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Press Releases

HTR Seeks Meeting with 'Legacy' Group

Healing Through Remembering (HTR) - the cross-community group that organised last week's Day of Private Reflection (on 21 June) - is seeking an early meeting with the Independent Consultant Group set up by Secretary of State Peter Hain to find the best way to deal with the legacy of the past.

Roy McClelland, Chairperson of HTR, said at a news conference today:

"Dealing with the past is a critical issue. It is important that any process established to deal with the past relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland is credible, legitimate and embedded in the local Assembly.

"We challenge the NIO to ensure that the issue is properly addressed. It is also imperative that the Assembly take an active interest in both the consultation and the outcome.

"We invite the appointed members of the team addressing this issue to meet with Healing Through Remembering as early as possible, so that we can inform them of the work, knowledge and research we have developed on this topic over the past six years.

"HTR has been engaged in public consultation, intense dialogue and extensive research on this issue. This has not been a straightforward or easy process. Dealing with the past is a highly emotive and contested area. Levels of mistrust between groups discussing such a difficult issue are extremely high.

"For this process to be of value, the team appointed to address this area must commit to building trust and listening carefully to the full range of views in

our society. Experience in this area shows that credibility in the eyes of the community is essential. From our work it is also clear that dealing with the past has to be a society-wide initiative that embraces the views and opinions of all."

Kate Turner, HTR Project Co-ordinator, adds: "The membership of HTR includes a diverse range of individuals from loyalist, republican, British Army and police backgrounds, as well as individuals from different faith backgrounds, victims and community groups and academic institutions. Our work with such a diverse range of people and groups over the past number of years has highlighted that there is no single solution in dealing with the past.

"A range of mechanisms is needed to fully address the legacy of the conflict. We have been working on a number of areas including storytelling, a living memorial museum, truth recovery and acknowledgement, a network of commemoration projects and a Day of Reflection.

"To help facilitate debate and discussion on the issue of dealing with the past we have held public events and produced an array of materials and resources. Our Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement Sub Group outlined five possible options for truth recovery, and our Day of Reflection Sub Group invited people to participate in last week's initial Day of Private Reflection. We continue to tackle the core issues related to dealing with the past.

"Processes of remembering, reflecting, informing and educating must be sustained for at least another generation. We all have a part to play in dealing with the legacy of the past."

25/06/2007

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