

**October 2023**

# The Highlighter News

**Accessible news for people with learning disabilities and autism**



**IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:**

**PSNI data breach  
Northern Ireland politics  
Luis Rubiales  
School closures  
Sports news**

**...and more!**

# Welcome to The Highlighter News

The Highlighter News aims to help make the news more accessible for people, including people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

## Content warning

**This issue contains articles about:**

- **Possible building collapses (pages 5 and 6)**
- **Sexual assault (pages 8 and 9)**



## TOP TIPS

- You can read The Highlighter News with a friend, family member or carer.
- Feeling upset or worried? Speak to someone you trust about what's upsetting you.
- It can be good to take a break from the news sometimes!

# Northern Ireland politics

By Michael Slater

Welcome to the Politics Round-Up where we will be looking at some of the top stories making the headlines in Northern Irish politics this month.

## The Lough Neagh algae crisis

Lough Neagh is the largest lake in all of Ireland and is bordered by five of NI's six counties. Recently it has been covered in a thick green algae which has formed due to a lot of pollution. So far lots of the wildlife around the lough has died and everyone is very worried that it is going to get worse.

Some politicians have asked for the Northern Ireland Assembly to start working again so that they can deal with the crisis. The Assembly has not been working since 2022. You can read more about this in our November 2022 issue.

A great deal of NI's drinking water comes from the lough and therefore poses a real threat to the environment, livestock, and people alike.

Many people across Northern Ireland are campaigning for something to be done to stop the algae. We will keep you updated on this story.



**Photo of algae at Toome canal near Lough Neagh.**

**Photo credit to Aaron Gibbon.**

# Northern Ireland politics continued

## **Taoiseach believes there will be a united Ireland in his lifetime**

Earlier this month the Taoiseach (pronounced tea-shock), the Irish prime minister, said that he believed he would see a united Ireland in his lifetime. A united Ireland means that Northern Ireland would join the Republic of Ireland and would no longer be part of the United Kingdom. The comments drew criticism from some other politicians who said the Taoiseach's comments were 'unhelpful.'

## **DUP boycott continues**

Jeffrey Donaldson is the leader of the DUP, the Democratic Unionist Party. The DUP are the largest unionist party in Northern Ireland and have refused to help restart the Northern Ireland Assembly for over a year because of their concerns regarding the Windsor Framework. You can read more about the Windsor Framework in our May 2023 issue.

Mr Donaldson recently said that his political party would 'not give way to pressure' to rejoin the NI Assembly until they get what they want. The DUP want legislation (laws) in place to protect Northern Ireland's ability to trade in the UK and they are concerned about how the Windsor Framework will affect this.

**DID YOU KNOW...**

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# Concrete in Schools

By Jack Mulhane

## What is RAAC Concrete ?

RAAC stands for reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete. It was used in buildings such as schools and hospitals that were built between the 1960's and the 1990's in the UK. The reason it was used was because unlike standard concrete, RAAC is cheaper, easy to make, and easy to install in buildings.

The difference between RAAC and standard concrete is that while standard concrete is solid (like the inside of a Cadbury's chocolate bar) RAAC has air bubbles throughout it (like the inside of an Aero chocolate bar). These air bubbles mean that if exposed to water over a long period of time (such as when it rains), the RAAC concrete will start to weaken and eventually collapse. This means that if the ceiling of a school is made from RAAC and has been there for over 30 years the likelihood of that ceiling collapsing is very high.

## Why has the focus been on schools?

The reason there is a particular focus on schools is simply because the UK Government had already assessed how many schools were built using RAAC.



**Photo is of concrete mixture being poured.**

# Concrete in schools continued

All the way back in 2004, the UK Labour party government announced a programme called 'Building Schools for the Future'. This programme aimed to rebuild all schools in the UK with priority given to those that were crumbling due to RAAC. Then in 2010, the new Conservative party cut the programme in order to save money.

Since then schools with RAAC have continued to be rebuilt but with less and less funding as the years have gone on.

By 2020, there was little money given towards rebuilding schools and priority was given to schools that were in the process of falling down. In 2020, Rishi Sunak, who at the time was Chancellor of the Exchequer (the Minister in charge of how the country's money will be spent) cut the budget, leaving hundreds of schools at risk of falling down.

## What's happening now?

So far over 150 schools have closed in England and Scotland. Some schools are using different buildings to have lessons.

Schools in Northern Ireland are being checked to find out if RAAC was used to build them.

**DID YOU KNOW...**

**The Highlighter News is written by a team of volunteers, including people with learning disabilities and autism. Interested in volunteering? Email [hello@thehighlighter.org](mailto:hello@thehighlighter.org) to find out about current volunteer vacancies.**

# PSNI data breach

By Olivia Gallagher

In August 2023, there was a data breach of at least 10,000 PSNI officers' surnames, work location and more. The PSNI are the police service of Northern Ireland.

## What is a data breach?

A data breach is when information that was supposed to be kept confidential is either stolen or 'leaked'. The recent PSNI data breach is believed to have been accidental. The information was mistakenly published to a website and was available for around two hours before being removed from the website.

## Why is it this data breach big news?

The data breach has got a lot of attention because police officers in Northern Ireland have often been threatened and it's worrying that information about them, such as their surnames and what police station they work at, could be accessed by people who may wish to cause them harm.

