

**Reported Incidents
Relating to Racism and
strategic response from the
NCCRI**

Jul - Dec 2007

**National Consultative Committee on
Racism and Interculturalism**

NCCRI Report of Incidents Related to Racism Draft Jul - Dec 2007

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 This is the fourteenth report, which covers the period July - December 2007. 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 2006 at www.garda.ie

Analysis of Data

- There have been about 45 racist incidents reported and compiled by the NCCRI between Jul – Dec 2007. In the whole of 2007 there were 99 cases reported as compared with 65 in 2006.
- Racism on the internet remains a significant issue with 15% of all cases in the Jul-Dec period related to this form of racism
- Half of the incidents reported to the NCCRI occurred in the greater Dublin
- The breakdown shows that the most significant victims of racist incidents were black Africans males. However people of Asian origin as well as members of the Traveller community also experienced racism. The main complaints from people from central and Eastern European relate to the work place.

Summary of Number of Incidents reported

Report	Period Covered	Number of Incidents Reported to the NCCRI
1	May - October 2001	41
2	Nov 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
13	Jan – June 2007	54
14	July – December 2007	45

The incidents are divided as follows:

- Incidents related to the criminal law
- Incidents related to discrimination in workplace or in the provision of goods and services
- Misinformation and public circulation of offensive material

1. Incidents Related to Criminal Law

The following incidents relate incidents to:

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

Racist abuse, harassment and in some cases physical attacks were the most common forms of incidents reported to the NCCRI. .

Examples:

- In Dublin, a Palestinian man alleged that he was repeatedly asked in a catering class by the lecturer about his country of origin, his religion and name. When he tried to ask a question about the use of alcohol to prepare one of the recipes he was spoken to very rudely and his religion was denigrated. As a result of the harassment he says he does not go to college anymore because of the racial and religious harassment from the teacher.
- A 20 year old Burundian man was walking down the street in Cork when a group of young men (about 16 to 19 years old) physically assaulted him while calling him racist names. The victim had to go to hospital to have 9 stitches because of a facial wound.
- In Dublin, a black man reported that he and another black African man were verbally abused by an Irish man while they were waiting at the bus stop. When they got on the bus, the man continued the verbal abuse. One of the victims tried to draw the attention of the bus driver but instead the driver shouted at them to get off the bus and supported the man who was abusing the African men.
- A woman who was a waitress from Mongolia and her Mongolian colleague who were working in a venue hosting a comedy night. The woman contended that she and her colleague felt they were verbally abused about her perceived ethnic origin by the on stage comedian in front of about 300 people. According to the complainant, it was the second time the same comedian had ridiculed her in public. At the end of the show, the complainant asked the comedian if she could talk to him about his abuse and he verbally abused her again.
- Complaints were received about racist comments posted on a discussion forum hosted on the website: www.taxi.ie. This was the second occasion that such complaints had been received. When NCCRI raised this issue before, the moderator of the discussion forum issues guidelines on acceptable usage. Following a complaint by the NCCRI and media coverage, the discussion forum was closed.
- In Dundalk, a Nigerian taxi driver alleged that he was called an “f---ing black bastard” by a white Irish colleague while on the taxi rank. The victim claims that the perpetrator does this to other black drivers on a regular basis.
- A South African woman in Cavan reported that some of her neighbours harassed her two young children in the private accommodation where she lives.

- A academic who is Jewish has been the target of racist comment on the internet in a number of sites hoisted outside Ireland

Discrimination in Workplace and the 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:

- A bus driver was alleged to have replied with a racially abusive comment to two Muslim men waiting for a bus to the airport. The NCCRI encouraged the men to complain to the bus company who treated the complaint seriously. As a consequence an apology was issued and the driver was reprimanded.
- A Romanian woman reported that she went to her local bank to cash petty cheques for use in her office (a regular occurrence) complained she is repeatedly questioned about her identity and her employer in a manner which makes her feel uncomfortable.
- A Polish woman who worked as a receptionist in Dublin reported that she was late to work one day, which resulted in a disciplinary meeting. She claimed that most Irish employees come to work late on a regular basis but are never subjected to disciplinary action. She contended that other Polish workers are treated in the same unfair manner. She and other Polish nationals have been told that speaking the Polish language is not allowed at work.

Misinformation, the Public Circulation of Offensive Material and Media Reports

- In Dundalk, materials were publically circulated with the caption “F**king niggas, blacks out”. The material also had the sign “KKK”.
- The NCCRI has received a number of emails with racist content claiming that organisation is ‘encouraging Africans and Asians to swamp Ireland especially the likes of Romanians and Nigerians’.
- The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and other NGO’s have also complained of receiving e-mails with racist content.

Media Reports

A former chairman of Enniscorthy Town Council was reported in a local paper as making derogatory comments about Travellers which has 'shocked' other Councillors, including:

'They will rape and pillage the area around them for the weekend and leave their dirt and filth for the Council to clean up'

'People will say we have to be politically correct but they are leeches on society. They pay no tax.'

Responses from the NCCRI on reported racist incidents

The following are examples of responses by NCCRI to some of the above incidents. Others were referred to relevant bodies such as the Gardai or equality bodies.

Websites with racist content

Following intervention by the NCCRI, a website chat room/discussion forum aimed at taxi drivers was closed down. The chat room was being used to disseminate racist comment about minority ethnic groups in Ireland. The website www.taxi.ie closed its 'discussion forum' following complaints by the NCCRI on its racist content which were publicised by the Irish Times. The NCCRI is also represented on the Government's Internet Advisory Board and continue

Taxi Drivers

Following complaints of tensions at taxi ranks over queue jumping, where some potential passengers avoided black taxi drivers and other taxi drivers were perceived to be colluding with this process, a series of meetings were organised involving various stakeholders; taxi drivers, taxi regulator, Gardai, and local authority staff. The Taxi regulator has indicated that guidelines on cultural awareness for the taxi industry are currently being prepared as part of overall guidelines. The NCCRI has been consulted on these guidelines.

Bus Company

A bus company reprimanded a bus driver and issued an apology to two Muslim men who contended they were racially abused.