

BEYOND DIVISION

Leadership, Truth & Belonging in
an Age of Online Hate

10:00 - 10:30 | Arrival

10:30 - 10:35 | Welcome, Host: Lilian Seenoi-Barr

10:35 - 10:55 | Mapping the harm: Online hate and the far-right activity | Dessie Donnelly (Trade union and social justice organiser and co-founder of rabble.coop)

10:55 - 11:10 | Voices of lived experience

11:10 - 12:00 | Panel Discussion: From online hate to real harm

Confirmed Panellists:

- Dr Ebun Joseph (CEO and founder of the Institute of Anti-racism and Black Studies)
- Femi Femi Oluwole (Political commentator and campaigner)
- Allison Morris (Journalist)

12:00 - 13:00 | Panel Discussion: When does free speech become hate speech?

Confirmed Panellists:

- Michael McAvoy (Dep. of Justice)
- Andy George (President of National Black Police Association)
- Alyson Kilpatrick (Human Rights Chief Commissioner)

13:00 | Reflection, Shannon Doherty, CAJ & NWMF)

13:10 | Closing remarks, Elly Odhiambo (Researcher, writer and community advocate)

1:30 - 2:30 | Lunch

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



LILIAN SEENOI BARR

Cllr Dr Lilian Seenoi-Barr is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the North West Migrants Forum (NWMF), a leading advocate for racial equality, human rights and social inclusion in Northern Ireland.

Originally from Kenya, she has over two decades of experience in community development, advocacy and campaigning for the rights of marginalised communities.

In 2024, Lilian made history as Northern Ireland's first Black Mayor, serving as Mayor of Derry City and Strabane from 2024 to 2025. She has represented the Foyleside area on Derry City and Strabane District Council since 2021.

Through her leadership at NWMF, Lilian has championed initiatives addressing racial discrimination, promoting community cohesion and strengthening the representation of Black and minoritised communities. Her work focuses on challenging institutional inequalities, influencing policy and building a more inclusive and equitable society.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

DESSIE DONNELLY

Dessie Donnelly is a seasoned trade union and social justice organiser. Before co-founding rabble.coop with Ruairí McCann in 2021, he worked with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in the USA, as well as UNISON and Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) in Ireland.

Alarmed by social movements' growing reliance on Big Tech, a trend that intensified during the Covid lockdowns, Dessie spearheaded PPR's transformation into a human rights organisation that championed free software and digital rights. In 2020, he took a sabbatical to explore how technology could enhance strategies for social change, earning a Diploma in Software Engineering alongside qualifications in computer networks and server management.

At rabble.coop, Dessie identifies and develops ethical software alternatives to Big Tech products, ensuring their services align with the values of their partners. He also specialises in data, helping clients collect and analyse information to craft impactful campaigns. Additionally, Dessie offers consultancy to organisations seeking to harness technology more effectively.

Based in Ireland, he remains dedicated to empowering social movements through innovative and ethical tech solutions.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

DR EBUN JOSEPH

Dr Ebum Joseph is a diversity and race relations consultant; CEO and founder of the Institute of Anti-racism and Black Studies (IABS); special rapporteur on racial equality and racism in Ireland; module coordinator and lecturer in Black Studies at University College Dublin (UCD), the first in Ireland; and founder of the African Scholars Association Ireland (AfSAI).

Dr Joseph held the position of Career Development Consultant at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland from 2017 to 2021 and was a teaching fellow at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) from 2019 to 2020, and a Training and Employment Officer with Employment for People from Immigrant Communities (EPIC) between 2007 and 2017.

Ebum is an author, TV panellist, columnist, and equality activist. With a research focus on labour markets and race relations, she has presented at several conferences, businesses, and non-profit organisations. Her authored books include *Critical Race Theory and Inequality in the Labour Market: Racial Stratification in Ireland*, and *Equity in the Workplace: Stories of Black Irish women in Ireland*.

She also co-authored the book *Challenging Perceptions of Africa in schools: Critical approaches to Global Justice Education* (Routledge, 2020). Dr Joseph's 2020 Irish Journal of Sociology article 'Composite Counter-storytelling as a Technique for Challenging Ambivalence about Race and Racism in the Labour Market in Ireland' won the 2020 IRJ Prize.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

FEMI OLUWOLE

Femi Oluwole is a British political commentator and campaigner who became one of the most visible young pro-European voices in public debate during and after the Brexit process.

