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To Whom It May Concern

**Dealing with the Past: A Proposed Model for Information Redaction under the Stormont House Agreement**

**4<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 10.00 am, Moot Court, School of Law Queens University Belfast**

For a number of years a group of academics at Queens and Ulster University, representatives from human rights NGOs and individual experts have been working on a range of dealing with the past related matters. That work has included providing detailed policy reports and commentary on various aspects of the dealing with the past debate including publishing (in 2015) a 'Model Bill' and related explanatory commentary – our attempt to give legislative expression to the past related components of the Stormont House Agreement (SHA).

Throughout the process, our work has been designed to help civil society organisations, policy makers and politicians from across the spectrum to navigate what are often complex legal and political challenges.

We were deeply disappointed when the Fresh Start negotiations which concluded in November 2015 failed to reach consensus on how to implement the SHA past-related mechanisms.

However, together with a number of NGOs who work very closely with families directly affected by the conflict, we resolved to continue to try to help overcome the remaining obstacles. In particular, given the political focus on questions relating to the proposed redaction of sensitive information from reports going to affected families on the grounds of national security, we concentrated our energies on these and related matters.

To that end, representatives from the Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Pat Finucane Centre, Relatives for Justice, and Rights Watch UK worked intensively with academic colleagues and myself for a number of months last year in developing and refining a proposed model for dealing with the redaction of sensitive information, a set of principles which should underpin the design and implementation of the proposed mechanism, and the criteria which should inform any decisions on redactions.

These documents were passed to the UK and Irish Governments last year but were not made public. We understand that the UK Government has produced a document on national security which has failed to lead to agreement. We now think it right to put our own proposals into the public domain.

I am therefore inviting you to a seminar to be held in:

**The Moot Court, School of Law, QUB between 10am and 12.30 pm on Tuesday 4th April 2017.**

The format will be a brief presentation of the documents – which will be available on the day – and an open discussion with a panel made up of the participating individuals and representatives of the NGOs.

Please RSVP to Ms Ling Bai [l.bai@qub.ac.uk](mailto:l.bai@qub.ac.uk) by 4.00pm Monday 3rd April.

Yours Truly



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