

**INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF
DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE
AND REFLECTION**

JANUARY 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

As part of a joint invitation of Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI) and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO), Dr. Alex Boraine, then Deputy Chairperson of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visited Northern Ireland in February 1999. Dr Boraine was involved in a range of discussions with different organisations about the value and limits of truth recovery in and about Northern Ireland.

March 2000 saw the launch of the *All Truth is Bitter* Report, which documented the discussions that took place during the visit. *All Truth is Bitter* revealed a consensus that the issues deliberated during Dr. Boraine's visit needed more in-depth debate and discussion. This led to a proposal to take the debate further through a consultation process. A number of individuals were approached to bring this proposal forward. In June 2001 a diverse group of individuals formed the board of the Healing Through Remembering Project.

This Board undertook a consultation that asked 'How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and, in so doing, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?' The consultation included both the public and relevant organisations in an attempt to ensure that as many voices as possible were heard. In June 2002 the *Healing Through Remembering* Report was published.¹ The report outlined six recommendations.

1.2 DAY OF REFLECTION

One of the six recommendations made by the Board was the establishment of a Day of Reflection. This Day was to 'serve as a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgement and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland'. The Day of Reflection was envisaged as an inclusive event that would focus on 'reflection and contemplation'. The recommendation in the report identified both the principles of the Day of Reflection and some of the obstacles that might be encountered in establishing it. The purpose of the Day was to 'provide an opportunity for people to remember the events of the past in a non-confrontational, dignified and respectful manner' and to 'initially be a day of private individual reflection, but develop towards ensuring a collective and public dimension whereupon many—sometimes from opposing perspectives—would be remembering and commemorated on the same day'. The report notes, however, that although the feelings and experiences of individuals should be considered if such a day were to take place, it should also be recognised that it might be too early for some to participate in a Day of Reflection.

¹ For more information on the consultation process and to download a copy of the report, visit www.healingthroughremembering.org

The report recommended that debate about the value of a Day of Reflection be promoted. The Healing Through Remembering Initiative was established in October 2003 to forward all the recommendations in the report. In August 2004 the Day of Reflection sub group was established to primarily take forward the recommendation to establish a Day of Reflection related to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

1.3 FOCUS OF THIS REPORT

The Day of Reflection sub group has undertaken a range of projects to take forward the recommendation.² This report is one component of the sub group's broader work. Specifically, this report focuses on international examples of days of reflection and remembrance. The sub group felt a focus on this would widen their thinking and provide them with lessons, both positive and negative, from other societies that have tried to establish a Day of Reflection or a Day of Remembrance following an extensive political conflict.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The research began with the compiling of a list of all the international days of 'remembering' or 'reflecting' that could be identified through an Internet search. (*See Appendices One and Two for a list of remembrance-related days, and all international holidays.*) Most of these days we identified as being remembrance-related (*Appendix One*), however, focused on 'remembering' rather than 'reflecting'. That said the list provided an invaluable source of information on what other countries have attempted by setting up a dedicated day for remembering, reflecting on, or commemorating aspects of political conflict. On reviewing this list the sub group decided that a more detailed examination of specific days would be beneficial. The group then selected a number of days and countries for further examination. Thereafter, the researchers:

- Identified contacts in the countries selected by the sub group, including human rights organisations and academics that could provide a view of the commemoration day and a broad evaluation of it;
- Drafted and finalised, in discussion with the sub group, a questionnaire (*see Appendix Three*) that could be used to gather information and achieve deeper knowledge of international experiences;
- Sent the questionnaire to the contacts identified in some ten countries;³
- Completed a file of each case study based on feedback from at least four sources for each. In total, 19 responses were received (*see Appendix Four* for a list of respondents);
- Wrote back to respondents to clarify or discuss certain answers;

² See www.healingthroughremembering.org for details of current projects.

³ The research and questionnaires for days of remembrance in countries in Latin America (El Salvador, Chile and Guatemala) were handled primarily by Maria Truño i Salvadó, as the submissions needed to be translated from their original Spanish. The research and questionnaires for the remaining days of remembrance (South Africa, Cambodia, Russia, Sri Lanka, United States, Australia and other internationally based days of remembrance) were compiled by Kathleen Ensor.

- Translated into English the answers regarding the three Latin American countries (which were answered in Spanish) and documented the findings on each;
- Catalogued and analysed the information obtained from the answers to the questionnaires; and
- Drafted this report, documenting the information obtained on each case study, as well as highlighting the implications of each case for the potential establishment of a Day of Reflection in and about Northern Ireland.

2. CASE STUDIES

2.1 CAMBODIA: DAY TO REMAIN TIED IN ANGER

2.1.1 BACKGROUND

In April 1975 communist Khmer Rouge forces captured Phnom Penh. They ordered the evacuation of all cities and towns, claiming that Americans were coming to the cities. The evacuations were carried out in a matter of days and nearly 20,000 people died during this exodus. The Khmer Rouge then implemented an eight-point programme in an attempt to attain a 'pure' revolution. Pol Pot's goal was to transform Cambodia into a completely self-sufficient agrarian communist state. The Khmer Rouge detained and executed people without trial. They executed former soldiers, civil servants and their families, ethnic Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, intellectuals and doctors. Malnutrition and disease were rampant, especially in the countryside. The practice of 'collectivisation' led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Cambodians. Under the guidance of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge claimed to be intent on breaking down class barriers and creating an equal society. In reality, the Khmer Rouge conducted genocide throughout Cambodia, targeting Buddhist monks and driving over 100,000 Vietnamese out of the country. The Chinese and Muslim communities also faced discrimination and eradication. When the Khmer Rouge was overthrown by the Vietnamese army in 1979, none of the professors and lecturers from pre-1975 (who had not fled) had survived. The Khmer Rouge legacy continues to affect the Cambodian people.

2.1.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

This Day was given the name *T'veer Chong Kamhaeng* which literally means the 'Day for Tying Anger'. It is most often translated into English as 'Day Of Hatred' but in the spirit of Khmer words it could more accurately be translated as 'Day of Maintaining Rage' (Fawthrop & Jarvis, 2004). The Day was established to remember the events that transpired in the four years between 1975 and 1979, when the Khmer Rouge was responsible for an estimated 1.7 million deaths. In 1980, 20 May was chosen as a remembrance day by the State of Cambodia and the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). The goals of creating this national holiday were to remember the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge against the Cambodian people and to prevent a recurrence of these atrocities. The specific day, 20 May, was chosen because it marked the day the Khmer Rouge's policy of 'collectivisation' began. The Day was established under the PRK along with the support of the Vietnamese government during a time when there were multiple insurgencies throughout Cambodia. The governing regime of 1979 was especially concerned with the insurgency perpetuated by the Khmer Rouge and wished to focus support away from them to the PRK. This has led many to view the Day for Tying Anger as one that is divisive and political, a tool employed by the PRK when they needed national support.

2.1.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

The role of the Day for Tying Anger in Cambodian society was affected by the changes in regimes and the instability through the later part of the twentieth century.

2.1.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- Chosen in accordance with the day that launched collectivisation, the Day for Tying Anger was created with mixed objectives and the circumstances at its conception influenced the way it was incepted. One of the objectives of the government in establishing this day was politically motivated. Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces were still fighting against the PRK government during this period. The Day for Tying Anger served the purpose of uniting people against the Khmer Rouge through remembering the atrocities that were committed under that regime.
- The Day is traditionally observed through ceremonies performed by Buddhist monks in order 'to appease the spirits of the victims'. Political leaders give speeches and certain individuals share their stories with those in attendance.
- It was generally agreed that the Day for Tying Anger lacks cultural diversity, mostly because of a lack of acceptance of the varying political views. Different political perspectives have, in past commemorations, been disparaged and discouraged.
- It has been noted in recent years that the government of Cambodia has attempted a policy of 'national reconciliation'. In 2001, the government officially renamed the Day for Tying Anger as the 'Day of Remembrance' with limited success. Yet the use of this day to add to the support of a political party is still in effect.
- Some of those that are excluded from the commemoration include the opposition parties that do not agree with the ruling party's policies, as well as individuals and groups that do not agree with the politics of the ruling party. The Day is not supported by those who were part of the Khmer Rouge and some who had family members who supported and remain in support of the Khmer Rouge.
- One of the negative aspects of the Day for Tying Anger is that it has been viewed as a political tool that weakens forgiveness or remembrance. It is tough to break away from the history of the formation of the day and it is therefore difficult to encourage a more inclusive and less political future for the day. The objectives and goals surrounding the Day for Tying Anger have served to reinforce divisions through political and cultural intolerance. Though there have been attempts to broaden the day, it is still perceived as politically motivated and to support it is seen as tantamount to supporting the PRK.

2.1.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a Day of Reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- The date that is chosen for a Day of Reflection in and about Northern Ireland is crucial to establishing an inclusive day.
- The motivations behind establishing a Day of Reflection are a vital component of its inclusiveness. These motivations and the consequent perceptions of the wider public of the goals of the day will influence the participation of individuals in commemorating a Day of Reflection both in the short term and long term.
- If political parties are to be involved in establishing a Day of Reflection, then it is important that all communities are part of the process so the Day does not create further divisions. A Day of Reflection should be free from political manoeuvring if maximum involvement and participation are to be ensured.
- If there are people who feel excluded from a Day of Reflection and/or do not wish to commemorate on the specific day for certain reasons (e.g. might find it difficult in the beginning to commemorate at the same time as an opposition or rival political faction) one option might be to hold activities before or after the day in which individuals might feel more comfortable participating in.

2.1.6 REFERENCES

- Kiernan, B. (2004). Coming to Terms with the Past: Cambodia. *History Today, September*. Available at <http://www.yale.edu/cgp/Cambodia11.pdf>
- Fawthropp, T. & Jarvis, H. (2004). *Getting Away With Genocide? Elusive Justice and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal*. London: Pluto Press.

2.1.7 WEBSITES

Beauty and Darkness: Cambodia in Modern History
<http://www.mekong.net/cambodia/banyan2.htm>

The Documentation Center of Cambodia
<http://welcome.to/dccam>

Cambodian Association for Human Rights and Development
www.bigpond.com.kh/users/adhoc

The Killing Fields Memorial and Cambodian American Museum
<http://www.cambodian-association.org/museum.htm>

The Khmer Institute for Democracy
<http://www.bigpond.com.kh/users/kid/>

Cambodia Genocide Program

<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/>

2.2 AUSTRALIA: SORRY DAY / NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING

2.2.1 BACKGROUND

In 1995 the Federal Government of Australia enlisted the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) to investigate issues surrounding the separation of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. The investigation had come out of a previous inquiry into the deaths of 100 Aboriginals in prison, which had found that 43 of the individuals had been removed from their families as children. The inquiry that took place resulted in the comprehensive report *Bringing Them Home*. *Bringing Them Home* concluded that indigenous children had been forcibly removed from their families and communities since the arrival of Europeans in Australia. The removal of especially those of mixed Aboriginal and European descent was Federal and State Government policy. It was thought by various officials and welfare workers that mixed Aboriginal children could be brought up to be European domestic workers and labourers. It was estimated that, over time, the generations of Aboriginal people (that were not of mixed descent) would die out. This strategy was not successful (sic), and led to the acceptance of a policy of assimilation that encouraged Aboriginals to accept Western culture and abandon their own cultural practices. The investigation into these 'stolen generations' included examining the past practice of forcibly removing Aboriginal children mainly of mixed backgrounds from their families and the possibility of compensation.

