



NEWS RELEASE

The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (the Commission) is today holding its 10th Anniversary Conference at the Radisson Hotel, Glasgow.

The Commission was established on the 1 April 1999, and is the public body responsible for investigating alleged miscarriages of justice in Scotland.

The Commission's review of cases is completely independent of the Parliament, the Scottish Government, the courts, the Crown and the defence, and all cases accepted by the Commission are subject to a thorough, impartial review before a decision is taken on whether or not a reference to the High Court should be made.

The Commission has now been in existence for 10 years in which time it has received a total 1092 applications, concluding 1043 cases and referring 82 cases to the High Court.

The High Court has determined a total of 64 of these referred cases resulting in 41 convictions being quashed/sentences reduced, 15 cases being upheld and 8 cases being abandoned.

The 10th Anniversary Conference will be an opportunity for the Commission to reflect on its first 10 years and to consider some of the issues that may impact on both the work of the Commission and the criminal justice system in the future. The results of the Commission's first research project on referred cases will also be presented.

The Commission's Chairman, Jean Couper CBE said:

"We aim to provide an interesting insight into the workings of the Commission since its inception in 1999 and consider how it may evolve in the coming years. The anniversary event will be an opportunity to consider others' opinions of the Commission as well as the environment in which we operate within the criminal justice system and how this is likely to change.

The findings of the Commission's first research project into referrals in its first 10 years will be presented and debated. The research project has been undertaken by a team from Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities and will provide a completely independent, objective and critical assessment of the Commission's referrals during this period.

It is anticipated that the research will be of great interest to a wide audience and the Commission therefore intends to publish the findings on its website by the end of May 2009. The Commission will at this point seek comments and views from stakeholders on the matters identified by the research.

I am extremely grateful for the support given to this prestigious event and in particular to have speakers of such experience, knowledge and standing. It will be

a valuable opportunity to hear these distinguished guests speak on such an interesting and relevant agenda.”

Keynote Speakers

The conference will be chaired by the Commission's Chairman and speakers include:

Kenny MacAskill MSP - Cabinet Secretary for Justice, The Scottish Government

Lord Bonomy - Judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

Donald Findlay QC - Prominent Defence Counsel

Peter Duff - Professor of Criminal Justice, University of Aberdeen

Professor Graham Zellick - former Chairman of the Criminal Cases Review Commission

Cheryl Thomas - Honary Professor, Centre for Empirical Studies, University College, London

James Chalmers - Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Edinburgh

Notes for Editors

The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission was established as an independent body on 1 April 1999 to review alleged miscarriages of justice in Scottish convictions and/or sentences. Under section 194A–L of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, as inserted by section 25 of the Crime and Punishment (Scotland) Act 1997, the Commission may refer a case to the High Court if it believes that a miscarriage of justice may have occurred and that it is in the interests of justice that a reference should be made. Once the Commission refers a case to the High Court, the case will proceed as a normal appeal.

The Commission operates with a Board of nine Members (one of whom is the Chairperson), a Chief Executive, a Director of Corporate Services, two Senior Legal Officers, six Legal Officers and administrative support staff.

For any further general information about the Commission, please contact Mr. Chris Reddick, Director of Corporate Services, SCCRC, 5th Floor, Portland House, 17 Renfield Street, Glasgow; telephone: 0141 270 7030; e-mail: creddick@sccrc.org.uk; or visit the Commission's website at www.sccrc.org.uk