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## Press Releases

### Truth Recovery continued

Kate Turner, Healing Through Remembering Co-ordinator, said: "There is a need for a debate about how we should deal with the issue of truth recovery. Making Peace with the Past is an aid to discussion and a tool for deepening and furthering the debate.

"The five options are examples of approaches that might be taken. The views of those who feel 'nothing else' should be done must be heard alongside those who propose a specific option or hybrid of options.

"Across all sectors in society there is a widespread consensus on the desirability of processes and structures which prioritise the needs of victims. This should be a key factor in deciding whether or not any formal truth recovery process is established, while also recognising that dealing with the past is a society-wide issue.

"*Making Peace with the Past* is not designed to offer a definitive view on how or whether Northern Ireland should have some form of truth-recovery process. Rather, this report is intended to provide sufficient detail and context to help focus the debate concerning truth recovery and realistic options for the future."

Overall, the Sub Group believes that the risk of not addressing unresolved issues, such as truth recovery, may prevent the development of a sustainable peace. Without an honest debate the suffering and conflict cannot be acknowledged, still less resolved.

This report is the product of just such a debate, in which people with very different experiences and political and cultural viewpoints found the space and will to discuss many options for truth recovery, including “doing nothing else”.

Dr. Brandon Hamber, an international conflict transformation expert who has worked in a number of countries emerging from conflict, said: “The process of developing this report has been truly unique. Nowhere else in the world has civil society, never mind a group as diverse as this, taken such a substantial lead in developing options on issues of truth recovery and transitional justice for their specific context.”

The Truth Recovery and Acknowledgment Sub Group developed its five options after considering local initiatives and international truth-recovery processes, both past and present.

The Sub Group felt that appropriate and relevant options are needed for the local situation but that lessons could be drawn from other societies. Hence, international truth-recovery models employed in countries such as Chile, East Timor, Argentina, Guatemala, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda were used to inform the Sub Group’s thinking.

Prof. Kieran McEvoy, author of the report said: “The question of truth recovery in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland often evokes strong and conflicting emotions. Typically, the issue is immediately associated with South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, this report seeks to challenge this approach and expands the discussion beyond this example to other international experiences.

“We must remember that no international option can simply be imported into the local situation. Any decision on the issue of truth recovery should be made following consideration of home-grown options such as those presented here.”

This debate is not easy. As the report says: “Some people are fearful of any

process to determine the truth about the past. However, the debate is necessary and our decision as a society to progress one of these options, including doing nothing else, or a new option, must be based on building a better future.

This document aims to stimulate the debate and we look forward to public responses on it.

Please click to download a copy of the [full report](#) or [executive summary](#).

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