2.2.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

The Day was established as part of one of the recommendations in the *Bringing Them Home* report. The federal government did not wish to follow the report's recommendation of a Sorry Day so the Chair of the Inquiry, Sir Ronald Wilson, invited about thirty people to discuss the possibility of a Sorry Day taking place through a community initiative. This group, comprising half indigenous and half non-indigenous people, decided to take the recommendation forward.

The date the report recommended, May 26, was chosen as the day the government should issue a national apology and as such the name 'Sorry Day' was decided on. The first Sorry Day took place on 26 May 1998. This particular day garnered support from community groups, as well as the parliaments of the states and territories. All these parliaments have issued an apology for past policies and invited representatives from Aboriginal communities to address parliamentary members. However, the federal government did not acknowledge Sorry Day as a national holiday and refused to apologise to the 'stolen generations' on behalf of the Australian people, claiming that to do so would imply that current generations were responsible for the actions of past generations.

2.2.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

A statement was issued stating that what was previously known as 'Sorry Day' would now be celebrated as the 'National Day of Healing' (*Appendix Five*). This was initiated by the Journey of Healing (a non-governmental organisation), who emphasised taking the next step, beyond saying 'sorry', in long-term healing. Sorry Day is still widely supported by community groups, local governments, representatives

from indigenous communities and many people throughout Australia. Events have expanded throughout regions and there are many groups working towards long-term reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people in Australia. The federal government still recognises neither a Sorry Day nor a National Day of Healing.

2.2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- Although Sorry Day did not receive much government support, community groups took the initiative to commemorate this day, as was recommended in the *Bringing Them Home* report. Though the national Sorry Day committee is central to co-ordinating events across the country, there are other role players who are vital to the events surrounding Sorry Day. This includes State Committees on Sorry Day, the Journey of Healing, and various individuals who support the concepts behind the day.
- It is felt by some that the non-indigenous people who staffed the institutions where Aboriginal children were removed were excluded to an extent from Sorry Day and that their stories are not being heard in the media.
- One of the major challenges faced in the creation of Sorry Day was the inadequate structure and scarce funding for those organising the Day. However, the media became interested in the conflicting views of those that wanted a Sorry Day and the federal government who did not. Through this media exposure more people were able to learn about the recommendation for Sorry Day. Many different groups, from universities to city and town councils, chose to recognise Sorry Day and hold their own commemorative events.
- Communities have been encouraged to organise their own events and form a ceremony that acknowledges the past wrongs towards the 'stolen generations' and contribute to the unification of the country.
- There are organisations that pursue the support of other recommendations in the *Bringing Them Home* report and are interested in assisting the country through the process of reconciliation and unification. The commemoration of Sorry Day / Day of Healing is a vital element of these goals. It is not known whether the federal government of Australia will acknowledge Sorry Day / Day of Healing, but there is continued support from state parliaments and various community groups.

2.2.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- It was suggested by respondents that a Day of Reflection could initiate a consultation process for groups to share information so that each community is more aware of the situations and circumstances of other communities. Such consultation would facilitate understanding and aid reflection on the past.
- It would be difficult to avoid the politicisation of a Day of Reflection. If it is not nationally supported, it would still be possible to look for local government support.
- The healing of a society from conflict is a long-term process and this should be taken into account when a Day of Reflection is planned for.
- A Day of Reflection should include creative events and community-based programmes that people can take part in.

2.2.6 REFERENCES

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- Nettheim, G. (2001). Reconciliation. *Hot Topics*, 33.
- Australian Equal Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. (1997). *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*. Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Available at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/>

2.2.7 WEBSITES

Journey of Healing

<http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/>

Reconciliation Australia

www.reconciliation.org.au

Reconciliation Victoria

www.reconciliationvic.org.au/

Australian government: culture and recreation

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/reconciliation/>

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation

<http://www.antar.org.au/>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Studies

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>

2.3 RUSSIA: DAY OF ACCORD AND RECONCILIATION

2.3.1 BACKGROUND

The Day of Reconciliation and Accord addresses the events surrounding the Bolshevik Revolution. The imperial Romanov family was overthrown in 1917, yet the government that replaced the monarchy proved ineffective. Some months later, Vladimir Lenin, with growing support, led the Bolsheviks (the radical wing of what was the Social Democrats) to take power. Following Lenin's ascension, there was increased civil strife as the Bolsheviks struggled to gain control over the USSR.

After Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin came into power and became widely known for his brutally repressive tactics to ensure domestic stability and crush opposition. Though the USSR was dissolved in 1990, there is still a legacy of human rights violations that has yet to be fully addressed and examined. The ineffectual leadership of the Romanovs, the deaths that occurred during the Bolshevik Revolution, the brutal dictatorship of Stalin, and the eventual collapse of the USSR are just some of the events that have taken place in the twentieth-century history of that region. Thus the history that is being commemorated by the Day of Accord and Reconciliation is a contested one. Though we could say that all histories are contested, the effects of the Socialist Revolution have yet to assume a comfortable public face.

2.3.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAY

Historically, the Day of the Socialist Revolution marked the start of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 7, 1917 and was commemorated each year. The Day of Reconciliation and Accord, determined by a decree signed by President Boris Yeltsin, was established on 7 November 1996 and was meant to replace the Day of the Socialist Revolution. President Yeltsin declared the Day of Reconciliation and Accord from his hospital bed, claiming that the motivation behind this action was to create a sense of unity and acknowledge the negative and positive impact the events of November 1917 had on Russia's history.

2.3.2 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

The Day of the Socialist Revolution had been celebrated fairly widely and the change made by President Yeltsin was met with disapproval. The Communist Party in Russia was strongly against this decree and felt that President Yeltsin had no right to change this Day of the Socialist Revolution to something else. There are some who support the Communist Party and still commemorate the Day of the Socialist Revolution as a celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.

2.3.3 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- No one felt that they could answer the questionnaires that were distributed, though they did comment on the Day. It was felt that the replacement of the Day of the Socialist Revolution by the Day of Reconciliation and Accord was a meaningless symbolic gesture on the part of the government.

- It was also suggested that while the Day of Reconciliation and Accord may have had previous significance directly after communism, the importance of the Day to the Russian people has dwindled.

2.3.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the Day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- Although there were no submissions for this case, problems that have been encountered in establishing this Day are self-evident. They highlight the importance of a consultation process to enable the consideration of the views and beliefs of those who might not support a Day of Reflection.
- If the date chosen has previous importance to certain individuals or groups there will be implications for the commemorating of this day.

2.3.5 REFERENCES

- Arnett, P. (1996). Recovering Yeltsin undercuts communists, calls for unity. Retrieved 29 June, 2005, from <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9611/07/yeltsin/>
- Jamestown Foundation Monitor (2001). Communists, Pro-Putin Youth Hold November 7 Demonstrations. Retrieved 29 June, 2005, from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/179-2.cfm>
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- Klimov, I. (2003). Is History a Lesson or Just a Memory? Retrieved 24 November, 2005, from <http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/analytic/klimov/ed032424>

2.3.6 WEBSITES

The Public Opinion Foundation

<http://bd.english.fom.ru>

2.4 THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

2.4.1 BACKGROUND

The region that was formerly known as Yugoslavia has a long and complicated history. The most recent conflict began, by most accounts, in 1991 when Slovenia and Croatia declared themselves independent states. They were followed by Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Serbia and Montenegro attempted to declare themselves the successor state to the former Yugoslavia. Conflict erupted in the 1990s. Slobodon Milosevic attempted to lead Serbian minorities in Bosnia and Croatia to form a 'Greater Serbia'. A campaign of ethnic cleansing took place throughout the region, with hundreds of thousands of people killed and millions displaced. Although the Dayton Peace Accords were signed in the mid 1990s, the continued killings of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo prompted NATO intervention and widespread bombing of Serbian targets. In 2001 Slobodon Milosevic was arrested and transferred to The Hague, to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, to be tried for crimes against humanity.

2.4.2 EXAMINING A DAY

It has been *proposed* that 9 March could be a day of remembrance. On this day in 1991 large-scale demonstrations occurred in Belgrade. The police used force to deter protesters, which resulted in over two hundred injuries, two deaths, and more than one hundred fifty arrests.

Though there is not a widely recognised day of remembrance as of yet, it became clear through submissions to the researchers that the possible options were being discussed in some circles. According to respondents, this led to the development of a more hypothetical approach to exploring days of remembrance in the regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and Croatia. It was therefore suggested by some respondents that a questionnaire with a focus on the *future* formation of a day of remembrance in the former Yugoslavia would be beneficial. The format of the original questionnaire was retained, though the questions were altered to reflect a hypothetical discussion of a day of remembrance in the former Yugoslavia. Submissions were then received that discussed the possibility of such a day in Serbia and Montenegro.⁴

2.4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- The submissions stressed the importance of choosing the date for a day of remembrance. There was a disagreement on whether the day needed to be symbolic. One argument was that without significant meaning, it would be difficult for the day of remembrance to focus people's attention on reflecting on the past. Another respondent pointed out that the symbolism of the date was not vital to the establishment of a day of remembrance, although it would be necessary to choose it carefully

⁴ Questionnaires were sent to groups in Bosnia and Croatia; however, there were no replies.

because of potentially conflicting views about the events that occurred on the date. The day itself should mark a new beginning.

- It was agreed the Day should be an initiative of both NGOs and politicians and that a day of remembrance had the potential to promote healing between communities as well as unity, if it was conceptualised with time and with much thought.

2.4.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the Day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- A Day of Reflection should focus on improving intercommunity relations.
- A remembrance or commemorative day that is not well organised may be counter-productive.
- It is essential the Day of Reflection not be something that is simply announced as coming into being and then forgotten.
- The date chosen for a Day of Reflection is a critical element in creating the day and should be chosen with care. It has the potential to exclude certain groups of people and create further divisions between communities.
- Creative events that could take place to commemorate the Day of Reflection should be carefully considered, such as art or theatre events. These events could encourage participants to reflect on lessons learned from the conflict or ways to ensure that violence does not happen again.

2.4.5 REFERENCES

- Grujic, D. (1994). The Day that Shook Belgrade. Retrieved 24 November, 2005, from http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/serbian_digest/128/t128-3.htm

2.5 SOUTH AFRICA: THE DAY OF RECONCILIATION DAY

2.5.1 BACKGROUND

In 1948, the National Party (NP) institutionalised racial segregation and enforced racist state policies by establishing 'apartheid' or 'separateness' between race groups. Apartheid was a system that was devised as a way to secure both the minority's power over the country and cheap labour from most of the population. It branded everyone in South Africa with a racial label and dictated where people of different race groups could live, travel, work, and even who they could have sexual relations with and marry. Through these policies, the white minority government was able to label each citizen. The government became notorious for the brutal way in which it managed to enforce the rules of apartheid, effectively managing to force individuals to live under the constraints of the label and identity assigned to them. The repressive tactics of the government resulted in widespread violence throughout the country. Though there was a series of half-hearted attempts at reform, apartheid eventually ended through peaceful negotiations. The president at the time, F.W. de Klerk, released Nelson Mandela from prison on 11 February 1990, as well as lifted the thirty-year ban on the African National Congress (ANC). This was followed in 1994 by a democratic election in which all citizens could participate for the first time. The ANC won the election and Nelson Mandela was elected the first President of a democratic South Africa.

