# Relatives to protest outside ICRIR marking anniversary of Northern Ireland Legacy Act



Relatives of those killed during the Northern Ireland Troubles plan to protest outside the offices of the Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) to mark the first anniversary of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023. The act came into force on 1 May last year and brought significant changes, including ending all inquests and civil cases related to Troubles-era incidents, while introducing conditional immunity for certain participants.

The ICRIR, which assumed responsibility for Troubles cases on that date, has faced strong opposition from many individuals impacted by the conflict. Critics argue that the commission is part of efforts by the British government to shield state actors from accountability. Despite plans to repeal the Legacy Act, the British government intends to maintain the commission, a move that has been met with concern. The Court of Appeal has ruled that the British government's veto power over sensitive information disclosures by the commission to relatives of the deceased is incompatible with human rights legislation.

The ICRIR is led by former Lord Chief Justice Sir Declan Morgan as chief commissioner, with ex-senior police officer Peter Sheridan overseeing investigations. Questions have been raised about the body’s independence, following revelations that ten former Royal Ulster Constabulary officers and staff are employed there.

The protest, branded “one year since the ‘Guillotine of Truth’ - Repeal and Replace the Legacy Act,” will see participation from relatives of Troubles victims alongside campaign groups such as Relatives for Justice, Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Pat Finucane Centre, and Amnesty International. Irati Oleaga, casework manager with Relatives for Justice, stated: “The ICRIR cannot proceed with its work without the trust of those it claims to serve, and that trust simply does not exist. We call on the UK government to listen to the clear voices of victims and survivors, and to replace the ICRIR in full.”

The protest coincides with fresh developments surrounding calls for justice in Troubles-related deaths. More than 5,400 people have written to the Secretary of State demanding a public inquiry into the murder of Sean Brown, a Co Derry GAA official. Mr Brown was attacked as he locked the gates at Bellaghy Wolf Tones GAC in County Derry and subsequently shot dead near Randalstown, County Antrim, in May 1997. Earlier this month, the Court of Appeal ruled that the British government’s refusal to hold a public inquiry into Mr Brown's death was “unlawful,” also determining that this refusal violated Article Two of the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects the right to life. The court has allowed Secretary of State Hilary Benn four weeks to consider the judgment, with the case scheduled to return to court later this week.

In addition to the court proceedings, Hilary Benn has indicated intentions to introduce remedial measures including a remedial order aimed at removing immunity provisions and to restore inquests that were halted under the Legacy Act, signalling ongoing legal and political adjustments in how Troubles legacy cases are managed.

The protest will be held at Great Victoria Street in Belfast city centre at 11am on Thursday. The Irish News (Belfast) is reporting on the event and surrounding issues.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://apnews.com/article/40825c78e97df4290c5c7a18e647e9ae> - This article discusses the Irish government's announcement to take legal action against the UK over the Legacy and Reconciliation Bill, which grants some immunity for acts of violence during Northern Ireland's Troubles, and the widespread opposition to the law.
3. <https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/protest-told-introduction-of-new-legacy-laws-is-day-of-shame-1620300.html> - This article covers a protest outside the Northern Ireland Office in Belfast, where Sinn Féin MP John Finucane addressed the crowd, criticizing the introduction of new legacy laws that halt some Troubles-era inquests and civil cases.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-launches-appeal-northern-ireland-amnesty-law-case-2024-03-07/> - This article reports on the British government's appeal following a court ruling against its Legacy Act, a law offering conditional amnesties to ex-soldiers and militants involved in Northern Ireland's violent past.
5. <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-41234590.html> - This article discusses the postponement of a conference examining new Northern Ireland Troubles legacy laws amid planned protests, highlighting the controversy surrounding the legislation and its impact on victims' families.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2023/01/17/uk-tweaks-controversial-troubles-legacy-bill-but-resistance-remains-from-victims-groups/> - This article details the UK's amendments to the controversial Troubles legacy bill, which has faced resistance from victims' groups and political parties in Northern Ireland, and the ongoing debate over its compatibility with human rights obligations.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/protest-in-belfast-to-mark-first-anniversary-of-controversial-legacy-act-F32YSRE2ZBDOVJCF57W3IT7WOU/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data