

The Leveson Inquiry

Witness Statement for Part 1, Module 1

Witness statement of Jane Winter

I, Jane Winter, Director of British Irish Rights Watch of 13b Hillgate Place, London SW12 9ES will say as follows:

1. I am the Director of British Irish Rights Watch (BIRW) which is an independent, non-governmental organisation that has been monitoring the human rights dimension of the conflict, and the peace process, in Northern Ireland since 1990. BIRW is working to promote a Northern Ireland in which respect for human rights is integral to all its institutions and experienced by all who live there. It strives to secure respect for human rights in Northern Ireland and to disseminate the human rights lessons learned from the Northern Ireland conflict in order to promote peace, reconciliation and the prevention of conflict. BIRW's services are available free of charge to anyone whose human rights have been violated because of the conflict, regardless of religious, political or community affiliations. BIRW takes no position on the eventual constitutional outcome of the conflict.
2. I have seen the witness statement of Ian Hurst prepared for the Inquiry. I was first informed by Ian Hurst in July 2011 that email communications and documents that I had sent to him had been accessed when his computer had been hacked. I can confirm that I have been interviewed by the Metropolitan Police and that I have provided a statement to them for the purposes of their ongoing investigation. As far as I am aware, correspondence that I had with third parties that I had sent to Ian Hurst appears to have been accessed by the person(s) who hacked into his computer.
3. I do not think I can add anything further to the facts contained in Ian Hurst's statement but there are a number of points that I would like to bring to the attention of the Inquiry:
 - There is a material difference between phone hacking and computer hacking in terms of its reach and impact. Unlike phone hacking, computer hacking enables the hacker to obtain access to communications and documents belonging to third parties. In this case, it appears fairly clear that confidential correspondence that is my property came into the possession of the person who hacked the computer.

- Furthermore, the persons/organisations sending material to me that I passed on to Ian Hurst have had their documents accessed.
- This 'ripple' effect is particularly chilling for an organisation such as BIRW which handles extremely sensitive and confidential documents and information. Unauthorised access to that material has the potential to compromise both official investigations and the safety of individuals, including myself.
- It is not clear what the purpose of taking my documents and communications was in this case. The material does not readily appear to be 'newsworthy' and it is not clear that it was obtained for the purposes of publication. Even though the evidence in Ian Hurst's statement (paragraph 15) appears to indicate that the hacking was conducted at the request of a journalist working for News International, it is not apparent that my documents were taken solely for publication as news stories. Therefore, the possibility of the hacking having another purpose rather than simply gathering news stories must be contemplated and investigated.

4. I believe the facts contained in this statement are true.

Signed:



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Jane Winter

Dated: 11th November 2011