2.5.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

The Day of Reconciliation takes place on 16 December. This date had previously been celebrated as the 'Day of the Vow', which commemorated the Battle of Blood. The Battle of Blood was fought between Voortrekkers and Zulu in 1838. The history of the day states that the Voortrekkers, who were outnumbered by the Zulus, made a vow to God that if they won the battle they would then make that day one of thanksgiving. On 16 December 1838 a battle ensued. The Voortrekkers defeated the Zulu, who suffered heavy casualties, and so the Voortrekkers (the ancestors of the Afrikaners) declared that day one of thanks to God for their victory.

December 16 had been celebrated as a public holiday in South Africa under different names for most of the twentieth century. However, this day did not become known as the 'Day of the Vow' until the National Party renamed the holiday in 1980. Additionally, 16 December was also commemorated by the African National Congress (ANC). On this day in 1961, the ANC began to arm its soldiers to overthrow apartheid. Therefore, it had significance for more than one constituency, but for opposite reasons.

At the time of South Africa's transition, President Nelson Mandela issued a statement that established 16 December as 'Reconciliation Day' and no longer the 'Day of the Vow'. The day was already recognised as a public holiday, though President Mandela stated: 'the Government of National Unity chose this day precisely because the past had made December 16 a living symbol of bitter division'. (*See Appendix Six, Message by President Nelson Mandela on National Reconciliation Day, 1995.*) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa thus chose 16 December 1995 as the starting date for its work.

2.5.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

There continues to be government support for the Day of Reconciliation through various government events and statements of recognition of the Day.

2.5.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- The day was chosen for its symbolism and history. The government was preparing for the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and it wanted to portray a unified South African future. In effect, the main actors in creating the day were part of the political leadership and this was not a community-based initiative.
- There are many events for commemoration of this day, including political-, musical-, cultural- and sporting-related activities. There are memorial services and extensive media coverage. Yet some feel that the Day of Reconciliation is celebrated at a provincial level rather than a national level.
- One of the negative impacts cited was that the Day of Reconciliation was instituted too soon, while there was a need to address underlying issues about reconciliation in general. Encouraging South Africans that were not as affected by the violence and repression to grasp the significance of the Day has proven to be a challenge.
- Replacing the Day of the Vow with the Day of Reconciliation alienated some of the Afrikaner constituency, so many feel the Day is not commemorated as it was intended to be (as a fully inclusive day). This is mostly a result of the government's decision to set up the Day of Reconciliation without consulting the wider population.
- More negative views of the Day of Reconciliation emphasise the problems with the government programme associated with the Day. Respondents felt the government does not make an adequate effort to reach out to certain areas in South Africa that do not have the resources for commemorating the Day such as the rural areas.
- Furthermore, some respondents felt that if the government fails to deal with reconciliation at a practical level throughout the year, celebrating and creating unity on one day is not enough.

2.5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- Timing is an important part of setting up a Day of Reflection in Northern Ireland, and it would be difficult to promote a Day of Reflection that is inclusive if there is no real political reconciliation.

- The events that commemorate a Day of Reflection should be well planned and indicate the meaning of the Day.
- The date that is chosen for a Day of Reflection is crucial, since it has the potential to upset and alienate people. It is imperative that those who might feel alienated by the date chosen for a Day of Reflection are aware that the difficulties they are experiencing are acknowledged.
- If a Day of Reflection is to remain significant for all parties concerned, it is compulsory that these groups be involved in the formation of this Day. A public participation process for creating a Day of Reflection is advised, with focus being placed on marginalised groups (e.g. ex-combatants, women, youth, survivors and families of victims).
- If establishing a Day of Reflection is led by or involves political leaders, it is necessary to ensure that the events or narratives of the day do not distort historical facts.

2.5.6 REFERENCES

- Naidu, E. (2004). A Community-Centred Approach to Memorialisation: A Living Memory Intervention Process. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- African National Congress (2005). Message by President Nelson Mandela on National Reconciliation Day, 16 December 1995. Retrieved 7 June 2005 from <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/Mandela/1995/pr951216.html>

2.5.7 WEBSITES

South African Government Information

<http://www.info.gov.za>

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

<http://www.csvr.org.za>

2.6 GUATEMALA: NATIONAL DAY FOR VICTIMS DIGNITY

2.6.1 BACKGROUND

In 1954 the democratically elected socialist government in Guatemala was overthrown by a few citizens with the backing of the CIA. For thirty years there was conflict between the government's army and the guerrilla Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). This resulted in the death of over 100,000 Guatemalans and the displacement of over a million. Most of those killed were indigenous Mayan Indians who were killed by the US-backed army. The civil war ended in 1996 and President Alvaro Arzu was elected. Democratic elections have continued, although corruption and human rights violations persist. As a result of the peace negotiations a truth commission called Commission for History Clarification of Human Rights Violations and Violent Acts that Caused Suffering to Guatemalan Population (CEH) was established. This official truth commission, with the support of the United Nations, launched its report called *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* on 25 February 1999. The CEH named some 42,200 victims (83% Mayans) with over half of these people being victims of arbitrary executions. The army was found to be responsible for over 90% of all violations.

2.6.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

The report of the CEH recommended establishing a National Day for Victims Dignity.

2.6.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

Since the recommendation for a Victims Dignity Day, several human rights organisations have lobbied for its establishment. In 2000 it was approved. However, three weeks later the President proposed 26 April as the day. This was the day when Monsignor Gerardi, the co-ordinating bishop of the Catholic Interdiocesan Project Recovery of Historical Memory project (REMHI), was killed after he launched the REMHI project report. REMHI was set up by the Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala (ODHAG) as an alternative to the official truth recovery process. The REMHI report documented thousands of abuses against indigenous people. Other parliamentary proposals then followed, including a suggestion for the second Sunday in May. Finally, without any consultation, the Congress approved a decree that established 31 March as the National Day for Victims of Violence. Interestingly, 31 March was already deemed Mother's Day, so the decree noted that the day should also take the form of remembrance for all mothers that suffered. That said, since 1999 human rights organisations have been commemorating 25 February as the day the CEH launched its report and as a reminder of the human rights violations that took place in the past.

2.6.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- Although the truth commission recommendation was implemented, the process of establishing the National Day for Victims Dignity was problematic. There was little consultation.

- Some also consider the whole establishment of the day as paradoxical since the President of the Congress who signed the decree was the former General Ríos Montt. He was head of the government in the early 1980s when mass atrocities against indigenous people took place.
- Overall, it seems that the political implications of changing the date are quite negative, because of the exclusion of civil society. Since 2002 (when Congress unilaterally decided on a date) human rights organisations have continued commemorating 25 February and not 31 March. Possibly, two separate days may emerge over time.

2.6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- The consultation process is critical and civil society organisations should lead the process that is aimed at establishing a day to ensure a more positive response from community and civic organisations, as well as the public more broadly.

2.6.6 REFERENCES

- Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification. (1999). Guatemala: Memory of Silence. Report of the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH). Retrieved 28 November, 2005, from <http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/>

2.6.7 WEBSITES

United Nations Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA): Monitoring Reports on the Compliance of the Recommendations of the Historic Clarification Commission

www.minugua.gt

International Peace Brigades in Guatemala

www.peacebrigades.org/guatemala

2.7 CHILE: NATIONAL UNITY DAY

2.7.1 BACKGROUND

In 1970, Senator Salvador Allende Gossens, a member of Chile's Socialist Party, was elected President of Chile. On 11 September 1973 he was forcibly removed from office, following a CIA-backed coup. Allende allegedly committed suicide in the presidential palace as armed forces bombed it. General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte took over the setting up of a military government. Years of human rights violations followed, with thousands being killed and some 30,000 people fleeing the country. Pinochet became President in 1980 following an undemocratic plebiscite. However, in 1988, following another plebiscite, General Pinochet was denied a second term of eight years. A new president was elected in 1989, Patricio Aylwin, a Christian Democrat. In 1991 Aylwin established the *National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation* report. Following extensive inquiry and statement taking, the report of the Commission, known as the Rettig Report, confirmed that around 3,000 people were killed or disappeared during the dictatorship, although human rights groups put the figure as higher. Chile has continued to have regular democratic elections since then.

2.7.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

In Chile, September is considered 'patriotic month' because several commemorations take place such as Independence Day (18th) and a day for remembering the military coup (11th). On 11 November 1998 political parties in the Congress established National Unity Day to be celebrated on the first Monday in September. This was aimed as a substitute for the remembrance that took place in conjunction with the military coup. Both left- and right-wing wanted to avoid the confrontations and demonstrations that took place by those against and those supporting commemorating 11 September, which was a national holiday declared by Pinochet in 1981. National Unity Day was set up and had no special significance; rather it was chosen as a national holiday instead of 11 September. It was seen as a mechanism to stop commemorations around the military coup and prevent riots on 11 September.

2.7.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

The original aim of the day was to promote reflection coupled with reconciliatory gestures. This has never happened. In fact, the Day has received little social recognition and there has even been a campaign carried out against it. Many in the human rights sector felt the day minimised claims for justice and focused too much on reconciliation. Finally, four years after its approval, in 2002 the National Unity Day was deleted by law (19.793 on 6 March 2002) because it was felt that it provoked division rather than unity or reconciliation.

2.7.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- Most Chilean people have little sense of why this day was established and declared a holiday. There was little acceptance or understanding of its purpose.

- There is and was little debate in civil society structures or society at large about the day. Reflecting on the past during the day was minimal.
- The concept of reconciliation in the Chilean context, like in many Latin American countries where military dictatorships took place, is seen negatively. It is seen, especially by those in the human rights sector, as the way official institutions such as the state, army and church avoid their responsibilities and argue for forgetting about the past, rather than as a concept associated with justice for past crimes.

2.7.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- The day was promoted by parliamentarians and politicians and was not accompanied by a social process. The purpose of the day was never properly understood or seized on.
- The day was essentially a national holiday and there was no programme to promote reflection on what justice and reconciliation mean and imply.

2.7.6 REFERENCES

- Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation. (1993). Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation. Retrieved 28 November, 2005, from http://www.usip.org/library/tc/doc/reports/chile/chile_1993_foreward.html

2.7.7 WEBSITES

CODEPU (Human Rights organisation)
www.derechos.org/nizkor/chile/codepu

2.8 SRI LANKA: REMEMBRANCE DAY FOR UNIVERSITY REFUGEE CAMP DISAPPEARED

2.8.1 BACKGROUND

The conflict between the Sri Lankan security forces and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) began in 1983 after mounting tension between minority Tamil separatists and the Sinhalese majority. In February 2002 the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government formalised a ceasefire and started peace negotiations. It is estimated that tens of thousands died as a result of this conflict. In 1999, the BBC reported that Sri Lanka had the second highest number of disappeared people in the world. This was following the publication of a UN study that reported that 12,000 Sri Lankans had disappeared since 1980 after being detained by security forces and that over 55,000 people had been killed in the preceding twenty-seven years.

