

# THE ICROSS FILES

## High Court hears shock allegations that Michael Meegan, the man who

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THE HIGH Court has rejected a bid by Irish charity boss Michael Meegan to gag an extensive Irish Mail on Sunday investigation into a series of allegations of sexual assault, financial impropriety and inappropriate behaviour against him.

Having read more than 100 pages of affidavits and exhibits submitted by both sides last weekend, High Court President Judge Nicholas Kearns ruled on Monday that the MoS had gathered sufficient evidence to defeat the injunction application and reasonably defend any future defamation actions.

On that basis, Judge Kearns ruled that Meegan – whose charity fundraisers have been supported by celebrities ranging from Chris de Burgh to Britney Spears – was not entitled to an injunction to prevent publication even though he denied all of the allegations against him.

During the hearing, the court heard that six Kenyan men, all of whom had worked for Meegan's charity ICROSS – International Community for Relief of Starvation and Suffering – had made signed and recorded statements to the MoS alleging sexual abuse, assault and inappropriate behaviour.

According to the evidence seen by the court, the allegations of assault stretch back almost a quarter of a century, having begun in 1986.

One of the men subsequently withdrew his statement although a former ICROSS board member and a one-time volunteer had in their sworn affidavits confirmed elements of it.

Meegan also provided evidence in the form of sworn affidavits that another of the men – Maasai tribesman Meriape Ole Sangaire – had retracted his allegations twice in the past.

In his own sworn testimony to the court, however, Meriape said the retractions were forgeries to which he had never signed his name.

'I reiterate that Michael Meegan has sexually abused all of us and I am willing to repeat this at any forum,' his affidavit reads. 'I am craving for justice and I hope that it will be done. I have repeatedly sought help in vain.'

One of the accusers, Nixon S Jacob, said in his statement given to the court that he was caned for Meegan's pleasure.

'He told me if I wanted money, I should strip for him and let him cane me. He told me to take down my trousers right there in his office.'

'He took a bamboo stick and gave me about 10 strokes on my bare buttocks. Then he gave me the money. He was like a sadist. He had taken off his shirt and was wearing just track-suit bottoms. He became sexually aroused.'

Nixon's evidence also informed the court of other approaches.

'One night I went to bed. I was a bit drunk. He came to my bedside, tried to wake me up. He was naked and said, "I need you to come with me. I need you to hold my penis".

'I said, "No".'

Nixon's statement included allegations that charity money was used to fly sexual partners from abroad to Meegan.

'I remember seeing him looking at gay websites with naked young men on them. Some were white Europeans and others were from Asia. He made contact and paid the fares for some of them to come over. We all met them.'

Evidence provided to the court by another man, Paulo Lerat, included similar allegations.

'I was in Meegan's clinic/office and he told me to take my clothes off, he intended to cane me. He was trying to joke about it.'

'I took my rungu – the Maasai club we always carry with us – and I hit him hard on the hand. He ran into the next room and closed the door.'

Details of a statement from another accuser, Haron K Wambiri, were also provided to the court.

In his statement – a synopsis of which was provided to the court – Haron alleges he was responsible for 'handing out cash for guys who agreed to be caned'.

'There would be ksh50 for being caned with trousers on; ksh100 for being caned on bare buttocks; and an extra ksh50 if Meegan was allowed to fondle their bare buttocks still hot from caning.'

Haron's evidence also included allegations that he cooperated with Meegan in creating 'ghost projects' for

ICROSS in order to justify donor funds.

In an affidavit provided to the court from Kenya, Meegan denied outright all of the allegations and accused two named fellow aid workers from what he called 'a rival' NGO of conducting a 25-year smear campaign against him.

On balance, however, the court ruled that the MoS had provided sufficient supporting evidence in the form of original documentation and affidavits from independent witnesses to show that it had a likely chance of defending any libel claim.

This evidence included a 1986 letter, signed by Meegan, in which he acknowledged and confirmed to one

of his own board members that he was the subject of a police investigation.

It also included an affidavit from one-time ICROSS board member

### Created 'ghost projects' to justify donor funds

Dr Vincent Kenny who travelled to Kenya in 1986 to help Meegan deal with the sexual allegations against him.

