Current Projects of The Equal Rights Trust

A. Legal Standards on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Purpose

The objective of this project is twofold. Firstly, to publish a concise document entitled, Principles on Equality (the Principles), that reflects a moral and professional consensus on the fundamental principles of equality law. Secondly, to publish a clear reference document that systematises the core normative standards of equality derived from public international law together with higher and/or more comprehensive standards derived from regional and national legal instruments, bodies and jurisprudence.

Project Description

The project began in June 2007 with an examination of international, regional and national legal standards of protection against discrimination. In December 2007, an Advisory Committee was set up to lead the work on the drafting of the Principles. An international conference of equality law experts and human rights advocates marks the second stage of the project. The conference is scheduled to be convened in April 2008 and is designed to facilitate the discussion and adoption of a draft of the Principles. In addition, thematic discussions at the conference will focus on emerging and controversial issues relevant to equality and non-discrimination law. These discussions will inform future ERT work in the development of a comprehensive reference document on the international legal standards of equality and non-discrimination.

Project Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee includes the following members: Barbara Cohen, Discrimination Law Consultant, Vice-Chair of the Discrimination Law Association, London; Andrea Coomber, Senior Lawyer, Equality Interights, London; Sandra Fredman, Professor in Law and Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford; Sir Bob Hepple, Chair of ERT’s Board of Trustees, Emeritus Professor of Law, Emeritus Master of Clare College, Cambridge (Chair of the Advisory Committee); Christopher McCrudden, Professor of Human Rights Law and Fellow and Tutor in Law at Lincoln College, Oxford; Alice Leonard, Independent Legal Expert, Bath; Gay Moon, Special Legal Advisor, Equality and Diversity Forum, London; Colm O’Cinneide, Senior Lecturer in Laws, University College, London; Michael O’Flaherty, Professor of Applied Human Rights and Co-Director of the Human Rights Law Centre at the University of Nottingham; and Dimitrina Petrova, Executive Director, ERT, London.

Donors

The Ford Foundation, Open Society Institute, Tides Foundation

B. Law Enforcement Discrimination and Deaths in Custody

Purpose

This project has three main objectives. Firstly, to systematise the existing pool of knowledge on the relationship between deaths in custody and discriminatory policy or con-
duct by law enforcement bodies. The second aim of the project is to further enhance the global understanding of the nexus between deaths in custody and discrimination. The final objective lies in developing and promoting new advocacy tools that will complement existing investigatory standards into custodial deaths by adding a distinct, anti-discrimination component. In that regard, the project will help investigatory authorities to fulfill their duty to take all possible steps to investigate whether or not discrimination may have played a role in the events leading to the deaths.

**Scope**

The project covers discrimination on one or more relevant grounds including, sex, race, ethnicity, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status. The key terms of reference, namely, “custody”, “death”, “law enforcement” and “discrimination” are defined in accordance with the practice of international and regional treaty bodies responsible for the protection against torture. The project is not restricted geographically and encompasses in-depth case studies in a number of countries strategically selected to cover all relevant regions.

**C. Virtual Library on Equality**

A major preoccupation of The Equal Rights Trust is the building of a digital library on equality issues. The project’s purpose is to systematise existing resources and serve as an educational tool on equality and non-discrimination issues for a broad range of users. In the online library, the user will be able to find a variety of materials and descriptions of their relevance to equality. Types of re-

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