2.8.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

Remembrance Day for University Refugee Camp Disappeared commemorates the anniversary of the disappearance of over one-hundred-and-fifty Tamils after they had been arrested by the Sri Lanka security forces. They were taken from the Eastern University refugee camp at Vantharamoolai on 5 September 1990 and were never seen again. In 1993 the Regional Centre of the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) at Batticaloa (in the eastern province of Sri Lanka) conducted inquiries into the disappearances. Its report identified soldiers that had taken part in detaining the individuals. The inquiry recommended that victims be compensated for their loss. On 5 September 1996 Peace Brigades International (PBI) observers were present at a gathering of 'The Families of the Disappeared' at Eastern University in order to remember the events of 1990. An hour-long vigil took place, led by three family members of the disappeared. One-hundred-and seventy-five people took part in the ceremony, where they all tied a piece of what was a long yellow string to each of their wrists as a symbol of hope. PBI stated there were plans for further commemoration on the following 5 September.

2.8.3 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- Although this Day it is known about nationally it is not celebrated at a national level. There are reports of its commemoration by international groups in the region of Batticaloa and Vantharamoolai, but commemorating 5 September 1990 does not take place outside of that region at this stage.
- Owing to the regional nature of any events that take place regarding this Day, all inquiries and requests for submissions were met with either claims of a lack of knowledge of the Day or of the events surrounding it.

2.8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- Even though there were no submissions discussing Remembrance Day for University Refugee Camp Disappeared, it is still an interesting case for the Day of Reflection sub group to examine. The Day has not attracted widespread attention or support across the society. It commemorates what is still a sensitive and possibly alienating event for some individuals, not to mention the fact that the disappearances have not been formally investigated or corroborated by the Sri Lankan government.
- The ceremonies that have been reported illustrate that reflection is taking place at a more community-based and individual level. It would be advisable for the sub group to follow the development of this Remembrance Day for if it does become a wider event, it would have been a day of remembrance that began in one community and was relatively isolated, but was able to expand into a more inclusive day.

2.8.5 REFERENCES

- Cyberspace Graveyard for Disappeared Persons. (1999). Where is the Mass Grave of Vantharamoolai? Retrieved 28 November, 2005, from http://www.disappearances.org/mainfile.php/articles_srilanka/10/
- Peace Brigades International-Sri Lanka. (Undated). The Families of the Disappeared" Gather to Remember. Retrieved 21 July, 2005, from <http://www.peacebrigades.org/lanka/slp9605.html>
- TamilNet. (1999). Batticaloa mass graves investigation urged on massacre anniversary. Retrieved 27 November, 2005, from <http://www.tamilcanadian.com/eelam/hrights/index.php?FULL=1000788>

2.9 UNITED STATES: MEMORIAL DAY

2.9.1 BACKGROUND

Memorial Day was established by General Logan, in General Order #11, in 1868. It was originally created as 'Decoration Day' and was not officially known as 'Memorial Day' until 1966 when President Lyndon Johnson made the announcement at Waterloo. Initially it was meant to take place on 30 May. The origins of the Day are still disputed by some, who trace commemorating dead soldiers since before the Civil War. In the National Holiday Act of 1971, Congress made Memorial Day into a three-day weekend by changing the date from 30 May to the last Monday in May, which is now a contested issue.

2.9.3 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- Some people felt that they could not properly answer questions to do with this day of remembrance because they no longer saw it as having any meaning. Others felt that they would not be able to provide adequate information about the day.
- The submissions received noted that the goals of Memorial Day had not changed over time, but that the way that it was acknowledged had changed. On the day, the President of the U.S. gives a speech that honours the contributions of the dead and lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. Other common practices that take place on Memorial Day include placing flags on graves, visiting memorials, and holding parades in some places.
- Key players in commemorating this day are mostly government officials, namely the President, as well as veterans groups. It was pointed out that, theoretically, the key players should be the American citizens.
- To prevent any distortion of the meaning of Memorial Day over time, the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance was formed. In December of 2000, the National Moment of Remembrance was passed to assist in reminding and educating people of the meaning of Memorial Day. At 3pm local time people are asked to reflect on the sacrifices made in the past by so many so that people could enjoy the freedoms that they experience now.
- The view that Memorial Day has lost its meaning seemed prevalent in the research conducted. Many felt that, over time, Memorial Day had simply become a public holiday that allowed them a three-day weekend for taking a trip somewhere.
- Although many do not see an emphasis on remembering those who died in the armed services, certain organisations are working toward re-establishing Memorial Day according to its original aim of

a time for remembrance. These organisations include The US Memorial Day Foundation and US Memorial Day.

A Bill was introduced to the Senate in 1999 and reintroduced in 2003. This Bill, S70, proposes that Memorial Day be changed back to 30 May and that Armed Forces day should be celebrated on the third weekend of every May.

2.9.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- A Day of Reflection would differ from this Day because Memorial Day remembers people who were killed in the armed services, where a Day of Reflection would be a more inclusive Day.
- A meaningful day should be chosen for a Day of Reflection, as clearly many Americans do not know the significance of 30 May in American history. It might help if events are scheduled in a way that makes people aware of them and ensures that the day's significance is not forgotten.
- It is difficult to say that a Day of Reflection in Northern Ireland would lose its meaning over time, but it should be noted that such a Day would be celebrated in a social and political context. In the wake of September 11, Memorial Day garnered renewed support by certain groups for remembering the Day as originally intended. It will be necessary to keep in mind the political context of the Day of Reflection not only at the time it is established, but the context in the years afterwards as well.

2.9.5 WEBSITES

U.S. Memorial Day

<http://www.usmemorialday.org>

Memorial Day Foundation

<http://www.memorialdayfoundation.org>

U.S. Department of Veterans

<http://www.va.gov/>

Memorial Day History

<http://www.usmemorialday.org/>

2.10 HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

2.10.1 BACKGROUND

The genocide undertaken by the Nazi regime and history of holocaust is well known. Since the end of the Second World War there have been several processes set up to commemorate the atrocities. One such international process is the establishment of Holocaust Memorial Day, which was commemorated in the United Kingdom for the first time in January 2001.

2.10.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

The United Kingdom (U.K.) Holocaust Memorial Day was created through an extensive process that aimed for wider consultation of the international community. In 1998 the Swedish, U.K. and U.S. governments established the Task Force for International Co-operation, Education, Remembrance and Research. They were then joined by Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Israel, Italy and France. On 10 June 1999, a working group of government officials was convened to cultivate proposals for a wider consultation. This consultation document was issued in October 1999 and received submissions from 237 organisations and 284 individuals. The majority of submissions showed support for an inclusive Holocaust Memorial Day. At the Stockholm Conference in 2000, forty-four governments signed a declaration aimed at establishing Holocaust Memorial Day. The conference also focused on ways to support education and research that addressed racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance. Holocaust Memorial Day has been commemorated in the U.K. on January 27 since 2001. This date marks the anniversary of the liberation of the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, in 1945, as well as the European Day against genocide.

2.10.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

The aims of this Day are to ensure that the crimes, anti-Semitism and racism that were committed during the Holocaust are not repeated. It also aims to raise awareness of and encourage reflection on recent atrocities that raise similar issues. The long-term goals of those that were vital in forming the day have not changed. There is still a plan to turn over responsibility for planning the day's events nationally to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, who will continue to take various views and feelings into account when commemorating this day.

2.10.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

On the basis of respondents' views the following findings were extracted:

- The submission that was received for this case recounted there was a significant effort by the government of the U.K. to account for the views of other countries and this has led to a more inclusive day. One of the challenges in setting up this day was overcoming the perception that Holocaust Memorial Day was not relevant to the public, i.e. the day only related to the Jewish community and the Holocaust was being singled out as more important than other genocides.

- Events for marking the day take place at the national and local levels in many countries and representatives from the communities who suffered during the Holocaust are consulted on the form the day should take.
- The day is not political in nature. The feeling did not exist that any groups are excluded from this day.

2.10.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a day of reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- This day illustrates the significance of wider consultation. The input that was received regarding Holocaust Memorial Day is still considered a crucial element to the commemorations and continues to shape events that take place nationally and locally.
- There was a clear and organised plan for Holocaust Memorial Day, which indicates that those establishing a Day of Reflection might benefit from forming a long-term plan based on much thought and deliberation. This would consider both problems with inclusion, local consultations for event planning, and possible perceptions that a Day of Reflection is not a meaningful day.

2.10.6 WEBSITES

Holocaust Memorial Day

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/default.asp>

2.11 PEACE ONE DAY

2.11.1 BACKGROUND

Peace One Day was launched by Jeremy Gilley, a British documentary film maker and peace activist, in 1999. It is the day where there is a global ceasefire, on 21 September. The first time that this international day was commemorated was 21 September 2002. Previously, this day had been known as the International Day of Peace, created by the United Nations. Jeremy Gilley felt that this day was not observed and that very few people worldwide took any notice of it. He set out to push for countries to recognise and observe the day. The United Nations now holds a ceremony each year to mark the day. There are also events held by other groups, as well as the Peace One Day organisation. Through advocacy work and much publicity, Peace One Day is observed in countries around the world. This recognition took the time and effort of many individuals.

2.11.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents' views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a Day of Reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- A Day of Reflection may be difficult to maintain. The idea that time and patience are also factors in establishing a Day of Reflection is illustrated by the growth in popularity of Peace One Day.

2.11.3 REFERENCES

- United Nations. (2001). General Assembly Resolution 55/282: International Day of Peace: United Nations.

2.11.3 WEBSITES

Peace One Day

<http://www.peaceoneday.org/page/home>

2.12 HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

2.12.1 BACKGROUND

On 4 December 1950, the United Nations General Assembly, in resolution 423, established Human Rights Day. Under the auspices of the day all states and interested organisations were invited “to adopt 10 December of each year as Human Rights Day, to observe this day to celebrate the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, and to exert increasing efforts in this field of human progress”.

2.12.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

Human Rights Day was established and continues to be organised by the United Nations. Most human rights organisations mark the day as one for reflecting on human rights issues. Local, national and international organisations and governments use this day to promote human rights education and awareness.

2.12.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

This day has been observed for over fifty years. The United Nations normally organises events to commemorate Human Rights Day and to reflect on human rights issues. Human Rights Day is also used to create awareness of and education in human rights.

2.12.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR A DAY OF REFLECTION

On the basis of respondents’ views regarding the day and information obtained about it, the following implications for a Day of Reflection in and about Northern Ireland were extracted:

- Human Rights Day affords many individuals around the world the opportunity to reflect on issues of human rights. This is made possible by the support of international organisations that work to raise awareness.
- A Day of Reflection might look towards the various strategies for implementing a positive view of a Day of Reflection, perhaps by focusing on specific issues that are affecting the areas in and about Northern Ireland. While there is a risk of alienating some individuals and organisations, there is also the possibility of touching upon contemporary issues, such as ongoing violations of rights or the issue of xenophobia. Of course, one would have to tread carefully if this was considered.

2.12.5 WEBSITES

UN Human Rights Day

<http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2004/index.htm>

2.13 UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE

2.13.1 BACKGROUND

This Day was created to direct attention towards helping torture victims and ending torture. The UN hoped to assist in ending torture around the world and has funded the creation of treatment centres with the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

2.13.2 ESTABLISHING THE DAY

United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was established in 1998 and is observed on 28 June.

2.13.3 EVOLUTION OF THE DAY

The UN provides information packs on different ways of commemorating this Day. There are various events that take place to help focus on the issue of torture and to promote the UN Convention against Torture. Human rights and anti-torture organisations around the world promote the Day to the public, health professionals, and government officials.

