ / Youthreach Human Rights Competition

During the summer of 2011, the ‘Your Rights Right Now’ campaign and Youthreach came together to call on Youthreach students to express themselves about the important human rights issues affecting their lives. Entries were invited in any medium: film, poetry, prose, photography or graphic. The response was enthusiastic and varied, testament to the creativity and imagination of the young people in the Youthreach programme.

At a prizegiving ceremony held on 27 September 2011 in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, the competition panel awarded first prize to Lauren Donovan from Sherrard Street Youthreach Centre in Dublin for her video montage about domestic violence. As first prize winner, Lauren accompanied the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ delegation to Geneva to learn first-hand about the workings of the international human rights system. She also was awarded a work experience placement with an Irish NGO. Her first place prize was kindly sponsored by Gallagher-Shatter Solicitors.

Second prize went to Clare King from Kiltimagh Youthreach Centre in Co Mayo for her compilation of diary entries. Written in the voice of her sister, the diary followed her family’s struggle to cope with her infant daughter’s illness. Third prize went to Thomas Larkin, also from the Sherrard Street Youthreach Centre in Dublin, who conducted an ambitious and detailed survey of discrimination in his community.

YOUTHREACH works with unemployed young early school leavers aged 15-20. It offers participants the opportunity to identify and pursue viable options within adult life, and provides them with opportunities to acquire certification and employment opportunities.

OLDER & BOLDER is an alliance of non-governmental organisations that champions the rights of all older people, and seeks to combat ageism. Its current member organisations are: Active Retirement Ireland; Age & Opportunity; The Alzheimer Society of Ireland; The Carers Association; The Irish Hospice Foundation; The Irish Senior Citizens Parliament, The Older Women’s Network and The Senior Help Line

‘Your Rights. Right Now’ in Geneva

A diverse group of civil society representatives travelled to Geneva for Ireland’s UPR examination on 6 October 2011 as part of the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ delegation. It included members and representatives from the Older and Bolder organisation, the winner of our Youthreach human rights competition, Lauren Donovan, as well as incapacity law reform advocates from Cork: Fiona Thompson-Fox, Paul Fox and Gerard Thompson. They were joined by various members of the UPR Cross Sectoral Steering Group from ICCL, Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC), Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) and Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

The group had the opportunity to meet with international Geneva-based non-governmental organisations and find out more about the inner workings of the United Nations (UN). The ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ delegation attended a reception hosted by the Irish Ambassador to the UN, Gerard Corr, on the eve of the UPR examination. This event also provided an opportunity to meet face-to-face with Minister Alan Shatter, various senior government officials and international NGOs.

Of course the highlight of the trip was the opportunity to see first-hand the questions posed to the Irish delegation by members of the UN Human Rights Council and the responses of Minister Shatter. The ‘Your Rights. Right Now’ delegation was delighted to see so many of the recommendations contained in the Civil Society UPR Coalition report, on which we had carried out strategic lobbying, made to the Irish government. After the examination, delegation members also took the chance to meet with members of the diplomatic corps and to discuss further with them the Irish review, the questions posed and recommendations made.

The ‘Your Rights. Right Now’presence in Geneva was documented by our video-grapher, Aoibheann O’Sullivan, including contemporaneous views on the importance and relevance of witnessing the examination. Check out our website www.rightsnow.ie for this video footage, available in the coming weeks!



The Outcome Report

The UPR examination which took place on 6 October 2011 consists of the State presentation and interactive dialogue. This is conducted by the UPR Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council. Under the UPR process, a report of the 3-hour examination, known as the ‘Outcome Report’ must be adopted by the UPR Working Group with in 48 hours of the examination. A brief meeting of the UPR Working Group in relation to Ireland’s report took place on 10 October 2011. The Irish Ambassador to the UN, Gerard Corr, presented those recommendations accepted and rejected by Ireland in addition to the recommendations which the Irish government chose to take ‘under consideration’ until the final adoption of the UPR outcome report by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2012. The Outcome Report contains all the recommendations made at the UPR examination including those accepted and rejected (and those ‘under consideration’). In total, Ireland received 126 recommendations: 62 were accepted, 15 were rejected and the Irish delegation informed the UPR Working Group on 10 October that 49 were ‘under consideration’. Ireland will accept or reject the latter 49 recommendations at the hearing of the UN Human Rights Council in March 2012. Amongst the recommendations accepted are commitments to bring about significant improvements in the areas of



prison conditions, mental health, children’s rights, prevention of torture, gender equality and combating racism and discrimination (including against members of the Traveller Community). In the coming months, the ‘Your Rights. Right Now’coalition, will be strongly advocating for Ireland’s acceptance of the remaining 49 recommendations on issues such as the incorporation of UN international human rights treaties into Irish law; the protection of LGBT rights, the repeal of s.37 of the Employment Equality Act; the introduction of same-sex marriage; and, the recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority group.