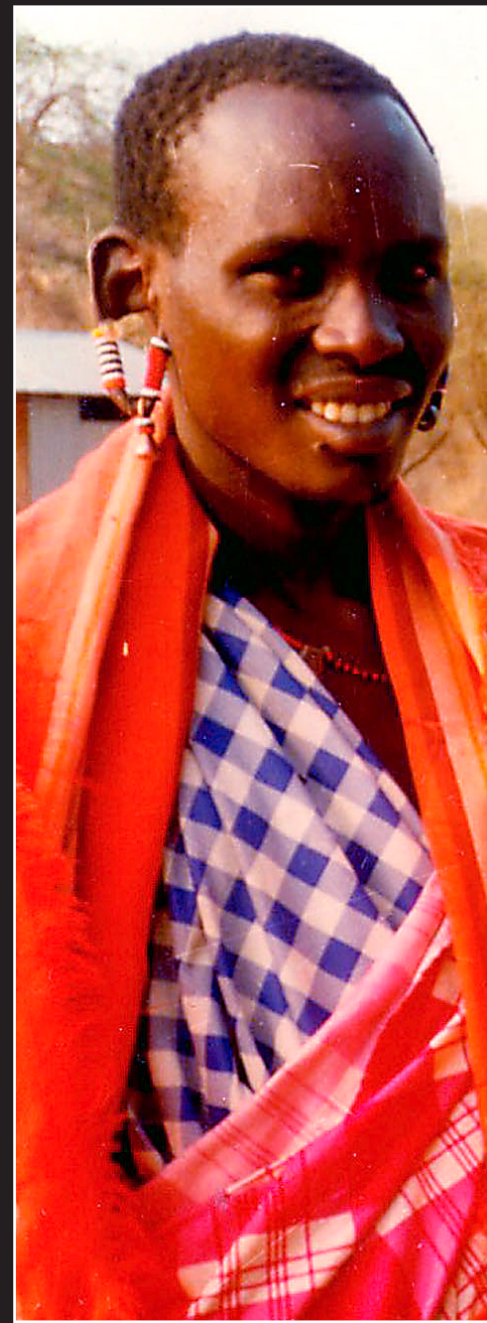
Evidence from a former board

member who confirmed Meegan had insisted on sleeping with an employee in her home in Dublin, and a former volunteer, now working for Concern, who swore Meegan had made a casual sexual advance toward him, was also included.

In addition, a British Labour Party peer, Lord Nicholas Rea, provided an affidavit in which he confirmed that after a visit to ICROSS he had found a plea for help in his jacket pocket from a male member of staff whom Meegan had teased during dinner about 'the size of his enormous penis'.

The signed note, the court was informed, read: 'Michael Meegan is a liar and a cheat. Don't believe anything he says.'

# Charity boss loses court fight to gag MoS over sex abuse claims



## 'I became Meegan's first victim'

IN A statement provided to the court as evidence, former ICROSS worker Meriape Ole Sangaire outlined the allegations he had made against Meegan. 'In 1986, he began harassing me by touching me continually. I asked him not to but he continued, telling me I had sexy buttocks and telling me to touch his secret parts.'

'I became Meegan's first victim, I realise now. One night he pulled me into his bedroom and tried to force me to take off my trousers, trying to rip them off me. I resisted him, but although I was strong he was stronger.'

'Even now I have problems with sex, problems I do not even discuss with my wife.'

'Everything he did to me was against my customs, my family, my Christian religion. It was a terrible abuse.'

The statement, backed up by a sworn affidavit, considered by the court also included allegations of caning.

'He said if I needed money I should let him cane me. He forced me to partially strip and he caned

me. I was angry and wanted to hit him but I knew I would end up in jail. He was the powerful white man and the police would believe him, not me.'

'He gave me Ksh1,000. I still have the scars on my buttock and inner thigh from his caning me.'

'I wanted to go back to the police and insist they arrest him but I was worried that he was bribing someone and I would be arrested instead of him.'

Meriape's statement also made the court aware of alleged deceptive practices at ICROSS.

'He started telling everyone that he was "living with the Maasai". This was a lie, he was living in a house. He never slept in a manyatta [Maasai community] in his whole time in Kenya.'

Meegan's legal presentation included claims that Meriape has twice previously admitted making false claims. However, Meriape swore a separate affidavit, shown to the court, saying that these claims were untrue and that documents used to back them up – which used an incorrect ID number and even spelt Meriape's name wrong – were forgeries.

'He also molests the boys.'

Other evidence provided to the court by the MoS included the complete details of a five-page 2006 letter from the Irish and British board of ICROSS to Meegan in which the board requested Meegan's response to a large number of allegations that had come to its attention.

Evidence before the court showed that this letter – sent to Meegan as a draft form to allow him to comment – included allegations of 'financial impropriety', 'character/integrity issues' and 'sexual impropriety'.

The letter asks Meegan about newspaper revelations that he had exaggerated his academic qualifications and 'misleading' claims by Meegan