2.13.4 WEBSITES

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

<http://www.un.org/events/torture/>

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 COMMON THEMES

Many of the people consulted in the course of this research stressed the thought needed in choosing the date for a Day of Reflection. This was mentioned for a number of reasons. Choosing a date that promoted inclusive reflection entails understanding and an ability to reflect on the many different views that are held about a county's history, as well as its conflict. This was illustrated in nearly all the cases that were examined.

Many of the submissions stressed the importance of timing in establishing a Day of Reflection. Some suggested a consultation process, while others simply emphasised patience and long-term planning as essential elements to a day of remembrance or reflection.

A day of remembrance that is seen as mostly symbolic and with little real substance has the potential to create adverse reactions to reflecting on and remembering the past. These potential negative reactions could be impacted on by the particular date chosen and by the way in which the day is commemorated by the government or community organisations.

The support of civil society is a key factor in a day of remembrance. Without this support, the day might not reach people who do not know about it or are not inclined to look further into taking part in reflection. Involving civil society means consultation throughout the process, i.e. from its inception to its delivery.

3.2 CHALLENGES

The politicisation of a day of remembrance can have damaging effects on the future commemoration of the day. The challenge, of course, is that it may be difficult to avoid if a Day of Reflection is made a national public holiday. Even if the day is not celebrated nationally, there is still the risk that it will take on a political symbolism that was not the original intent of those that established the day. This may happen if political parties become involved and use it for their own political ends and if the media attention is primarily negative and seeks polarising views.

The date of a Day of Reflection can impede an inclusive process and lead to alienating certain communities and individuals.

Even if there is a consultation process, there is still the possibility that a small minority of people might still feel excluded from a Day of Reflection. That said extensive consultation is the best way to make as many people as possible feel included and part of the event as possible, and offset any negative feeling.

3.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

In some cases, we received a limited number of submissions about some of the days considered. This might have affected the range of voices that contributed to the research. We attempted to counteract this by complementing all submissions with desktop research, i.e. through the Internet, journal articles, newspaper articles, and books. Naturally, some limitation remains. However, common themes certainly emerged from the submissions and the desktop research, as have been referred to above. These common themes also inform the recommendations.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Most submissions emphasised the importance of an inclusive consultation process. This process should take place over time and would allow the various constituencies in and about Northern Ireland to have a voice in what a Day of Reflection might look like. This process could take place in phases so that ways of implementation could be carefully decided on and compiled. A phased approach would also be more responsive to the constantly changing political landscape of Northern Ireland.

4.2 CHOOSING A DATE

The date that is chosen is an important part of establishing a Day of Reflection. As a Day of Reflection has the express aim of encouraging reflection on the past, it should be anticipated that people will consider the events that took place years before on the chosen date. That said, the international lessons suggest that it is likely that some group or constituency will initially feel uncomfortable with the day. The reservations of such groups should be considered and acknowledged. This could be accomplished, at least to some degree, through a good consultation process.

4.3 CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICS

A Day of Reflection should be a community-based initiative but also be part of wider social and political processes. It is clear from the cases studied that those days unilaterally initiated by governments or politicians, and without the support and endorsement of community groups, generally lacked legitimacy. Once the Day of Reflection is established, community-based organisations will be critical in moving the day forward initially and into the future, so their support is crucial.

4.4 WAYS OF COMMEMORATING

There are many different ways of commemorating days of remembrance. Creative activities that promote reflection should be explored through the consultation process. In the course of their deliberations, the HTR Day of Reflection sub group should also consider possible creative events and activities.

4.5 ONE DAY A YEAR

Traditionally, days of remembrance are commemorated on one day a year. However, some submissions pointed out the significance of promoting ways of remembering throughout the year. When planning a Day of Reflection, the HTR sub group should look at ways of promoting reflection throughout the year. There is also the option of creating a 'Week of Reflection'.

4.6 THE WAY FORWARD

The HTR Report (2002) recommends that the Day of Reflection be a process. The international lessons gleaned from this research suggest the wisdom of this recommendation. For this reason, the HTR sub group should approach establishing a Day of Reflection from a long-term, consultative and strategic perspective. Many of the criticisms of other days of remembrance explored in this research were aimed at those who rushed processes or circumvented them. This had the effect of excluding certain individuals and groups, or of alienating them. In several cases it proved difficult to overcome initial problems once a day was established, as the legitimacy of the day was continuously questioned. The Day of Reflection should be a process that is given time and allowed room to develop.

APPENDIX ONE – REMEMBRANCE-RELATED DAYS

Holidays with their main motivations linked to:⁵

- Peace agreements
- Victims: soldiers who died in conflict
- Veterans of wars
- National heroes: resistance fighters, liberators (birth or death)
- Battles: ending or victory
- Remembrance Day (1 or 2 November) – All Souls Day

AMERICA

Argentina

Malvinas Day: 5 April (Veterans Day and tribute to the fallen in this war)

Saint Martin's Day: 17 August (memorialises the death of José Francisco de San Martín, died 1850)

Brazil

Tiradentes Day: 21 April (a tribute for a national hero, a resistance fighter against the Portuguese)

Canada

Remembrance Day: 11 November (tribute to the soldiers who died in IWW)

Chile

Navy Day: 21 May (celebrates a battle against Peru in 1789)

Army Day: 19 September

Colombia

Boyce Battle Day: 7 August (celebrates victory against the Spanish in 1819)

Ecuador

Pichicha Battle: 24 August (celebrates victory against the Spanish in 1822)

El Salvador

Peace Agreement Day: 16 January

First call for Independence Day: 5 November (in tribute to the first battle for independence 1811)

Guatemala

Army Day: 30 June

Revolution Day: 20 October (1940?)

Haiti

Ancestry Day: 2 January

⁵ Source: BANK HOLIDAYS 2004, excluding religious holidays and independence days. *RESOURCE: Bank Holidays of the World*. Available at http://www.jours-feries.com/index.php3?id_langue=2 (October 2004).

Anniversary of the Death of Dessalines: 17 October (anniversary of the death of nation founder, Dessalines, died 1806).

Armed Forces Day: 18 November (celebrates victory over the French, 1803)

Nicaragua

Liberation Day: 19 July (Sandinista victory against Somoza)

Panama

Martyrs Day: 9 January

Paraguay

Peace of Chaco Day: 12 June (celebrates the end of Chacho war against Bolivia in 1935)

Battle of Boqueron: 29 September (1930)

Peru

Battle of Angamos: 8 October

United States of America

Martin Luther King's Day: 19 January

Memorial Day: 31 March (observed on the last Monday in May in most of the USA, in honour of the nation's armed serviced personnel killed in wartime and the deceased in general. Created after the Civil War, the Day is traditionally marked by parades and memorial speeches).

Veteran's Day: 11 November (in honour of those, living and dead, who served with the US armed forces in wartime. Formerly Armistice Day, which was proclaimed to commemorate the termination of World War I)

Uruguay

Battle of Las Piedras: 18 May (end of the war with Brazil in 1828)

AFRICA

Algeria

Revolution Day: 1 November (upheaval against French 1830)

Angola

Colonial Repression Martyrs Day: 4 January (in tribute to the outbreak of the armed struggle against the Portuguese)

Beginning Armed Uprising: 4 February

Victory Day: 27 March

Day of Peace and Reconciliation: 4 April (a national holiday after the signing of the Luena Memorandum of Understanding as a supplement to the Lusaka Protocol, putting an end to the successive wars)

Burkina Faso

People's Uprising: 3 January

Democratic Republic of Congo

Independence Martyrs Day: 4 January

Day of National Heroes Lumumba: 17 January

Education Day: 30 April

Army Day: 17 November

New Regime Anniversary: 24 November

Kenya

Madaraka Day (Responsibility Day): 1 June (anniversary self-government)

Liberia

Armed Forces Day: 11 February

Remembrance Day: 12 November

Mali

Martyrs Day: 26 March

Mozambique

Mueda Massacre Day: 16 June

Rwanda

Democracy's Day: 28 January

Genocide Commemoration Day: 6 April

Uganda

Martyrs Day: 3 June

National Heroes Day: 9 June

South Africa

Human Rights Day: 21 March

Freedom Day: 27 April

Youth Day: 16 April

Day of Reflection: 16 December (national day)

Zimbabwe

Heroes Day: 11 August

Unity Day: 22 December

ASIA

Armenia

Genocide Remembrance Day: 24 April (in tribute to the Armenian killed by the Turks in 1915-1916)

Peace Day: 9 May

Australia

Azac Day: 25 April (commemorates the Australia and New Zealand National Corps soldiers who died during the world wars)

Azerbaijan

Martyrs Day: 20 January

Victory Day: 9 May

National Salvation Day: 15 June

Day of the National Revival: 17 November

Day of the Solidarity: 31 December

Bangladesh

Victory Day: 16 December

Cambodia

Victory Day over genocide regime: 7 January

Children's Day: 1 June

Paris Peace Talks Anniversary: 23 October

India

Mahatma Gandhi Birth Anniversary: 2 October

Iran

Oil nationalization Day: 20 March

Celebration of the American humiliation in Tabas: 25 April (American commando unsuccessfully tried to liberate 49 hostages in Teheran in 1980)

Iraq

Anniversary of chemical bombing in Halabja (only in Kurdistan): 17 March

Peace Day: 8 August

Japan

Constitution Day: 3 May (parliamentary democracy established in 1947)

Children's Day: 5 May

Hiroshima Peace Festival (only in Hiroshima): 6 August (in tribute to the victims of the dropping of the first nuclear bomb in 1945. Observance is held at Peace Memorial Park)

Memorial Day (only in Nagasaki): 9 August

Respect for the Aged Day: 20 September

South Korea

Memorial Day for the Korean War: 6 June

Children's Day: 5 May

Lao

Children's Day: 1 June

Mongolia

Day of Children and Mother: 1 June

Nepal

Democracy Day: 19 February (in tribute to the 1952 Constitution)

Pakistan

Pakistan's Defence Day: 6 September

Federation of Russia

Accord and Reconciliation Day: 7 November. One of the most important holidays during the Soviet era was Revolution Day. It was a time to honour and remember those who instigated the October Revolution of 1917, and those who fought and died as a result of oppression and rebellion. In 1996, then President Yeltsin signed a decree changing the focus of the November 7 holiday: it was considered too negative as

it focused on the countless victims of revolution and, also, it split society rather than unifying it. The holiday became Accord and Reconciliation Day, in an attempt to promote the ideal that the Russian people have a common past and future.

Turkey

National Holiday of the Sovereign and his children: 23 April (inauguration of the Grand National Assembly in 1923, and promotion of the idea that children are the symbol of the New Turkey).