After the data breach, the PSNI apologised for mistakenly publishing the information. They asked that anyone who had access to the information deleted it immediately. It is against the law to have this information. The Chief Constable (senior officer in charge of the PSNI) Simon Byrne has now resigned.



**Photo is of Simon Byrne, who has now resigned from his job as Chief Constable of the PSNI.**

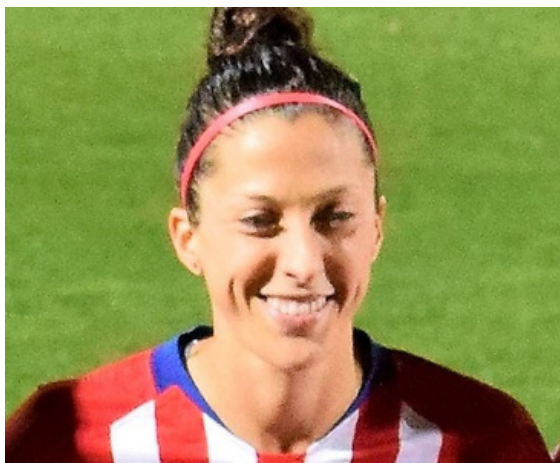
# Conflict in Spanish football

**Content warning: sexual assault**

**By Saana Taussi**

After Spain won the Women's World Cup in August, there has been a lot of conflict related to the Royal Spanish Football Federation. The Royal Spanish Football Federation oversees football in Spain and is in charge of things like selecting the management for the Spanish national football teams.

Luis Rubiales, who was then the President of the Football Federation, has been accused of sexually assaulting one of the winning players, Jenni Hermoso, at the World Cup. Rubiales has now resigned as president.



**Photo is of Jenni Hermoso.**

**Credit to Alejandro Reguero.**

## **What happened between Rubiales and Hermoso?**

During the World Cup Victory celebrations Rubiales kissed Hermosa on the mouth during a live tv broadcast. People around the world were angry because they felt his behavior was inappropriate. Rubiales claimed the kiss was consensual (with permission), but Hermoso denied this and she filed a formal sexual assault complaint against Rubiales. Spanish state prosecutors filed a lawsuit against Rubiales for the incident, accusing him of sexual assault and coercion.

Sexual assault means touching another person in a sexual way without the consent of that person. Coercion means trying to make someone do something by threatening them or forcing them.



# Conflict in Spanish football continued

**Content warning: sexual assault**

Hermoso has said that Rubiales' tried to pressure her to defend him after there was a bad reaction to his behavior.

If found guilty, Rubiales could face a fine or be sentenced to prison for one to four years.

## **Why have the boycotts continued and what changes are being made?**

After Hermoso accused Rubiales of sexual assault, 81 women players said they would not play for the Spanish national team until Rubiales is removed (fired). However, the Federation never fired Rubiales, instead he eventually resigned himself.

After having long discussions with the players, the Federation announced they will take action to build a safer professional environment for women players. Many of the planned changes are not publicly announced yet, but they include firing several people in the organisation who have been responsible for treating the players poorly. There have also been reports that players have been told they will be fined or suspended from their team if they don't play.

**Reading about sexual assault can be upsetting. If you are worried or sad, talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling. If you don't know how to start the conversation, show them this article. Or you could write down your feelings or even draw a picture.**

**You can also talk to The Samaritans by ringing 116 123 or by texting SHOUT to 85258.**

# Sports

By Bartek Wysokowski

## Summer sports round-up

### Roland Garros (French Open)

Roland Garros is a tennis grand slam which took place in Paris, France from the 22nd of May to the 11th of June. A grand slam is one of the most important tennis events which plays annually. There are four grand slams each year.

In the men's singles, Novak Djokovic won his 3rd Roland Garros and won his record-breaking 23rd grand slam defeating Norwegian Casper Ruud 3 sets to 0. In a men's grand slam, you need to win three sets to win. To earn a set, you need to get six games.

In the women's singles, Polish tennis player Iga Swiatek defeated Czech tennis player, Karolina Muchova in a great match winning 2 sets to 1 to win her 2nd Roland Garros title in a row and her 3rd Roland Garros title in her career.



**Photo shows Novak Djokovic.**

# Sports continued

## Summer sports round-up

### FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 Finals

The women's world cup final was held in Stadium Australia in Sydney. The match was between Spain and England on Sunday the 20th of August. The winner of the match was Spain 1-0 by a goal in the 29th minute by Olga Carmona winning their first women's world cup.

The day before the finals, there is the bronze medal match. It was between Sweden and the hosts Australia. The winner was Sweden winning 2-0 with a penalty in the 30th minute from Fridolina Rolfo and a 62nd minute goal from Kosovare Asllani to collect the bronze medal.

Currently there is a bid going on amongst some countries for the next women's world cup in 2027. A bid involves a country applying to put on the next tournament by outlining how they will do it and why they would be the best choice. The countries participating in the bid are Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Brazil, Mexico, United States and South Africa. Some countries like Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands will be together in a bid and some will bid alone like Brazil and South Africa.

**On in October**

### Men's Rugby World Cup

### Cricket World Cup

- UEFA Champions League (football)
- Premier League (football)
- Women's Super League (football)

# Get in touch!

**Have you enjoyed reading this month's issue of  
The Highlighter News?**

**Is there a topic or news story you'd like us to write  
about in next month's issue?**

**Let us know by emailing [hello@thehighlighter.org](mailto:hello@thehighlighter.org)**

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**Every workshop includes an opportunity for attendees  
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