

# **Reported Incidents Relating to Racism**

**January - June 2006**

**National Consultative Committee  
on Racism and Interculturalism**

## NCCRI Report of Incidents Related to Racism January - June 2006

### **Introduction**

In May 2001 the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) established a system for recording incidents related to racism in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Incidents are analysed and compiled into six monthly reports.<sup>2</sup> There have been ten reports to date. This is the eleventh report, which covers the period January - June 2006. The reports aim to:

- Provide an overview of racist incidents reported to the NCCRI in the given six month period
- Draw out the key issues arising from the incidents logged
- Make recommendations to a range of relevant actors.

The incidents included in this report have been forwarded by non-governmental organisations on behalf of the victims, including key organisations working with Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and migrants. Other incidents have been reported directly to the NCCRI by the victims.

The data that is generated by this reporting system is primarily qualitative and indicative of key issues that need to be addressed. This report does not aim to provide a comprehensive list of every racist incident in Ireland. Indeed evidence from other countries tends to reveal that with all such reporting systems, whether statutory or voluntary, there is likely to be significant under-reporting of incidents. However the NCCRI reporting mechanism plays an important role in complementing other systems such as the Equality Authority casework and Garda records.<sup>3</sup>

Organisations and individuals reporting racist incidents have also been encouraged to report the incident to the relevant authority responsible for investigating and addressing the complaint, for example, the Gardai (racist crime), the Equality Authority/Equality Tribunal (discrimination in the workplace, discrimination in the provision of goods and services etc.) and local authorities (graffiti, harassment on local authority housing estates etc.). In addition the NCCRI also encourages individuals and organisations to report articles or broadcasts in the national, regional or local media which they consider to be offensive to minority ethnic groups. In a small number of instances, those involved in or reporting the incident only want the incident to be logged by the NCCRI with no further action taken. These requests have been respected.

The NCCRI focus on a policy response to the racist incidents identified. We do not purport to respond to every racist incident reported to our office but to highlight issues such as gaps in service provision and we seek to encourage a national and localised response to incidents.

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<sup>1</sup> Reporting forms can be accessed through the NCCRI website [www.nccri.com](http://www.nccri.com).

<sup>2</sup> The six monthly reports are also available on our website [www.nccri.com/publications.html](http://www.nccri.com/publications.html)

<sup>3</sup> For official statistics regarding racially motivated crime, see Garda Annual Report 2004 at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

### Analysis of Data

- There were 25 racist incidents<sup>4</sup> reported and compiled by the NCCRI between January - June 2006.
- 75% of incidents are reported as occurring in the greater Dublin area
- 25% of incidents are reported as occurring in urban areas outside of Dublin
- The majority of incidents were targeted at adults, both male and female. However children were present for some of the incidents. Once again our findings indicate that people of all ages and gender are experiencing racism in Ireland.
- Statistics reveal again that racism is being experienced regardless of someone's legal status. Refugees and asylum seekers, Irish and EU citizens, including Travellers and non-EU citizens are experiencing racism in Ireland. Even people visiting Ireland as tourists.

### Number of Incidents reported

| Report | Period Covered            | Number of Incidents Reported to the NCCRI |
|--------|---------------------------|---|
| 1      | May - October 2001        | 41  |
| 2      | November 2001- April 2002 | 40  |
| 3      | May - October 2002        | 67  |
| 4      | November 2002-April 2003  | 48  |
| 5      | May - October 2003        | 46  |
| 6      | November 2003-April 2004  | 42  |
| 7      | May - October 2004        | 70  |
| 8      | November 2004-Dec 2004    | 22  |
| 9      | January-June 2005         | 81  |
| 10     | July- December 2005       | 38  |
| 11     | January - June 2006       | 25  |

The incidents reported relate to three main areas, which are:

- Assaults, abuse and harassment
- Delivery of public and private services
- Misinformation and circulation of offensive material

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<sup>4</sup> Multiple reports about one incident are regarded as one racist incident in this report.

## **1. Assaults, Abuse and Harassment**

Racist abuse, harassment and in some cases physical attacks were the most common forms of incidents reported to the NCCRI.