Turkmenistan

Remembrance Day: 12 January

Commemoration of the Great Earthquake: 6 October

Neutrality Day: 12 December

EUROPE

Germany

National Day – Day of Unity: 3 October

Belgium

Flemish community Day (state of Flanders only): 11 July (applies to Flemish-speaking civil servants)

French community Day: 27 September (applies to Flemish-speaking civil servants)

Croatia

Anti-Fascism day: 22 June (celebrates the uprising of Croatian partisans against German and Italy in 1991)

National State Day: 25 June (statehood proclaimed in 1991)

Cyprus

EOAK Day: 1 April (in the 1950s, Greek Cypriots, under the leadership of Archbishop Makarios, started a campaign for the unification with Greece. A Greek Cypriot secret organisation called EOAK started guerrilla attacks on the British)

Peace Day: 20 July (anniversary of the 1974 Turkish invasion)

Greek Independence Day: 25 March (uprising against the Ottoman rule in 1821)

Independence Day: 1 October

Czech Republic

Struggle for Liberty and Democracy Day: 17 November

Denmark

Common Prayer Day: 7 May (also named Store Bededagm, protestant)

France

V-E Day (Armistice): 11 November (celebrates the end of WW I in Europe)

Greece

Ochi Day: 28 October (refusal of obedience to Mussolini in 1940)

Gypsy Roma

Celebration of the 1999 Kosovo expulsion: 16 June

Day of Mourning: 2 August (commemorates the Auschwitz extermination)

Moldova

Martsishor: 1 March

Memorial Day: 27 April

Ukraine

Chernobyl nuclear incident anniversary (1986): 26 April

APPENDIX TWO - INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS. DATES FOR 2004

JANUARY

01 New Year's Day Holiday
in World

01 Independence Day in
Haiti, Sudan

01 Universal Fraternity Day in
Mozambique

02 Ancestry Day in Haiti

02 St. Berchtold's Day in
Switzerland

03 New Year's Holiday in
Scotland

03 Revolution Day in Burkina
Faso

04 Independence Day in
Burma

04 Martyrs' Day in Zaire

06 Children's Day in Uruguay

06 Three Kings' Day in
Puerto Rico

07 Christmas in Ethiopia

07 Pioneer's Day in Liberia

09 Day of the Martyrs in
Panama

11 Armed Forces Day in
Liberia

12 Zanzibar Revolution Day
in Tanzania

13 National Liberation Day in
Togo

15 Martin Luther King Holiday
in USA

15 Adults Day in Japan

15 Arbor Day in Jordan

16 Martyrs' Day in Benin

18 Revolution Day in Tunisia

19 Confederate Heroes Day
in Texas

19 Ethiopian Epiphany in
Ethiopia

20 Army Day in Mali

20 National Heroes Day in
Guinea-Bissau

20 Lee-Jackson Day in
Virginia * (3rd Monday)

20 Martin Luther King Day in
New York * (3rd Sunday)

20 Robert E. Lee's Birthday
in Alabama & Mississippi *
(3rd Monday)

21 Our Lady of Altagracia in
Dominican Republic

21 Lee-Jackson Day in
Virginia * (3rd Monday)

23 Feast of St. Ildefonsus

23 National Handwriting Day

24 Economic Liberation Day
in Togo

26 Republic Day in India

30 Australia Day in Australia

FEBRUARY

11 National Foundation Day
in Japan

12 The Day Following
National Foundation Day in
Japan

18 Lunar New Year's Holiday
in South Korea

19 Presidents Day in the
USA

21 Lunar New Year's Holiday
in Macau, South Korea (3
days), Singapore, Taiwan *

MARCH

01 Samil Independence
Movement Day in South
Korea

01 St. David's Day, Cardiff

02 Peasants Day in Burma

02 Texas Independence Day

02 Victory of Adowa in
Ethiopia

03 Girl's Day in Japan

03 Throne Day in Morocco

04 Vermont Admission Day (admitted as 14th state in 1791)	13 National Day in Grenada	Greece
05 Independence Day in Equatorial Guinea	15 Day of the 1848 revolution in Hungary	26 Independence Day in Bangladesh
06 Lantern Day, Beijing	16 Black Press Day; first Black newspaper founded in 1827	26 Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole Day in Hawaii
07 Purim - Feast of Lots	17 Evacuation Day in Suffolk County, Massachusetts	27 Armed Forces Day in Burma
08 First Annual International Women's Day, 1909	17 St. Patrick's Day	29 Seward's Day in Alaska * (last Monday)
08 International Women's Day in U.S.S.R.	19 St. Joseph's Day in Colombia, Costa Rica, Holy See, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Spain, Venezuela	29 Death of President Barthelemy Boganda in Central African Republic
08 Syrian National Day in Libyan Arab Republic	19 Tree Planting Day in Lestho	29 Memorial Day in Madagascar
08 Women's Day in Guinea- Bissau, Taiwan, Yemen Democratic Republic	20 Vernal Equinox Day in Japan	31 National Day in Malta
08 Youth Day in Zambia	20 Independence Day in Tunsia	APRIL
09 Decoration Day in Liberia	20 Youth Day in Oklahoma	01 Youth Day in Benin
09 Falgun Purnima Day in Nepal	21 Afghan New Year in Afghanistan	02 Malvinas Day in Argentina
10 Labor Day in South Korea	21 Juarez' Birthday in Mexico	02 Pascua Florida Day in Florida
11 Johnny Appleseed Day; anniversary of the death of John Chapman	22 Abolition Day in Puerto Rico	04 Ching Ming Festival in Hong Kong
12 Commonwealth Day in Swaziland	23 Pakistan Day in Pakistan	04 National Day in Senegal
12 Independence Day in Mauritius	25 Greek Independence Day in Cyprus	05 Pesach - First Day of Passover - Festival of Freedom * (night of the 15 th day of the month of Nissan)
12 Moshoeshoe's Birthday in Lesotho	25 Lady Day (a.k.a. the Feast of the Annunciation)	05 Arbor Day in South Korea & Taiwan
12 Renovation Day in Gabon	25 Maryland Day in Maryland	05 Holy Week (5 days) in Venezuela * (week before Easter Sunday)
	25 National Holiday in	

06 Chakri Memorial Day in Thailand	19 Republic Day in Sierra Leone	30 The Workers Day in Uruguay
06 Victory Day in Ethiopia	21 San Jacinto Day in Texas	30 Queen's Birthday in Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles
08 Fast and Prayer Day in Liberia	21 Tiradentes in Brazil	
09 Martyrs' Day in Tunisia	22 Arbor Day in Nebraska & Delaware	MAY
11 National Heroes Day in Costa Rica	22 Oklahoma Day in Oklahoma	01 Labor Day in many places
12 Easter Monday in UK and Rep. of Ireland *	24 Victory Day in Togo	01 Law Day (decl. by Eisenhower)
13 National Day in Chad	25 Anzac Day in Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Western Samoa	01 May Day in many places
13 Songkron Day in Thailand	25 Liberation Day in Italy	01 Boy's day in Japan
14 Day of the Americas in Honduras	25 National Flag Day in Swaziland	01 Labor Day in Singapore & Philippines
15 Bengali New Year in Bangladesh	25 Anniversary of the Revolution in Portugal	01 May Day in United Kingdom
15 Patriot's Day in Maine & Massachusetts * (3rd Monday)	26 Confederate Memorial Day in Florida & Georgia	02 King's Birthday in Lesotho
16 De Diego's Birthday (celebrated in Puerto Rico)	26 Arbor Day in Wyoming * (last Monday)	02 Bank Holiday in UK * (first Monday in May)
16 Tourist Week (5 days) in Uruguay	26 Union Day in Tanzania	02 Constitution Day in Japan
17 Burmese New Year in Burma	26 Confederate Memorial Day in Alabama, Florida, Georgia & Mississippi * (last Monday)	04 Rhode Island Independence Day
18 Independence Day in Chile, Zimbabwe	27 Independence Day in Togo	05 Children's Day in Japan, South Korea
19 Declaration of Independence in Venezuela	29 Emperor's Birthday in Japan	05 Battle of Puebla in Mexico
	29 Hari Raya Haji Day in Singapore	05 Coronation Day in Thailand
		05 Liberation Day in Netherlands
		06 Bataan Day in Philippines
		07 Buddha's Birthday in South Korea
		08 Truman Day in Missouri

08 Buddha's Birthday in South Korea	17 Memorial Day in Michigan * (third Monday)	Anniversary in Sudan
08 Elections for the National Assembly in Philippines	18 Flag Day in Haiti	26 First Day of Shavuot (seven weeks after Passover)
09 Liberation Day in Czechoslovakia	18 Prayer Day in Denmark	27 Memorial Day in USA
09 Victory Day in Poland, U.S.S.R.	19 Youth and Sports Day in Turkey	27 Afghanistan attains sovereignty, 1921
10 Confederate Memorial Day in North and South Carolina	20 Mecklenburg Independence Day in North Carolina	28 Mothers Day in Central African Republic
10 Mothers Day in Guatamala	20 National Day in Cameroon	30 Confederate Memorial Day in Virginia
11 Minnesota Day in Minnesota	20 Victoria Day in Canada	
14 Buddhist Holiday (Waisak 2528) in Indonesia	22 National Heroes Day in Sri Lanka	31 Pya Martyrs' Day in Togo
14 Independence Day (2 days) in Paraguay	23 Commonwealth Day in Jamaica, Belize	31 Bank Holiday in UK * (last Monday)
14 Anniversary of the Founding of Guinean Democratic Party in Guinea	23 National Labor Day in Jamaica	31 Republic Day in South Africa
14 Unification Day in Liberia		31 Vesak Day in Singapore
15 Kamuzu Day in Malawi	24 Bermuda Day in Bermuda	JUNE
15 Vesak Day in Singapore, Malaysia	24 Day of Slav Letters in Bulgaria	01 Independence Days (3 days) in Western Samoa
15 Visakha Bucha Day in Thailand	25 African Freedom Day in Zimbabwe	01 Madaraka Day in Kenya
16 Discovery Day in Cayman Islands	25 African Liberation Day in Chad, Mauritania, Zambia	01 Victory Day in Tunisia
17 Constitution Day in Nauru, Norway	25 Independence Day in Jordan	02 Corpus Christi in Paraguay
	25 Memorial Day in New Mexico & Puerto Rico	03 Jefferson Davis's Birthday in Florida & Georgia
	25 Anniversary of the Revolution of 1810 in Argentina	03 Confederate Memorial Day in Kentucky, Louisiana & Tennessee
	25 May Revolution	03 Labor Day in Bahamas
		04 Emancipation Day in Tonga