Born in Darlington to Nigerian parents – a surgeon father and a paediatrician mother, both of whom immigrated to the UK in the 1980s - Femi grew up in the West Midlands but, as a child, lived in several different places across the country.

At the age of 27 he became a campaigner against Brexit and later co-founded the anti-Brexit youth advocacy group Our Future, Our Choice.

Femi regularly appeared in the media during the process of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and in July 2019, Richard Tice, the then chair of the Brexit Party, threatened to sue him after he alleged that Leave.EU (an organisation Tice co-founded) was "overtly antisemitic".

Femi is a campaigner for electoral reform and a member of the Make Votes Matter alliance for proportional representation.

During the 2024 UK general election, Femi Oluwole was barred from a Reform UK rally in Birmingham. Despite him showing his press pass, security guards at the venue said they "didn't know" why he was not allowed to attend the event.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

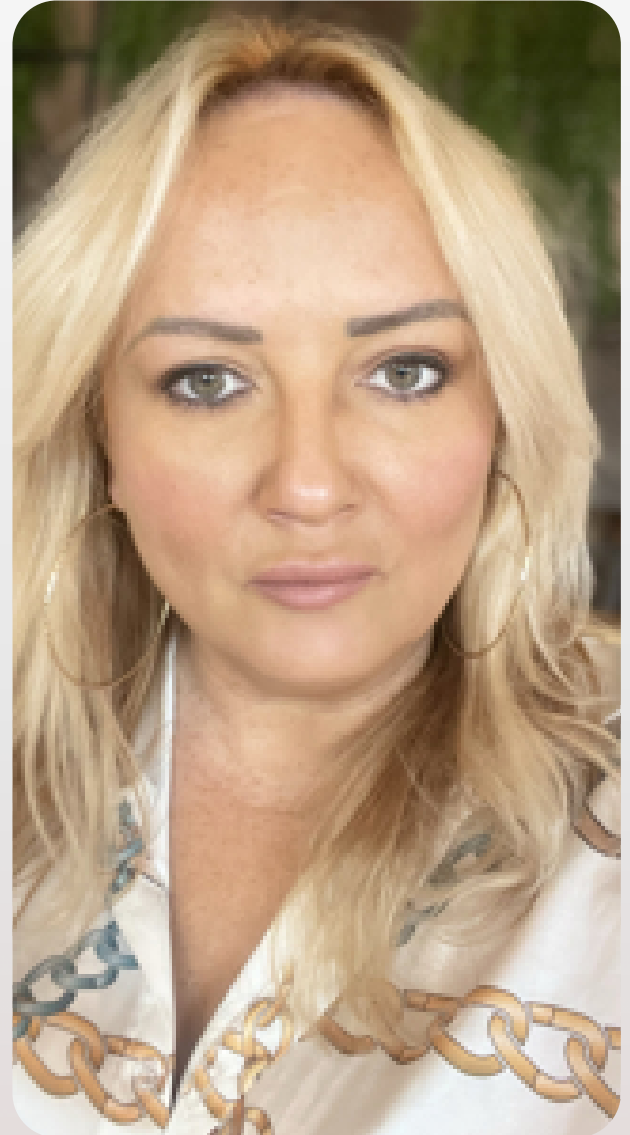
ALLISON MORRIS

Allison Morris is a Belfast-based journalist with over two decades' experience specialising in crime, security and justice issues. Allison started her career working for weekly newspapers as a journalist with the Belfast Media Group, covering the early days of the peace process.

As a rookie reporter, she covered the formation of the PSNI, the Holy Cross blockade and the summer parading disputes that often resulted in violent disorder.

Moving to the Irish News in 2007, she was later appointed Security Correspondent, winning several awards for stories involving ongoing loyalist and dissident republican paramilitary groups, breaking the story of the IRA murder and disappearance of Belfast man Joe Lynskey.

Appointed Crime Correspondent with the Belfast Telegraph in 2021, she has a particular interest in highlighting the high rates of femicide and domestic violence in Northern Ireland. As a commentator on security issues, she often appears on the BBC, UTV and RTE as well as being a regular contributor to the Sky News Press Preview. She co-presented the 2022 documentary Murder in Paradise for the BBC on the unsolved killing of Tyrone teacher Michaela McAreavey on the island of Mauritius.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

ALYSON KILPATRICK

Alyson Kilpatrick studied law at Queen's University Belfast, the Inns of Court School of Law, London and the College of Europe Bruges. She practised at the Bar of England and Wales and at the Bar of Northern Ireland. Between 2009 and September 2017, Alyson was the Independent Human Rights Advisor to the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

In 2016, she was appointed special legal advisor to the UK's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation. Until 2017, she was Chair of the Board of the Simon Community NI and, until 2020, Vice Chair of the Board of the NI Co-Ownership Housing Association. She is a founding member of the Board of the Foyle Family Justice Centre (One Safe Place).

