

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (“HRC”)
6th MEETING OF 2025
MINUTES
14 August 2025
CONFERENCE ROOM
HRC SECRETARIAT OFFICES**

PRESENT:

Benjamin Tonner KC	Chairperson
Nicholas Quin	Member
Alecia Johns	Member
Jennifer Hunter	Member

APOLOGIES:

Nicholas Dixey	Member
Melanie McField	Manager

SECRETARIAT MEMBERS PRESENT:

Francis Kearns	Deputy Manager
Evette Burnell	Administrator/Analyst
Jessica Ebanks	PR & Education Coordinator (in part)

1. Meeting called to order

The meeting commenced at 3:22 pm.

2. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2025 were approved.

3. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**a. Education Initiatives****i. Social Media Campaign**

The Public Relations and Education Officer reported that social media posts through September had been prepared in advance and had been pre-approved by Members. Social media engagement levels have remained steady.

ii. Bill of Rights Training

Since the previous meeting, there have been fifteen (15) new enrolments in the interim Bill of Rights (BOR) training course, which will continue to be offered until the comprehensive course is launched.

The Secretariat provided an update on the comprehensive BOR training currently under development. A UK-based provider has been selected, and the Secretariat, in collaboration with a consultant, is reviewing the draft content. The feedback process will result in a storyboard to be finalised by the end of August, with a prototype anticipated by September. Feedback to date has

focused on ensuring the content is relevant to the Cayman Islands context, and this has been incorporated by the provider.

iii. School Visits

No school visits are currently scheduled. With the commencement of the new academic year in September, the Secretariat aims to arrange visits to schools not previously engaged by the HRC. The prior approach of visiting individual classes, rather than addressing full school assemblies, proved more effective and will be maintained going forward.

b. Migrants

In follow-up to a query from the previous meeting, the Ministry provided an update regarding the proposed amendment to immigration legislation that would extend the residency requirement for Caymanian status applications to twenty-two (22) years. The draft legislation is not yet available for review; however, the HRC will receive a copy upon completion.

The Secretariat confirmed that the Cayman Islands Legal Practitioners Association (CILPA) had approved the draft email soliciting volunteers for a roster of pro bono attorneys willing to assist migrants.

In addition, the Secretariat met with the Cayman Islands Legal Assistance Clinic (CILAC), which expressed willingness to offer support. Members deemed their assistance would be helpful later in the asylum process, including possible assistance with appeals. CILAC also proposed hosting training sessions and legal clinics at the Bodden Town Civic Centre. Members noted that representation during the initial stages at the detention centre requires more experienced attorneys due to the complexity of the work involved and volunteer CILPA members would still be preferred to assist with this.

The HRC has yet to receive the requested migrant statistics from the Customs and Border Control (CBC) or updates regarding proposed amendments to migrant interview questions. Both matters will be pursued at the next quarterly meeting. The Secretariat continues to seek a date for the next meeting with CBC and will escalate the matter to the Ministry if necessary.

c. Prison Updates

Following the previous meeting, the HRC wrote to the Ministry responsible for prisons expressing concerns regarding:

- The significant increase in prisoners with mental health conditions;
- Reduced psychiatric resources; and
- Overcrowding that limits appropriate segregation for vulnerable prisoners.

The correspondence also requested an update on the timeline for the new prison facility and details of interim measures being implemented. A response is pending, and the Secretariat will follow up.

The matter of mental health in prisons was also discussed with the Premier during the meeting of 17 July 2025, subsequently covered by Government Information Services (GIS). This coverage prompted further media interest and public discussion.

d. HRC Annual Report

The Chair will review the “Chair’s Message” section of the annual report and provide any amendments. The report will then be finalised.

4. Human Rights Complaints and Enquiries

OLD:

a. HRC Complaint 002/2024

An appeal in relation to this matter is ongoing, and the Secretariat will continue to monitor developments. The complainant has also submitted a supplementary complaint concerning delays in the delivery of the judgment.

b. HRC Complaint 002/2025

The Secretariat raised this matter in the meeting with the Premier on 17 July 2025, following prior correspondence to Cabinet. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the necessity for legislative amendments to replace the temporary measures currently in place and confirmed that work is underway, though the amendments have not yet been tabled.

c. HRC Complaint 003/2025

Consideration of this matter was deferred.

NEW:

d. HRC Complaint 005/2025

This complaint was determined to be outside the HRC’s jurisdiction. The file will be closed, and the complainant will be provided with contact details for legal befrienders who may be able to assist.

e. HRC Complaint 006/2025

This matter relates to a supplementary complaint to HRC Complaint 002/2024 regarding delays in judgment delivery. The complainant has also written to the Governor and the Chief Justice on the matter. The Secretariat will follow up to ascertain whether a response has been received.

f. HRC Enquiry 001/2025

The Secretariat will liaise with Workforce Opportunities and Residency Cayman (WORC) to obtain information on their processes and the support available to jobseekers.

5. New Business

The HRC discussed concerns regarding potential amendments to the Beneficial Ownership Register legislation. This matter was also raised with the Premier on 17 July 2025.

The HRC authorised the Secretariat to seek legal advice from London-based Chambers on this matter. The Secretariat will request quotations and availability from three Chambers, with the aim of receiving an initial report by the end of September.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

This was the final meeting for Member Jennifer Hunter, whose term will conclude in September.

The Commission and Secretariat expressed their appreciation for her years of dedicated service and extended best wishes for her future endeavours.

Members were also updated on the recruitment progress for new Members.

The Deputy Manager also announced his forthcoming transfer to another department in September. The Commission conveyed its gratitude for his commitment and contributions during his tenure.

7. Action Items

It was resolved the Secretariat would:

- a. Progress the BOR training and provide an update at the next meeting, as outlined in 3.a.ii (PR and Education Coordinator and Management).
- b. Contact potential new schools for HRC to visit and provide an update at the next meeting, as outlined in 3.a.ii (PR and Education Coordinator and Management).
- c. Follow up with CILPA regarding the email to Members and continue discussions with CILAC, as outlined in 3.b. above (Administrator/Analyst and Management).
- d. Follow-up with CBC to reschedule the next quarterly meeting to discuss the issues and contact the Ministry for their assistance, as outlined in 3.b. above (Administrator/Analyst).
- e. Follow up on letter to the Ministry regarding concerns on mental health in prison, as outlined in 3.c. above (Administrator/Analyst).
- f. Update the draft 2024 Annual Report once the Chair's statement is approved, as outlined in 3.d. above (Administrator/Analyst).
- g. Reach out to Chambers for quotations on BOR advice, as outlined in 5.a. above (Administrator/Analyst).
- h. Draft correspondence for all complaints and enquiries as detailed above (Administrator/Analyst).

8. Items to be Discussed at the Next Meeting

- a. PR & Education Initiatives
 - i. Social Media Campaign
 - ii. Bill of Rights Training
 - iii. School Visits
- b. Migrants
- c. Prisons Updates
- d. HRC Annual Report
- e. Mental Health
- f. Beneficial Ownership Register

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 18 September 2025.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.



Benjamin Tonner KC
CHAIRPERSON