04 Queen's Birthday in New Zealand

05 Constitution Day in Denmark

05 Liberation Day in Seychelles

06 Corpus Christi Day in Germany

06 Memorial Day in South Korea

06 His Majesty, Yang Di-Pertuan Agong's Birthday in Malaysia

07 Bank Holiday in Rep. of Ireland * (first Monday)

07 Jefferson Davis's Birthday in Alabama & Mississippi * (1st Monday)

09 Senior Citizen's Day in Oklahoma

10 Camoes Day in Portugal

10 Birthday of HM the Queen in Australia

11 King Kamehameha I Day in Hawaii

11 Queen's Birthday

12 Peace with Bolivia in Paraguay

12 Independence Day in Philippines

13 Corrective Movement in Yemen Arab Republic

14 Flag Day

17 Bunker Hill Day in Suffolk County, Massachusetts

17 Independence Day in Iceland

17 National Day in Federal Republic of Germany

18 Evacuation Day in Egypt

18 Queen's Birthday in Fiji

19 Artigas Birthday in

Uruguay

19 Emancipation Day in

Texas

19 Labor Day in Trinidad,

Tobago

19 Revolution Day in Algeria

20 Flag Day in Argentina

20 West Virginia Day in West Virginia

22 National Sovereignty Day in Haiti

22 Corrective Movement in Yermen Democratic Republic

22 Midsummer Eve in

Finland, Sweden

23 National Holiday in

Luxembourg

24 Fisherman's Day in

Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia

24 Kings Day in Spain

24 Peasants Day in Peru

24 St. Jean-Baptiste Day in Quebec

24 Battle of Carabobob in Venezuela

28 Mothers Day in Central African Republic

29 Independence Day in Seychelles

30 Day of the Army in Guatemala

JULY

01 Dominion Day in Canada

01 Freedom Day in Suriname

01 Independence Day in Burundi

01 National Day in Rwanda

01 Republic Day in Ghana

01 Eid-UI-Fitr* (2 days) in Pakistan

01 New Year's Holiday in the Philippines

01 Union of the Somalia Republic in Somalia

02 National Day in Kiribati

04 Independence Day in USA

04 Independence Day in Rwanda

04 Caribbean Day in Guyana

04 Constitution Day in

Cayman Islands

04 Family Day in Lesotho

04 Heroes Day in Zambia

04 Kadooment Day in Barbados	14 National Holiday in Monaco	24 Pioneer Day in Utah
04 Philippine-American Friendship Day in the Philippines	15 St. Swithin's Day	24 Simon Bolivar's Day in Ecuador, Venezuela
04 Warriors Day (2 days) in Yugoslavia	16 Presidents Day in Botswana	25 Constitution Day in Puerto Rico
05 Day of Peace and Unity in Rwanda	17 Constitution Day in South Korea	25 National Rebellion Day (3 days) in Cuba
05 Independence Day in Algeria & Venezuela	17 July Revolution in Iraq	25 Republic Day in Tunisia
07 National Day in Malawi	17 Munoz Rivera's Birthday (celebrated in Puerto Rico)	25 St. James, Patron Saint in Spain
07 Saba Saba Day in Tanzania	18 Constitution Day in Uruguay	26 Independence Day in Liberia
07 Anniversary of the P.U.N. in Equatorial Guinea	18 Liberation Day in Nicaragua	26 National Day in Maldives
09 Independence Day in Argentina	19 Presidents Day in Botswana	27 Barbosa's Birthday (celebrated in Puerto Rico)
10 Independence Day in Bahamas	19 Martyrs' Day in Burma	28 Independence Days (2 days) in Peru
11 National Holiday in the Mongolian People's Republic	20 Independence Day in Colombia	29 Asalaha Puja Day in Thailand
12 Battle of Boyne celebrated in Northern Ireland	21 National Holiday in Belgium	29 Olsok Eve in Norway to commemorate Norway's Viking King St. Olav
12 The Twelfth in Northern Ireland	22 National Day in Poland	30 Khao Phansa Day in Thailand
13 Buddhist Lent in Thailand	22 King's Birthday in Swaziland	31 Revolution Day in Congo
14 Independence Day in France	23 Anniversary of the Revolution in Egypt	AUGUST
14 Anniversary of the Revolution in Iraq	23 Egyptian National Day in Syrian Arab Republic	01 Discovery Day in Trinidad, Tobago
14 Bastille Day	23 Remembrance Day in Papua, New Guinea	01 Emancipation Day in Granada
		01 Freedom Day in Guyana

01 National Day in Switzerland	11 Heroes Day (2 days) in Zimbabwe	17 Independence Day in Indonesia
01 National Holidays (5 days) in El Salvador	11 Independence Day in Chad	17 Anniversary of the Death of General San Martin in Argentina
01 Parent's Day in Zaire	11 King Hussein's Accession to the Throne in Jordan	19 Independence Day in Afghanistan
01 Founding of Asuncion in Paraguay	12 Birthday of HM the Queen in Thailand	20 Constitution Day in Hungary and birthday of King St. Istvan
02 Bank Holiday in Scotland * (first Monday)	13 Women's Day in Tunisia	23 Liberation Days (2 days) in Romania
02 Bank Holiday in Australia, British Columbia, Fiji, Iceland, Ireland, Ontario * (first Monday)	13 Proclamation of Independence in Central African Republic	24 National Flag Day in Liberia
02 Our Lady of Los Angeles in Costa Rica	14 Waddi Dhahab in Morocco	25 Constitution Day in Paraguay
03 Massacre du Pidjiguiti in Buinea-bissau	14 Independence Day in Pakistan	25 Independence Day in Uruguay
03 Independence Day in Jamaica, Niger	14 VJ Day, 1945	26 Susan B. Anthony Day in Massachusetts
03 Memorial Day of Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus	15 Assumption Day in France & Germany	27 Liberation Day in Hong Kong
04 Freedom Day in Guyana	15 Founding of Ascuncion in Paraguay	28 Heroes Day in Philippines
06 Emancipation Day in Bahamas	15 Santa Maria in Malta	30 Huey P. Long Day in Louisiana
06 Independence Day in Bolivia	15 Independence Day in India	30 Victory Day in Turkey
07 Battle of Boyaca in Colombia	15 Liberation Day in South Korea	30 Bank Holiday in England, Wales and Northern Ireland * (last Monday)
09 National Day in Singapore	15 National Day in Congo	
10 Independence Day in Ecuador	15 Admission Day in Hawaii, 1984 (3rd Friday)	
	16 Bennington Battle Day in Vermont	
	16 Independence Days (3 days) in Gabon	
	16 Restoration Day in Dominican Republic	

31 Independence Day in Trinidad, Tobago	13 Barry Day commemorates the death of Commodore John Barry in Pennsylvania and New York	Japan
31 National Day in Malaysia		24 Anniversary of the Third Republic in Ghana
31 Pashtoonian Day in Afghanistan	14 Battle of San Jacinto in Nicaragua	24 Our Lady of Mercedes in Dominican Republic
SEPTEMBER		24 Independence Day in Guinea-Bissau
03 Independence Day in Qatar	15 Foundation of Panama in Panama	24 National Day in Saudi Arabia
03 Memorial Day in Tunisia		24 Republic Day in Trinidad, Tobago
06 Labor Day in the USA * (first Monday)	16 Cherokee Strip Day in Oklahoma	
06 Defense of Pakistan Day in Pakistan	16 Independence Day in Mexico, Papua, New Guinea	25 Army Day in Mozambique
06 Settlers Day in South Africa	17 National Heroes Day in Angola	25 Referendum Day in Rwanda
07 Independence Day in Brazil	18 Independence Day in Chile	26 National Day in Maldives, Yemen Democratic Republic
09 Admission Day in California	18 Independence Day in Chile, Zimbabwe	26 Revolution Anniversary Day in Yemen Arab
09 National Day in North Korea	19 Armed Forces Day in Chile	27 Feast of Finding the True Cross in Ethiopia
09 Anniversary of the Socialist Revolution (2 days) in Bulgaria	20 Respect for the Aged Day in Japan * (third Monday)	28 Moon Festival in Taiwan
10 National Day in Belize	21 Independence Day in Belize	28 Korean Thanksgiving Day (Ch'usok) in South Korea
11 Ethiopian New Year in Ethiopia (Enqutatash)	22 Independence Day in Mali	28 Confucious' Day in Taiwan
12 Amilcar Cabral's Birthday in Guinea-Bissau	22 National Sovereignty Day in Haiti	29 Battle of Boqueron in Paraguay
12 Defender's Day in Maryland	23 Grito de Lares in Puerto Rico	30 Botswana Day in Botswana (2 days)
	23 Autumn Equinox Day in	30 First Day of Sukkot *

OCTOBER

01 Armed Forces Day in South Korea	09 Independence of Guayaquil in Ecuador	14 Columbus Day in USA
01 Independence Day in Nigeria	09 Independence Day in Uganda	14 Young People's Day in Zaire
01 Labor Day in Australia	09 Korean Alphabet Day in South Korea	15 Evacuation Day in Tunisia
01 National Liberation Day (2 days) in China	09 Leif Erikson Day commemorates the discovery of North America in AD 1000	16 National Boss Day in United States
02 Anniversary of Guinean Independence in Guinea	09 Republic Day in Khmer Republic	17 Dessaline's Day in Haiti
03 Chung Yeung Festival in Hong Kong	10 Health-Sports Day in Japan	18 Heroes Day in Jamaica
03 Day of German Unity in Germany	10 National Day in Taiwan	20 Anniversary of the 1944 Revolution in Guatemala
03 Francisco Morazan's Birthday in Honduras	10 Oklahoma Historical Day in Oklahoma	20 Kenyatta Day in Kenya
03 National Foundation Day in South Korea	11 Fiji Day in Fiji	21 Armed Forces Day in Honduras
03 U.N. Day in Barbados	11 Day of the Revolution in Panama	21 Revolution Days (2 days) in Somalia
04 Independence Day in Lesotho	11 Druger Day in South Africa	23 Day of the 1956 revolution in Hungary
05 Anniversary of Proclamation of the Republic in Portugal	11 Thanksgiving Day in Canada	24 Independence Day in Zambia
06 National Sports Day in Lesotho	11 Mother's Day in Malawi	24 United Nations Day
07 National Heroes Day in Jamaica	12 Day of the Race in Argentina	25 Chulalongkron's Day in Thailand *
07 Labor Day in Australia	12 Discovery Day in Bahamas	25 Labor Day in New Zealand
08 Constitution Day in U.S.S.R	12 National Day in Equatorial Guinea, Spain	25 Taiwan Restoration Day in Taiwan
08 Battle of Agamos in Peru	12 Our Lady Aparecida Day in Brazil	25 Bank Holiday in Rep. of Ireland * (last Monday)
	12 Pan American Day in Belize	26 Angam Day in Nauru
	14 National Day in Yemen Arab Republic	26 Armed Forces Day in

Benin, Rwanda
26 National Day in Austria

28 National Holiday in
Greece

28 OHI Day in Cyprus

29 Republic Day in Turkey

31 Nevada Day in Nevada

NOVEMBER

01 All Saints Day
01 Samhain; Beginning of the
Celtic year and most
important holiday.

02 All Souls Day in Bolivia,
Brazil, El Salvador, Uruguay

03 Culture Day in Japan

03 Thanksgiving Day in
Liberia

03 Independence from
Columbia in Panama
03 Independence of Cuenca
in Ecuador

04 Flag Day in Panama

04 Will Rogers Day

06 Green March Day in
Morocco

06 Prophet Mohammed's
Birthday in Malaysia

07 National Revolution Day

07 Anniversary of Great
October Revolution in

Bulgaria

09 Sanbhidhan Diwash in

Nepal

11 King's Birthday in Bhutan
(3 days)

11 Veterans Day in USA

11 Independence Day in

Angola

11 Remembrance Day in

Canada

11 Republic Day in Maldives

12 Deepavali in Singapore 12
Deepavali in Fiji

14 King Hussein's Birthday in
Jordan

15 Independence of
Cartagena in Colombia *

15 Proclamation of the
Republic in Brazil

15 Thatlouang Festival in

Laos

15 Dynasty Day in Belgium

16 Oklahoma Heritage Week
in Oklahoma

17 Corrective Movement in
Syrian Arab Republic

17 Army Day in Zaire

17 Day of Prayer and
Repentance in Germany

18 Battle of Viertieres in Haiti

18 Independence Day in
Morocco

18 National Days (4 days) in
Oman

19 Garifuna Settlement in
Belize *

19 Discovery Day in Puerto
Rico

19 Feast Day of S.A.S.

Prince Rainier in Monaco

20 Revolution Day in Mexico

22 Independence Day in
Lebanon

22 Anniversary of Portuguese
Aggression in Guinea

23 Labor Thanksgiving Day
in Japan

24 Anniversary of the New
Regime in Zaire

25 Thanksgiving Day in USA
* (last Thursday)

25 Independence Day in
Suriname

28 Proclamation of the
Republic in Chad

29 Independence Day in
Panama

29 Independence Day in
Albania, Mauritania 29 Day of
the Republic (2 days) in
Yugoslavia

29 W.V.S Tubmans Birthday
in Liberia

29 Liberation Day in Albania

29 National Day in Burma
 30 Independence Day in Barbados *, Yemen Democratic Republic
 30 National Heroes Day in Philippines
 30 St. Andrew's Day in Scotland

