



Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Select Committee Announcement

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Date 15/12/2009 For Release at 00.01 am Wednesday 16/12/09

Northern Ireland not yet ready for Legacy Commission

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee today publishes its report on *The Report of the Consultative Group on the Past in Northern Ireland*. The Report concludes that:

- Northern Ireland has not yet reached a consensus on how to move on from its recent past (para 37).
- It is not clear that Northern Ireland needs a Legacy Commission when bodies such as the Victims and Survivors Commission and the Historical Enquiries Team are already dealing in different ways with aspects of the legacy of the Troubles (paras 30 and 105, 113 and 114).
- Healthcare services, particularly mental health services, for those affected by the Troubles are under strong pressure. Given the continuing hardship suffered by many of those affected, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister should consider creating a new fund for victims and survivors and draw up criteria for distributing the fund which win cross-community support (paras 64, 65, 81 and 85).
- Any future Legacy Commission should be chaired, or co-chaired, by figures from Northern Ireland rather than by a foreign figurehead (para 48).
- A Commission would need at least five years to do its work, but should be time-limited to prevent its running indefinitely (para 45).
- The Northern Ireland Assembly, rather than the UK Government, should ultimately be responsible for decisions on how to fund a Legacy Commission (and therefore on the width of its remit) (para 51).
- Clarification is required on what role the Irish Government would play in setting up such a Commission, and in particular on what financial contribution it would be expected to make (para 54).

Notes to Editors:

1. The Consultative Group on the Past was established in 2006 by Peter Hain MP, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and was chaired by Lord Eames and Mr Denis Bradley.
2. The Group reported in January 2009 after 18 months of consultation across Northern Ireland, initially to controversy over its recommendation that the next-of-kin of everyone bereaved during the Troubles receive £12,000 as a 'recognition' payment.
3. The Northern Ireland Office has concluded a public consultation on the proposals, and is expected to publish a response in 2010.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Committee Membership is as follows: Sir Patrick Cormack MP (Chairman) (Conservative, South Staffordshire), Rosie Cooper MP (Labour, West Lancashire), Christopher Fraser MP (Conservative, South West Norfolk), Mr John Grogan MP (Labour, Selby), Mr Stephen Hepburn MP (Labour, Jarrow), Lady Hermon MP (Ulster Unionist Party, North Down), Kate Hoey MP (Labour, Vauxhall), Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP (SDLP, Belfast South), Mr Denis Murphy MP (Labour, Wansbeck), Stephen Pound MP (Labour, Ealing North), Mrs Iris Robinson MP (Democratic Unionist Party, Strangford), David Simpson MP (Democratic Unionist Party, Upper Bann).

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Specific Committee Information: The Committee intends to publish the transcript of these meetings on its Homepage approximately two weeks after the meeting. For further information about the work of the Committee, please contact Emma McIntosh, Assistant to the Committee, on 020 7219 2173 or e-mail northircom@parliament.uk

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