Although the Outcome Report recommits Ireland to ‘expeditious implementation’ of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of A, B and C v Ireland (para 50), Your Rights Right Now was disappointed to see Ireland’s outright rejection of 6 specific recommendations made in relation to the legislative regulation of access to abortion services made by some of our EU peers such as the UK, Norway, Spain and Denmark. The ICCL has brought this to the attention of the Department of the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

A copy of the Outcome Report is available on www.rightsnow.ie.



Geneva’s Palais des Nations, on the day of Ireland’s UPR hearing, 6 October 2011



Attendees at the Liberty Hall screening (L-R): Liam Herrick, IPRT; Michael Farrell, FLAC; Evelyn Geraghty, IFPA; Patricia King, SIPTU; Tanya Ward, ICCL; David Joyce, ICTU; Ethel Buckley, SIPTU

The UPR Breakfast Screening



A full house at the UPR Breakfast Screening, Liberty Hall, 6 October 2011

In addition to providing a live stream of Ireland's UPR hearing on the 'Your Rights. Right Now' website, a live breakfast webcast of proceedings was held for the public and civil society groups in Dublin's Liberty Hall. Parallel screenings were held in NUI Galway, Limerick and Cork.

The Liberty Hall screening was full to capacity for the duration of the three hour hearing, with participants from across civil society following proceedings and documenting developments on Twitter. Media coverage on the day was also extensive. Joe Little reported from Liberty Hall event for RTE Six-One news, while the campaign fielded live several interviews from both Dublin and Geneva for all the major radio news programmes.

Ireland's UPR – What's Next?

'Your Rights. Right Now' will continue its work into 2012 by publicising the UPR recommendations as widely as possible, returning to the communities where we conducted consultation events in early 2012 and through collaborative working with government to ensure progressive and substantive implementation.

As part of this awareness-raising, on 22 October 2011, the UPR project manager, Deirdre Duffy, made a presentation on behalf of 'Your Rights. Right Now' to the 9th Annual Human Rights Conference of the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Law Society of Ireland entitled, Ireland's Human Rights Record under the Spotlight: Implications of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review. From 4-5 November 2011, Deirdre travelled to Moldova at the invitation and the expense of the United National Development Programme (UNDP) to participate in a regional conference hosted by UNDP, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of the Republic of Moldova entitled, Responding to the UPR Recommendations: Challenges, Innovation and Leadership.



Colm O'Gorman, Executive Director of Amnesty International Ireland and ICCL Director Mark Kelly with Kyung-wha Kang, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

ICCL and Amnesty hold Seminar on the 'Dublin Process'

On Wednesday 9 November 2011 the ICCL and Amnesty International Ireland organised a joint seminar on the eve of an international meeting of UN treaty body members and high-level UN delegates, including the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights. The event, which was chaired by ICCL Director Mark Kelly, took place in Dublin's Radisson Hotel and was attended by over 60 guests.

The treaty body members were in Dublin to discuss formal proposals on how to strengthen treaty monitoring (the 'Dublin II' meeting). Funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the meeting was organised by the Nottingham Centre for Human Rights. This is the conclusion of two years of meetings and reviews by key stakeholders in the treaty monitoring area. More information this process is accessible at http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/HRTD/hrtid_process.htm

The purpose of the Amnesty/ICCL event was to inform Irish civil society groups about the 'Dublin Process' and to provide space for an exchange of views with UN treaty body members. The event identified some of the major challenges for treaty monitoring, including poor resourcing, variations in capacity and practice, as well as government attitudes to the treaty monitoring bodies. Opened by Kyung-wha Kang, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, other speakers included: Professor Ron McCallum, Chair of the Committee on People with Disabilities; Michael O'Flaherty, UN Human Rights Committee and Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; Colin Wrafter, Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Human Rights Unit; Rachael Blake, UN Quaker Office and Rosslyn Noonan, Chair of the International Co-ordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Human Rights Treaty Monitoring

There are currently nine core UN human rights treaties which have been agreed at the international level since 1948 that are important for human rights monitoring in Ireland. These cover: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; racism; women's rights; torture; children's rights; migrant rights; disability rights; and protection against enforced disappearance. Compliance by states with these treaties is monitored by Treaty Monitoring Bodies (TMBs) made up of independent experts. TMBs also issue recommendations benchmarking the state of human rights in each signatory country.



