
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1987 No. 463

The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987

PART II

PROCESSIONS AND MEETINGS

Imposing conditions on public processions and open-air public meetings

Para. (1) rep. by 1998 c. 2

(2) If a senior police officer, having regard to the time or place at which and the circumstances in which any open-air public meeting is being held or is intended to be held, reasonably believes that—

- (a) it may result in serious public disorder, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the life of the community; or
- (b) the purpose of the persons organising it is the intimidation of others with a view to compelling them not to do an act they have a right to do, or to do an act they have a right not to do,

he may give directions imposing on the persons organising or taking part in the meeting such conditions as to the place at which the meeting may be (or continue to be) held, its maximum duration, or the maximum number of persons who may constitute it, as appear to him necessary to prevent such disorder, damage, disruption or intimidation.

(3) In^[F1] paragraph (2)] “a senior police officer” means—

- (a) in relation to^[F1] an] open-air public meeting being held, or to^[F1] an] open-air public meeting intended to be held in a case where persons are assembling with a view to taking part in it, a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary not below the rank of inspector;
- (b) in relation to^[F1] an] open-air public meeting intended to be held in a case where sub-paragraph (a) does not apply, a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary not below the rank of superintendent.

(4) Directions given by virtue of paragraph (3)(b) shall be given in writing.

(5) A person who knowingly fails to comply with a condition imposed under this Article shall be guilty of an offence, but it is a defence for him to prove that the failure arose from circumstances beyond his control.

(6) A person guilty of an offence under paragraph (5) shall be^[F2] liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or to both.]

^[F3](7) This Article does not apply in relation to a protest meeting within the meaning of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.]

F1 1998 c. 2

F2 1998 c. 2

Changes to legislation: The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, Section 4 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 17 February 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) [View outstanding changes](#)

F3 2005 NI 2

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[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- Instrument amended by [1998 c. 2 s.18\(1\)Sch.3 para.3](#)
- arts.34(1) revoked by [1998 c. 2 s.18\(2\)Sch.4](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Order associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Order (including any effects on those provisions):

- art.2(3)(b) amended by [1996 c. 26 s. 2\(3\)\(4\)](#)
- art.2(3)(b) amended by [1996 c. 26 s. 2\(3\)\(4\)](#)
- arts.5(2)66A7(1) revoked by [1998 c. 2 s.18\(2\)Sch.4](#)