

Transcript – What is Justice?

KEY:

N: Narrator

N: The principle of justice is an important feature in all democratic societies. Justice can be thought of as everyone being treated fairly, or as someone receiving a deserved punishment as a result of their actions. The issue with justice is that people can have their own ideas about what is fair and what a deserved punishment might be.

Take, for example, the case of an athlete using a banned substance to improve their performance. Should they be banned from their sport? For how long? People are likely to disagree about this, as they might not be impartial. So, what is justice in this case? And who should decide what justice is?

Democratic societies have an impartial Judicial System which is independent from government. This is a system of courts which is granted authority by the government to apply the law and administer justice. When a person is found guilty of breaking the law by a court, a Judge or Magistrate decides the level of punishment based on the seriousness of the offence. This is called 'passing sentence'. A custodial sentence, or imprisonment, may be imposed for serious offences. Non-custodial sentences, such as fines or community service, may be imposed for less serious offences.

Paramilitary organisations who impose their own sense of justice on others through punishment beatings or punishment shootings are acting unlawfully. Only the courts have the authority to administer justice. So-called punishment beatings or shootings are an abuse of Human Rights, and in many cases, are also a form of child abuse.