PRE-ORDER YOUR 2012 ICCL POCKET DIARIES

ICCL-branded 2012 pocket diaries will soon be available to purchase from the ICCL. Priced at €4.99, the sale of these diaries will go towards the ICCL's important work protecting and promoting human rights in Ireland.

To order a diary, please contact the ICCL at info@iccl.ie or on (01) 7994504.

ICCL lends its support to the NLGF's GALA award for International LGBT Activist

This year the ICCL once again lent its support to the NLGF's GALA award for International LGBT Activist, joining Amnesty International, the NLGF and Front Line on the nomination committee. The category recognizes a person or organisation working outside Ireland for the betterment of LGBT rights.



Paisarn Likhitpreechakul

The GALAS were set up in 2009 by the National Gay and Lesbian Federation (NLGF) to honour lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people and organisations for their contributions to Irish society, both north and south of the border. The awards are also to honour politicians, employers and other people who are committed to advancing equality and social acceptance for LGBT people in Ireland.

www.galas.ie



Justice Michael Kirby

The ICCL nominated Justice Michael Kirby of the Australian High Court, who has been a committed voice in advancing equality, legal and social acceptance for LGBT people in Australia, and on the international stage, including in Ireland. Amnesty International's nominee was Kasha Nabagesera, founder and Executive Director of the Ugandan LGBT advocacy organisation Freedom to Roam, while the NLGF nominated www.allout.org, the online campaign to highlight LGBT Human Rights issues around the world.

The winning nominee, announced at the GALAS' award ceremony in Dublin's Sugar Club on 22 September 2011 was Front Line's nominee Paisarn Likhitpreechakul of the Foundation for Human Rights on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Thailand. Speaking from Bangkok, Paisarn Likhitpreechakul spoke of how this award sent a strong message of support and solidarity to all the gay community in Thailand, many of whom are working in very isolated and vulnerable situations: "Despite the gay friendly image that Thailand enjoys internationally there is much ingrained homophobia and discrimination. Without equality, tolerance is just a myth".

Global Perspectives and Local Solutions

Global civil liberties leaders gather in Dublin to share their work

On Friday, 16 December 2011, leaders of like-minded civil liberties organisations from across the globe will address an Irish Council for Civil Liberties meeting marking the ICCL's 35th anniversary year.

The event, which will take place from 9.30am - 1pm at the Westbury Hotel, Grafton Street, Dublin is free for members and supporters.

Speakers will include: Anthony Romero, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union, on Strategic Litigation; Shami Chakrabarti, Director, Liberty, on Campaigning and Advocacy; Hagai El-Ad, Executive Director, Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), on Building Effective Coalitions and Hossam Bahgat, Director of the Egyptian Initiative for Person Rights (EIPR), on Human Rights and the "Arab Spring" - Lessons from Egypt.

Interest in this event has been very keen, so please contact us quickly (aoife.murphy@iccl.ie) if you would like to secure a place!



ICCL welcomes Sinéad Skelly

We would like to welcome Sinéad Skelly as the newest member of the ICCL team. Sinéad is currently engaged in a six month EU Criminal Justice Internship with the ICCL. She will be working on the 'JPEN programme' which aims to improve procedural, defence and victims' rights in the European Union. She holds an LLB from Trinity College Dublin and an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Oxford. In the summer of 2010 Sinéad completed an internship with the Department of Justice and Equality where she was engaged as legal researcher to the Advisory Committee on Garda Interviewing of Suspects.

Do you have what it takes to join the Executive of the ICCL?

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties Association is seeking expressions of interest from committed people who may have the potential to join its Executive.

The Executive is the ICCL's governing body and membership is part-time (four to five meetings a year), voluntary and unpaid.

We currently have a vacancy for a new member with a background in accountancy / finance / taxation and a genuine commitment to human rights.

Future vacancies may arise, including for legal practitioners with human rights knowledge.

If you are interested, please contact suzanne.handley@iccl.ie before the end of December 2011.