

Re: PE 1351, Attention Scottish Petitions Committee

17th January 2013,

Dear Chair and Committee members,

FBGA would like to respond to some of the recent submissions by the Petitioners, Scottish Government and CELCIS.

Scottish Government,

Recent developments by the Scottish Government including the following, National Confidential Forum consultation just completed are positive steps. This includes the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill. Provisions for the National Confidential Forum which will be taken forward as part of the Victims and Witnesses Bill and which we support in principle. We await final details and confirmation of the proposals and remit on the completion of the billing process through Scottish Parliamentary processes.

The up and coming consultation for Civil Law of Damages: Issues in Personal Injury, will required to be fundamentally reformed. The current law requires updating and modernised in our view if it is to bring real tangible benefits to this particular group of claimants.

The recent engagement of a cross section of victim-survivors in events such as the Survivor Stakeholder group and the setting up of the National Confidential Forum reference group. This has enabled a wider participation of Scottish victim-survivors in events and in an environment that was enabling, safe and appropriately managed which has been invaluable and on the whole been well received and very positive.

Recent commitments and statements by the Scottish Government given in the NCF consultation analysis feedback document and through this committee are welcome, helpful and encouraging including the Governments commitment to participate in the forthcoming Interaction.

CELCIS,

We would like to thank CELCIS for there communication & update to the committee. Also the input and support the CELCIS organisation has provided in the InterAction preparatory meetings has been much appreciated by FBGA. These meetings arranged by CELCIS have enabled attendees including victim-survivors representatives to raise issues in a constructive and enabling manner while engaging with the various parties. The meetings to-date in our view have been conducted in a spirit of goodwill by all who have participated.

Scottish Human Rights Commission,

We welcome the recent appointment of the independent Interaction Chair, Monica McWilliams, Professor of Women's Studies, based in the Transitional Justice Institute at the University of Ulster.

Given that this particular Petition is and I quote "A Time for All to be Heard" perhaps the Petition Committee members would consider hearing the considered views of other victim-survivors including FBGA in the near future. We are encouraged and supportive of recent initiatives by all the parties including the Scottish Government.

Kind regards
David Whelan
FBGA