
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

4.—(1) If a senior police officer, having regard to the time or place at which and the circumstances in which any public procession is being held or is intended to be held and to its route or proposed route, 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 procession such conditions as appear to him necessary to prevent such disorder, damage, disruption or intimidation, including conditions as to the route of the procession or prohibiting it from entering any place specified in the directions.

(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 paragraphs (1) and (2) “a senior police officer” means—

- (a) in relation to a procession or open-air public meeting being held, or to a procession or 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 a procession or 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 liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum, or to both; or
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to a fine, or to both.