

Reported Incidents Relating to Racism

Jul - Dec 2006

**National Consultative Committee on
Racism and Interculturalism**

NCCRI Report of Incidents Related to Racism
Draft July - December 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.¹ Incidents are analysed and compiled into six monthly reports.² 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 victims, witnesses and 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.³

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.

¹ Reporting forms can be accessed through the NCCRI website www.nccri.com.

² The six monthly reports are also available on our website www.nccri.com/publications.html

³ For official statistics regarding racially motivated crime, see Garda Annual Report 2004 at www.garda.ie

Analysis of Data

- There have been 40 racist incidents⁴ reported and compiled by the NCCRI between July and December 2006.
- 95% of the incidents were reported as occurring in the greater Dublin area and 5 % outside
- One incident was reported in Cork, one in Dundalk and one in Galway
- The breakdown shows that nearly all the victims were African males. Just over 4% of the victims were females while the remaining 96% plus were males of African origin. Two females were of Asian descent.
- The majority of incidents were targeted at adults, both male and female, although mostly males. However children were present in some of the incidents.

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 |
| 12 | July – December 2006 | 40 |

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

- Assaults
- Abuse and harassment
- Misinformation and circulation of offensive material

⁴ 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:

- In Dublin, a Nigerian man alleged that he was called racist names such as ‘black p***k’ and wrestled to the ground by a member of the Gardai for allegedly hitting his son.
- In an incident related to a specific incident in the Middle East involving the death of children, a report was received that a pair of children’s shoes with the word ‘Qana’ painted on them was tied to the railings of the Synagogue in Cork.
- A Congolese man reported numerous incidents of damage to property, racist verbal abuse and racist graffiti, perpetrated by his neighbours.
- A bus driver alleged he experienced racist verbal abuse from passengers and a lack of support in tackling the issue from his employer.
- A Zimbabwean PhD student was badly beaten with hurling sticks and baseball bats in Dublin and left in a coma. Although he is recovering, is likely to lose the use of one of his eyes according to his doctors.
- In Galway, a woman of Chinese descent was repeatedly called ‘Chinky’ and had stones thrown at her while walking in the park with her Irish husband and children.
- Graffiti on a wall beside the train line at Broombridge, Dublin referring to ‘Polish’ scum and had a swastika.
- In another incident, the victim was allegedly harassed by his neighbours in a council estate. According to him, he complained many times to the council and nothing happened. His children were often beaten by his neighbour’s children. His neighbours broke his windows (he sent photographs). He claimed he called the Guards and they did not show up. He got a letter a few days after his windows were broken warning him about the consequences of anti social behaviour from the council.
- A racist email to an NGO in Dublin read ‘I don’t like blacks’. ‘It’s alright to tell them to go back home’.

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:

- In Dundalk, a Congolese man alleged that a member of staff of the catering company contracted where he was accommodated broke into his apartment after an altercation at the door and called him and his family racist names like ‘f—king black bas***ds’ while threatening them with deportation.

Misinformation and the Circulation of Offensive Material

- A racist email to an NGO in Dublin read ‘I don’t like blacks’. ‘It’s alright to tell them to go back home’.

Media Reports

- There were a number of complaints at offensive attempts at satire by a Dublin magazine in its publication of September 2006. In relation to a piece on ‘Golf: The Dummies Guide’ the article stated. “Traditionally, golf was quite an elitist sport With his inoffensively mild Negro features and blond wife, Tiger Woods has paved the way for darkies”
- Same Dublin magazine in its October 2006 publication indicated that the female journalist who wrote the story would rather have cancer than be intimately examined by a black doctor.
- The Ireland on Sunday newspaper of 20th August 2006 “The rise of the green jihadis”
- Headline on the Sunday Tribune of 13th August read “Fascist fundamentalism is rife among young Irish Muslims”. .
- On the 2nd of October 2006, a columnist for The Irish Independent noted ‘that: you know you are having a weird day when you find yourself arguing with a middle-aged traveller woman in a wheelchair before you’ve had lunch’
- “Ireland could easily become a launch pad for terror attacks on Britain because in security terms we are the ‘weakest link’ in Europe...” (Daily Star 11/08/06). Negative coverage increased followed the reported arrest of two Algerians living in Ireland but arrested in the UK ‘Dublin based Algerians held in UK terror swoop’ 22/08/06 Irish Independent). The Irish Daily Star had a front page dedicated to this issue (‘Irish Muslim Terror Plot’ 21/08/06). Both men were subsequently released without charge. Representatives from the Muslim community in Ireland expressed concerns to the NCCRI about negative stereotyping and sensationalised reporting by the media.

Recommendations and further action

- The NCCRI will appoint new, additional member of staff to increase our focus on racist incidents

- In response to these issues the NCCRI is:
 - Organising a Roundtable on Muslim Communities in Britain and Ireland
 - Launching a leaflet challenging the myths and misinformation on the Muslim community in Ireland
 - Participating in a research project on combating racism through the criminal law under the National Action Plan Against Racism
 - Launching a leaflet challenging the myths and misinformation on migrant workers in partnership with the Migrant Rights Centre

- Community Profiles series of research undertaken in partnership with people from minority ethnic communities were launched in November 2006
 - Polish Migrant Workers in Ireland
 - Chinese Students in Ireland

- The NCCRI in partnership with Integrating Ireland will carry out a series of talks at regional events to encourage reporting of racist incidents to the Gardai.