



FORUM MEETING

Thursday 24 September 2015, Belfast Castle

In Attendance

Mitch Bresland

Alex Bunting

Liz Clarke

Violet Craig

Stephen Gault

Eibhlin

Glenholmes

Peter Heathwood

Roberta Holmes

Fiona Kelly

Irene Kerrigan

John Loughran

Jennifer McNern

Ann Travers

Jude Whyte

Present

Judith Thompson
(Chair)

John Beggs

Adrian McNamee

Tina McCann

Apologies

Jeff Smith

David Scott

1. Minutes

Minutes were checked for accuracy and one amendment was recorded to the attendance register. On correction, these minutes will be added to the record and uploaded to Commission for Victims and Survivors website

2. Matters Arising and Review of Action Points

A review of the action points from the 2 July meeting was given including;

- Adrian advised that in response to members request for more information on the role of EU to victims and survivors, personnel from the EU Commission were to attend today but agreed to reschedule. This presentation will now be given on a later date.
- John advised that the review of policies and procedures of the Forum was ongoing and consideration will be given to the appropriate induction procedures for new members. The 'Frequently Asked Questions' section has been drafted but will be held until the new members of the Forum are appointed. John added that all operational policies for the Forum would be reviewed to reflect the changes to the operation of the Forum including the social media policy, User Guide, protocols and procedures.
- John advised that he had written to Brenda Hale in August for an update on the Private Members Bill on a Pension for the Severely Injured and this was the holding position. A discussion followed and concerns raised over parity in lobbying selected political parties.

John accepted these concerns and advised that the letter was seeking clarity on the status of the private members bill and no parties had been approached on this issue subsequently.

3. Current NI Affairs Committee Inquiry into Compensation from the Libya

Judith gave the background to an invitation she has received from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster and Adrian detailed the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee "*Inquiry into the role of the UK Government in seeking compensation for the victims of IRA attacks made possible by the provision of Semtex and other weapons by the former Gaddafi regime*".

Adrian also gave the terms of reference that details the questions the NI Affairs Committee have asked the Commissioner to consider which are;

- The effectiveness of Government efforts to date in seeking compensation for UK victims;
- The current situation faced by UK victims;
- The work of organizations and individuals campaigning on behalf of UK victims;
- The options for providing compensation and redress, including the potential use of the frozen assets of the Gaddafi family.

Judith invited members to comment on the inquiry as the Commission are in listening mode in order to inform a response to the NI Affairs Committee. Members' comments included their knowledge of the writ against the Gaddafi regime and the settlement given to American citizens who were victims of Libyan semtex attacks and, how to inclusively represent the interests of Libyan semtex victims whose names may not be included in the writ as there have been more than the 150 people injured or affected by the semtex. Judith thanked the members for their comments and added that this information would be used to inform the submission she would make to the Inquiry and provide an update at the next Forum meeting on the 22nd October.

AP: Agenda item for Forum meeting on 22 October – Update on Commission for Victims and Survivors submission to NI Affairs Committee Inquiry.

4. A O B

Tina reminded members of the Forum Services Working Group that they are meeting with the Victims and Survivors Service Board on Tuesday 20th October @ 12.30 in Seatem House. Judith will be joining the members for this meeting.

A discussion was held on the use of the Forum Steering Committee in coming months. After discussion, Judith advised that the Steering Committee would go into abeyance until further notice.

AP: Steering Committee to be suspended until further notice

Alex informed the Forum that he and Jennifer had met the Prosthetics Forum informally. This is a Forum for amputees who use the Regional Disablement Service (RDS) based in Musgrave Park Hospital. He said that there were opportunities to explore partnerships with the Prosthesis Forum which could lead to improvement for victims who were amputees. He

will be meeting the Manager of the RDS in coming weeks and will update on potential opportunities with the Victims and Survivors Service and the Commission in due course.

AP: Alex to provide an update on developments with the Prosthesis Forum and RDS

Eibhlin requested that the Forum consider supporting the addition of the recently published Gender Principles to the Stormont House Agreement as there is no reference to the experience of women and children in this or any other political agreement.

AP: Tina to forward Gender Principles to the Forum members for review and consideration.

Alex suggested issuing a statement on behalf of the Forum welcoming Judith and reminding the politicians of the importance of the dealing with the past sections of Stormont House Agreement.

John advised that a statement was already in preparation reflecting the issues Judith was encountering regarding the Stormont House Agreement and its institutions.

5. Date & Time of Next Meeting:

Thursday 22 October @ 10.30am, venue to be confirmed