### ***Examples:***

- This was posted on a website: “Whites who mix with blacks shouldn’t be surprised when they are treated like animals themselves. They are traitors to their race, culture and family. We have no sympathy for them”. This appeared on an interactive section of a web site which is hosted by a company in the United States and so out of our jurisdiction.
- A Nigerian woman received this text the following text in Dundalk on her mobile “Do you have AIDS negro woman? This is a simple question and not illegal”. The same person has called her mobile several times to deliver racist slur.
- An American tourist of Chinese descent was racially abused and physically attacked while visiting a friend in Limerick. He was repeatedly called “Chinky and Jackie Chan” by a group of up to 15 young men who also threw stones at him
- A Polish family were told to leave their home in Blanchardstown and were threatened that if they failed to do so, their house would be burned. Their windows were broken and they got a note in the post box which said “move out of our district or we will burn you down negers” (sic). The family fearful for their safety subsequently moved out of the area
- In Galway, a Nigerian man was verbally abused by his next door neighbour. He was told to get out of Ireland and then threatened with a shotgun. Although he has reported the matter to the Gardai, he is considering moving to another area

## **Delivery of Public and Private Services**

There have been a number of incidents reported to the NCCRI in relation to the delivery of public and private services. The following serve as examples:

### ***Public Services:***

- An African man from Senegal reported to the NCCRI that he and some of his friends were prevented twice from entering a wine bar in Dublin. When they asked why, they were told ‘blacks and latinos were not allowed in’

## Misinformation and the Circulation of Offensive Material

### *Emails, Texts and offensive material*

On the 14 April the Irish Independent published a letter written to the Editor under letters to the editor entitled “Diluting Dublin”. In this letter, the writer narrated how he and his wife felt disappointed and intimidated by a battalion of men speaking an incomprehensible language as they bludgeoned a path through the crowds. He further said of their trip to Dublin from the UK that if he wanted to spend a weekend surrounded by eastern European immigrants, he would gone to Krakow instead

On the 12 May, the Star reported that a third of all fatal road accidents in the Republic this year, directly or indirectly, involved foreign nationals under the sensational headline “Death smash foreign link, immigrants involved in 1 in 3”

On the 3 July, the Irish Examiner published a letter with the headline “Deport immigrants who commit crime” under the [letters@examiner.ie](mailto:letters@examiner.ie) column. The writer in addition to advocating this measure across the EU also feels that “with enough home-grown criminals of our own, such a measure would ease the pressure on the system”

A poster with a young white girl was circulated in the Tallaght area with the caption “MISSING”. The material went on to say “description: blond, red or brown hair, fair skin; innocent, inquisitive, intelligent, trusting personality. Corrupt politicians and minority-special-interest groups have abducted her future”

The NCCRI received an email from somebody in Dundalk complaining about Travellers re – the halting site at St. Helenas. This person thinks that a particular Traveller family “should be given a one way ticket”

A report was sent to the NCCRI about the website Stormfront, [www.stormfront.org](http://www.stormfront.org). The site hosted a number of racist comments about Travellers in Dundalk

## 4. Recommendations

The NCCRI would make the following recommendations based on an analysis of reported racist incidents January - June 2006. The National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR) advocates protection as one of the Plan’s strategic objectives, enhancing protection against racism, including a focus on combating discrimination, assaults, incitement and abuse.

- The proposed introduction of the Defamation Bill provides enabling legislation for the recognition of a Press Council in Ireland and allows for interested parties to establish a Press Council. Of particular importance in this respect is what will be contained in the forthcoming Press Council’s ‘Code of Conduct’. It is important that the Code of Conduct is reflective of this commitment, which arises from the Report of the Legal Advisory Group on Defamation. The code of conduct should also refer and seek to incorporate the

NUJ code of conduct, the NUJ's guidelines on Race Reporting and Reporting in respect of the Traveller community in Ireland. If the Code of Conduct simply refers to Newspapers not transgressing the 'Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, then the NCCRI is concerned that the Press Council will bring little added value to the issue of racism and irresponsible press reporting.

- The completion of the review of the effectiveness of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 and a consideration of the effectiveness of legislation that provides general protection against assaults and abuse, including the Offences Against the Person Act 1997 and the Public Order Act 1994. Current legislation outlawing incitement to hatred and other relevant criminal legislation needs to be strengthened so that it is adequate in scope and that it provides for effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.<sup>6</sup> Crimes motivated by hatred of particular communities including minority ethnic groups and other vulnerable communities should be considered as an aggravating factor in sentencing. The NCCRI welcomes research undertaken under the NPAR on this issue.
- The NCCRI welcomes the carrying out of an independent human rights audit of An Garda Siochana. One of the main points drawn from the audit is that procedures and operating practices within the force "can lead to institutional racism" particularly in relation to Nigerians, Travellers and Muslims. Recommendations made by the audit concerning racism are to identify and tackle institutional racism, to deal robustly with racist crime and to protect vulnerable communities.

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<sup>6</sup> Relevant criminal legislation include Prohibition of Incitement to Hated Act 1989, Offences Against the Person Act 1997 and Public Order Act 1994