

Justice for Colombia Northern Ireland Delegation, March 10th -12th 2014

Most of the following travelled to Colombia with the British NGO Justice for Colombia (JFC), and in June 2013 some travelled with JFC to meet the FARC in Cuba.



Rt. Hon. Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

In 1998 Donaldson was a leading member of the Ulster Unionists' negotiating team for the Good Friday Agreement.

However he subsequently left the talks at the end of the negotiations. This was largely in protest that the terms of the agreement Sinn Fein was to be allowed to share Government without prior decommissioning by its military wing – the IRA – of its Arsenal of weaponry and the early release of prisoners.

He subsequently joined the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in January 2004 and immediately became a key member of their negotiating team for the review of the Belfast Agreement which culminated in a new Agreement at St Andrew's in the autumn of 2006.

Two of his cousins were murdered by the Provisional IRA while serving with the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1997 he became an MP in the national UK Parliament in Westminster. As a lifelong unionist, he joined, at sixteen, the Orange Order and was a volunteer in the Ulster Defence Regiment. At one stage he was, at 22, the youngest member of the old Northern Ireland Assembly. He has been his party's spokesperson on Defence, Equality and Energy and Climate Change. He is a member of the Defence Select Committee.



Mark Durkan MP, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Former Deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland. Former Leader, SDLP. Negotiator, Good Friday Agreement.

Mark Durkan was former Special Advisor and No. 2 to John Hume during the Good Friday Agreement Negotiations. He then immediately became Leader of the SDLP when John Hume stood down.

In 1990 Durkan became chair of the SDLP, a position he served in until 1995. He was a key member of the party's negotiating team in the run up to the Good Friday Agreement.

Following the Agreement he was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1998, and became a member of the Northern Ireland Executive as Minister for Finance and Personnel. In 2001 he replaced Seamus Mallon as Northern Ireland's Deputy First Minister and was elected Leader of the SDLP. He was re-elected to the Assembly in November 2003. In the 2005 general election he retained the Foyle seat at Westminster for the SDLP. He stood down as leader of the SDLP in September 2009 so he could concentrate on his parliamentary career.



**John McCallister MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), Leader of N.I 21 political party
Former Deputy Leader, Ulster Unionist Party**

John McCallister was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2007. He was, until recently, Deputy Leader of the Ulster Unionists. After attending a Sinn Fein conference in November 2011 in Newry he issued an apology for "unionist failings" in the past. Others in his party stated that people in the unionist community were "appalled" by McCallister's remarks.

He has stated the importance of his party reaching out to Catholic voters. In contrast with some previous Unionist leaders he would happily attend traditional 'nationalist' sporting

fixtures. He ran for the leadership of the UUP and until late last year was Deputy Leader. Early 2013, he left the party after a disagreement around the flag disputes.

Civil Society Delegates



Patricia McKeown, Northern Ireland Secretary for UNISON

Patricia McKeown is the Northern Ireland Regional Secretary of the public service union UNISON. Her union worked extensively in peace building during the conflict and campaigned for support for the Peace Agreement in the 1998 Referendum.

She is the union's lead negotiator and represents both UNISON and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) on a wide range of public policy forums. Her union recently signed an agreement with the largest employer in Northern Ireland, the National Health Service, which protects the employment opportunities of ex-prisoners involved in the conflict. Patricia is a lifelong campaigner for equality and human rights as fundamental building blocks for peace. Patricia is Co-Convenor of the Equality Coalition with the human rights NGO, the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ). She is also a member of the civic society network, the Human Rights Consortium and has represented the organisation extensively in delegations to the Irish, UK and US Governments in Dublin, London and Washington on the importance of the Irish and UK Governments completing their human rights commitments in the peace agreement.

Patricia was President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2007-2009). She has previously been Chairperson of the ICTU Northern Ireland Committee and Deputy Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland.



Brian Campfield, General Secretary of NIPSA (Northern Ireland Public Services Union)

Brian Campfield has been active in the trade union movement in Northern Ireland for over 35 years. He has been a full time official with NIPSA, the largest public sector union in Northern Ireland since 1982 and was elected the union's General Secretary in

November 2009. He previously held the position of Deputy General Secretary in the union. He is a member of the Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and is currently Vice Chair of its Northern Ireland Committee.

He was a member of the NI Civil Rights Association during the early 1970s.

Between 1983 and 2009 he held, during that period, the positions of President, Vice President and Secretary of Belfast and District Trades Union Council.

Belfast Trades Council was responsible during the 1980s and 1990s for organising trade union responses including protests on the streets, at times jointly with the Irish Congress of trade Unions, to sectarian and other killings involving paramilitary organisations. This has sometimes involved the organisation of public protests and demonstrations.

Over the years and at different times NIPSA members have been threatened by paramilitary organisations and the union supported members who left their place of employment en masse to protest against these threats. Both NIPSA and Belfast Trades Union Council have supported initiatives on human rights and civil liberties and continue to press for the introduction of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Both organisations continue to oppose the use of violence for political ends including state violence.



Jimmy Kelly
Leader of Unite the union in Ireland

Jimmy Kelly spent his early working life in Waterford Crystal where he was elected full time convenor. He was elected to the Executive of the former T&G and subsequently elected as the first Chair of the Irish Executive Council. Jimmy was the first representative from Ireland to hold this important position within the structures of the Union.

Jimmy played a central role in merger talks between the former AMICUS and T&G to form Unite. Unite is the largest unions with over 1.5 million members.

He was appointed as the T&G Irish Regional Secretary towards the end of 2007, and then as the first Irish Regional Secretary of Unite.

Jimmy is currently a member of the Executive of Irish Congress of Trade Unions and has been leading the campaign against austerity and for an investment-based alternative in Northern Ireland and in Republic of Ireland.



Mariela Kohon , Director, Justice For Colombia (JFC)

JFC the only NGO founded and owned by the British and Irish trade unions. It was established after representatives from the British trade union confederation, the TUC, went to Colombia in 2002 and was disturbed to find a human rights crisis that was, at that time, wholly ignored by the British press. Since then support for JFC has grown to encompass all the main British and Irish trade unions and it has a Parliamentary Group in Westminster working in support of its issues, of over 90 Parliamentarians. It also has cross party Parliamentary Groups in Stormont, in the Dail in Dublin, and in the European Parliament in Brussels.

It has taken over 200 politicians and civic society leaders to Colombia and has successfully placed the Colombian human rights situation on the political agenda in the UK, Ireland and Brussels. Last year Mariela Kohon won the Latin UK Human Rights Campaigner of the Year Award.