DECEMBER

01 Independence Day in Central African Republic
 01 Independence Day in Portugal
 02 National Holiday in United Arab Emirates
 03 National Holiday in Laos
 06 Independence Day in Finland
 07 Delaware Day in Delaware
 07 Independence Day in Ivory Coast, Panama
 08 Mother's Day in Panama
 08 Blessing of the Water in Uruguay
 08 Immaculate Conception in Paraguay
 09 Independence Day in Tanzania
 10 Human Rights Day
 10 Thai Constitution Day in

Thailand *
 10 Wyoming Day in Wyoming
 11 Independence Day in Burkina Faso, Africa
 12 Independence Day in Kenya
 13 Republic Day in Malta
 15 Statue Day in Netherlands Antilles
 16 Constitution Day in Nepal
 16 Day of the Covenant in South Africa
 16 National Day in Bahrain
 16 Victory Day in Bangladesh
 17 National Day in Bhutan
 18 Republic Day in Niger
 22 Unity Day in Zimbabwe
 23 Victory Day in Egypt
 23 Emperor's Birthday in Japan
 25 Christmas Day
 25 Constitution Day in Taiwan
 25 Birthday of Quaid-i-Azam in Pakistan
 26 Bank Holiday in Canada, Rep. of Ireland, and UK
 26 Boxing Day
 26 Day of Goodwill in South

Africa
 26 St. Stephen's Day
 26 Feast of Our Theotokos in Greece
 27 Christmas Holiday in Cayman Islands *
 27 Constitution Day in North Korea
 28 Boxing Day in Cayman Islands
 30 Republic Day in Madagascar
 31 Republic Day in Congo
 31 Bank Holiday in El Salvador, Honduras, Pakistan

***Indicates dates that are subject to change.**

Information obtained from 'International Holidays' *Accuweather.com*
http://www.accuweather.com/adcbn/travel_desk/holiday
 (October 2004)
 and
<http://www.qppstudio.net/worldholidays.htm>
 (December 2005)

APPENDIX THREE - QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF DAYS OF REFLECTION

Country, name of the day, date (inserted here)

WHY THIS DATE?

1. Why was this specific date chosen? Did anything in particular happen on this day related to the past political developments? Was it chosen for other reasons?
2. Did this date have any previous meaning or significance?

WHAT IS COMMEMORATED?

3. What is the goal or are the goals of this Day?
4. Have the goals changed over the time?

PROCESS TO SET UP THE DAY

5. Who were the main role players who helped establish the Day?
6. What factors contributed to the establishment of this Day?
7. What were the main difficulties and challenges in the development and setting up of the Day?

WAYS OF COMMEMORATION

8. What specific activities take place to commemorate the Day?
9. Does it include a comprehensive programme to promote reflection or remembrance rather than a one-day activity only?
10. Are diverse cultural approaches and traditional practices in commemorating the day taken into account, as well as different political perspectives? If so, how?

GROUPS INVOLVED

11. Who are the key role players currently involved in commemorating the Day?
12. Who are the groups or individuals who you feel are excluded from this commemoration?

EVALUATION

13. What do you think are the positive impacts of this Day?
14. What do you think are the negative impacts of this Day?
15. Are there any lessons you think might be helpful from the experience of setting up and running the day for setting up a similar day in Northern Ireland?

APPENDIX FOUR - LIST OF RESPONDENTS

John Bond	Journey of Healing: National Sorry Day Committee
Cath Collins	
Nicole Drouilly	
Craig Etcheson	
Shirley Gunn	Khulumani Support Group
Ariana Hellerman	
Sarifa Moola	
Ereshnee Naidu	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
Dina Nay	The Khmer Institute for Democracy
Vesna Nickolic- Restanovic	Victimology Society of Serbia
Sean O’Leary	Dennis Hurley Peace Institute
Katarina Putnik	
Robert Rhodes	Inicijativa Mlaidh za Ljudska Prava
Emma Ross	Cohesion and Faiths Unit
Janet Trisk	
Ea Meng-Try	The Documentation Center of Cambodia
Francis Valverde	
Samantha Vice	Rhodes University
Nomfundo Walaza	

APPENDIX FIVE – STATEMENTS: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING

NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING

The National Sorry Day Committee has decided on a radical new step. We have decided that Sorry Day, 26 May, should become a National Day of Healing – for all Australians.

Sorry Day has been the annual focus of the Journey of Healing for the stolen generations. That Journey will go on until the Bringing Them Home report is implemented wholeheartedly. We cannot stop while several thousand indigenous people are still searching for the family members from whom they were separated.

But the stolen generations cannot heal in isolation. Their healing depends on, and contributes to, healing among the wider Indigenous community. And healing among indigenous Australians depends on, and contributes to, healing in the non-indigenous community.

The healing needed in the indigenous community is clear to anyone who saw the agony of spirit, which made Michael Long walk to Canberra last December to ask help with ‘the tragedy that is destroying my people’.

So far we have not seen much response to his plea. Non-indigenous Australia seems unable to feel the pain of indigenous people. As any doctor knows, a person who cannot feel is diseased, and the disease must be diagnosed and cured.

The National Day of Healing is aimed at diagnosis and at cure. We need to understand why indigenous culture is unable to thrive alongside Western culture in Australia. The stolen generations have shared their stories on Sorry Days, and that has opened the eyes of many to our history. Now more of us need to follow their lead.

If healing is to come, it will come through a grass-roots movement of people who feel each other’s pain across the gulfs which divide us, and commit themselves to work for justice. The National Day of Healing aims to help build that movement.

Ray Minniecon and Gillian Brannigan
Co-chairs, National Sorry Day Committee

* Journey of Healing website on 25 July 2005 at <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/>.

DECLARATION OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS ON THE NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING

We, Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations, our families and communities, still experience grief and trauma as a result of Government policies and practices. We remember those who have passed on without receiving justice.

We recall the crimes since white settlement began. The rape and massacre of many of our people, which resulted in the destruction of whole Aboriginal nations, and the attempt to 'breed out' our Aboriginality and assimilate us into the white population.

THESE ARE ACTS OF GENOCIDE

The theft of our children, and the mental, emotional, sexual, and physical torture many endured in government and religious institutions – and the ongoing suffering. The refusal to allow our Elders to teach our heritage. The desecration of our culture. Our removal from our traditional lands – our 'belonging place' and our spiritual connection. The banning of our beautiful languages, and the compulsory teaching of a foreign language and religion. The detention of our Elders, families and nations on reserves and missions. Our exclusion from the social, political and economic development of our beloved country. The adoption of a Constitution without our input. The constant imprisonment of our people, many of whom have died unjustly in custody.

THESE ARE ACTS OF BARBARITY

Yet we, the Aboriginal Nations and peoples of Australia have continued to resist. We have worked against incredible odds for our voices to be heard and our plight addressed. We have formed organizations. We have worked for the freedom of our people through petitions and campaigns at home and abroad. We changed the Constitution through the 1967 Referendum. We honour those non-Indigenous people who have stood with us in our struggle, and those who stand with us today.

THESE ARE ACTS OF RESISTANCE

We fought until the Australian Government removed the untrue and insulting notion of Terra Nullius and recognised our Native Title rights. We have persuaded Governments to inquire into the deaths of our people in custody, the Stolen Generations, the health and welfare of our people, and to change policies. Our voices will not be silenced. Our stories will be told.

THESE ARE ACTS OF TRUTH-TELLING

We will continue to fight for self-determination, and for the recognition of our Aboriginal people as the First Nations of Australia, the restoration of our languages, the reconstruction and development of our economic life, including royalty payments, the inclusion of Aboriginal rights within the Australian constitution, restitution for past injustice, and a national Government apology.

THESE ARE ACTS OF JUSTICE

We acknowledge the compassion and contribution of Australians, churches and Governments to the healing of Stolen Generations expressed in the Bringing Them Home report, Sorry Day gatherings, Bridge walks, apologies in Sorry books and invaluable programs such as Link-Up and the Bringing Them Home counsellors

THESE ARE ACTS OF HEALING

Many people have come to our country who suffered in their homelands – from the early convicts expelled to our shores for petty crimes, to those seeking asylum today. We do not want any one to experience the humiliation and trauma that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have endured over these past 217 years.

Many of us – Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous people – are on a journey of healing. Together, we will continue to work for, and be a part of, the healing of all peoples and cultures in our country, so that we become a nation based on truth, justice and freedom.

WE CALL UPON ALL AUSTRALIANS TO JOIN TOGETHER ON MAY 26TH 2005 TO COMMEMORATE A NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING FOR ALL LIVING IN OUR COUNTRY.

* Journey of Healing website on 25 July 2005 at <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/>

APPENDIX SIX – MESSAGE ON NATIONAL DAY OF RECONCILIATION (SOUTH AFRICA)

16 December 1995

There are few countries which dedicate a national public holiday to reconciliation. But then there are few nations with our history of enforced division, oppression and sustained conflict. And fewer still, which have undergone such a remarkable transition to reclaim their humanity.

We, the people of South Africa, have made a decisive and irreversible break with the past. We have, in real life, declared our shared allegiance to justice, non-racialism and democracy; our yearning for a peaceful and harmonious nation of equals.

The rainbow has come to be the symbol of our nation. We are turning the variety of our languages and cultures, once used to divide us, into a source of strength and richness.

But we do know that healing the wounds of the past and freeing ourselves of its burden will be a long and demanding task. This Day of Reconciliation celebrates the progress we have made; it reaffirms our commitment; and it measures the challenges.

The Government of National Unity chose this day precisely because the past had made December 16 a living symbol of bitter division. Valour was measured by the number of enemies killed and the quantity of blood that swelled the rivers and flowed in the streets.

Today we no longer vow our mutual destruction but solemnly acknowledge our inter-dependence as free and equal citizens of our common Motherland. Today we re-affirm our solemn constitutional compact to live together on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Reconciliation however, does not mean forgetting or trying to bury the pain of conflict.

Two terrible defects weakened the foundations of the modern South African state that were laid in the great upheaval at the beginning of the Century. Firstly, it rested on the treacherous swamps of racism and inequality. The second defect was the suppression of truth.

Now, at the end of the century, South Africans have the real chance to strike out along a glorious path. The democratic foundations of our society have been laid. We must use our collective strengths to carry on building the nation and improving its quality of life.

The Truth and National Reconciliation Commission, which will soon begin its work, is one important institution created by our democratic Constitution and Parliament in order to help us manage the more

difficult aspects of healing the nation's wounds. Thus we shall free ourselves from the burden of yesterday; not to return there; but to move forward with the confidence of free men and women, committed to attain the best for ourselves and future generations.

Reconciliation means working together to correct the legacy of past injustice. It means making a success of our plans for reconstruction and development.

Therefore, on this December 16, National Day of Reconciliation, my appeal to you, fellow citizens, is: Let us join hands and build a truly South African nation.

Issued By: The Office of the President (Nelson Mandela)

* Source: Message on National Reconciliation Day *The Office of the President: African National Congress*
http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1995/pr_951216.html (7 June 2005)