

Dr Phillip Lee MP
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Dear Dr Phillip Lee MP

The UN Universal Periodic Review of the UK: Acceptance of Recommendations

As civil society organisations, we are writing to you as you prepare to confirm which of the 227 United Nations Human Rights Council's recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) the UK will be supporting on 20-22 September 2017.

As you know, there is strong civil society interest in the UPR process. The signatories to this letter were part of BIHR's engagement with 175 groups for the Civil Society UPR Shadow Report, and/or submitted their own evidence on human rights in the UK to the UPR process and other UN monitoring mechanisms. The Civil Society Report made over 40 recommendations across a range of issues, many of which are reflected in the 227 UN UPR recommendations.

We note from the UN documentation (made available on 12 and 13 September) that only 42% of the UPR recommendations are to be supported by the government. As a state which prides itself on demonstrating human rights leadership internationally, we are disappointed that such a low number have been supported. Particularly as WEOG countries (Western European and Others) accept an average of 67% of UPR recommendations.

We are especially disappointed that the UK has not supported the UPR recommendations that are relevant to the primary recommendations of the Civil Society Report to guarantee building upon the Human Rights Act (HRA), rather than amending or repealing it via a new bill of rights and recognising that the HRA gives effect to a range of international human rights laws (recommendations 134.68 - 134.77).

As civil society groups we urge the UK government to commit to:

- Disseminate its report on which recommendations have been supported and the rationale for this to civil society groups it has engaged with and ensure this is easily accessible on www.gov.uk;
- An implementation plan for how the recommendations will be progressed over the next four and half years, including:
 - a process for better and on-going engagement with civil society across the UK, including in the devolved nations, which enables the monitoring of

- progress and constructive dialogue using a variety of consultation, involvement and evidence gathering approaches;
- a mid-term report (2019) as part of this implementation plan, not in lieu of it, to assess progress and ensure opportunities for engagement with civil society, and to review any change of position on recommendations not previously supported; and
 - consideration of how this links to UN treaty monitoring reporting and implementation of recommendations from those bodies.

The UK has long championed the UPR, recognising it as an important international process. We believe taking the above steps are vital in realising the UK's commitment to the UN systems of human rights monitoring, to transparency, and to human rights progress here at home.

We look forward to increased engagement with civil society, working together to ensuring implementation of the UPR recommendations and progress on human rights here at home.

Yours sincerely,

British Institute of Human Rights
 AIRE Centre
 Article 12
 AVID (Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees)
 Campaign to Close Campsfield and End All Immigration Detention
 Child Rights Alliance for England
 Children in Scotland
 Children in Wales
 Coram Children's Legal Centre
 FiLiA
 Friends, Families and Travellers
 Garden Court Chambers
 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
 HEAR Equality and Human Rights Network
 HIV Scotland
 Human Rights Consortium Scotland
 Humanist Society Scotland
 Humanists UK
 Inclusion London
 Just Fair
 Latin American Women's Rights Service
 Law Centres Network
 Leicester Secular Society
 London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC)
 Mary Ward Legal Centre
 Mental Health Foundation
 Migrants Resource Centre
 NAT (National AIDS Trust)
 NAWO (National Alliance of Women's Organisations)
 Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council
 NSUN (National Service User Network)

NTDi
 Older People's Advocacy Alliance (UK)
 René Cassin
 Rights Watch (UK)
 ROTA - Race on the Agenda
 Runnymede Trust
 SBASSG (Swansea Bay Asylum Seeker Support Group)
 Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
 South Wales against Wrongful Conviction
 Stonewall
 Stonewall Cymru
 Stonewall Scotland
 Swansea Women's Asylum and Refugee Support Group
 The Howard League for Penal Reform
 The IARS International Institute
 The Judith Trust
 The Traveller Movement
 Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)
 TransForum Manchester
 UK Race and Europe Network
 Unicef UK
 Unique Transgender Network North Wales
 United Nations Association - UK
 University of Liverpool Law Clinic
 Wales PEN Cymru
 Welsh Women's Aid
 Women's Aid
 Women's Resource Centre
 York Human Rights City Network
 York LGBT Forum