Since 2023, Alyson has been a National Expert for the Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales on homelessness and Chair of the Northern Ireland Strategic Steering Group for the Foundation's Homewards NI project.

In 2018, Alyson conducted, on behalf of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, an independent human rights inspection of An Garda Síochána. She was appointed to carry out an independent review of the ECHR compliance of a number of NI 'legacy' investigations, known as Operation Kenova.

Alyson was appointed Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on September 1 2021 and has been reappointed for a further five-year term from September 1 2026.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

ANDY GEORGE

The eldest son of a Protestant mother from Armagh and a father who was born in Malaysia but who served in the British Army, Andy George is the longest-serving president of the National Black Police Association (NBPA).

Chief Inspector George joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary (now Police Service of Northern Ireland) in 1999 and spent his first years in a response team before moving to the Armed Response Unit, where he spent ten years. He was twice highly commended during his time in active service.

He attended his first NBPA meeting in July 2016 and was elected to the Cabinet as Sponsorship Co-Coordinator in October 2017. He was then elected as male vice president in October 2019 before being elected as president in October.

As president, Chief Inspector George works to improve support for members, liaises with senior leaders and wider stakeholders and engages with community groups from ethnically diverse backgrounds. He advises the National Police Chiefs Council, College of Policing, Independent Office of Police Complaints and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Service on racial equality, system change and police accountability. He also meets regularly with government officials such as the home secretary and other key figures who are responsible for policing.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

MICHAEL MCAVOY

A native of East Belfast, in 1992 Michael joined a newly established team set up by the Northern Ireland Civil Service to develop a fresh approach to tackling social and economic disadvantage in deprived rural areas of Northern Ireland.

Following devolution, Michael worked for two years as Private Secretary to Agriculture Minister, Bríd Rodgers.

Over the years, he has worked on a wide range of regeneration projects tackling deprivation in towns across Northern Ireland and in inner city areas of North and West Belfast. This included work in 2006-2007 to redevelop the former Crumlin Road Gaol site in North Belfast.

Michael joined the Department of Justice in 2017 to head up work on the Interfaces Programme and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

Over recent years as Director of Community Safety, Michael's work has focused on public protection, hate crime, electronic monitoring, ASB and efforts to improve community safety.

Outside of work, he helped establish Strangford Integrated College, where he was the school's Founding Chair of the Board of Governors. He plays golf regularly, but badly, and is an avid rugby fan, following Ireland and Ulster.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

SHANNON DOHERTY

Shannon Doherty is a researcher, policy practitioner and human rights advocate based in Northern Ireland, specialising in racial equality, migration, hate crime, minority rights and building inclusive societies.

She leads a joint project between the Committee on the Administration of Justice and North West Migrants Forum.

Her research examines racial justice, racist intimidation, far-right mobilisation and online extremism in a society still shaped by conflict. She holds a PhD from Ulster University, an LLM from Queen's University Belfast and a BSc from Ulster University.





MEET OUR SPEAKERS

ELLY ODHIAMBO

Elly Omondi Odhiambo is from the Kanyamwa clan of the Luo tradition, a people of Western Kenya.

He has studied, worked and lived in Northern Ireland for nearly 20 years. He has researched and co-written several migrant-themed commissioned reports, including Africans West of the Bann and Voices from the Global South. He worked on the social and health care needs of migrants in northwest Ireland.

In Kenya, Elly did research work and capacity building promoting corporate responsibility and philanthropy.

He wrote a play, *Did You Come By Boat* (2010), which toured the northwest, including the Playhouse Theatre in Derry and received good reviews. He has written hundreds of articles in local and international media. He previously contributed opinion articles to the Sentinel in Derry under the tag 'Out of Africa'.

Elly has co-founded and chaired migrant community organisations in the North of Ireland.

Elly currently works with unaccompanied young people. In the past, he has penned weekly columns for the Belfast Media Group newspapers.

