

President Joseph R. Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

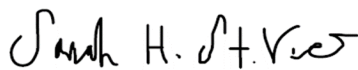
Rights and Security International (RSI), and the undersigned civil society organisations with a deep concern for the victims and survivors of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, write to you regarding the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill ('the Legacy Bill') ahead of Prime Minister Sunak's visit to Washington on June 8, 2023.

On May 28, the UK government stated that it planned to change the Legacy Bill to make the proposed new system for investigations relating to the Northern Ireland Troubles more "robustly compliant" with international law. This would appear to be in response to criticism from members of Congress, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding how the legislation is likely to breach the human rights of victims, survivors, and their families. This primarily relates to the proposed sweeping amnesty, and the shutting down of existing and future investigations into killings which occurred during the Troubles, and which impacted people from all communities in Northern Ireland.

As you know, these provisions of the Legacy Bill would breach the rights of victims, survivors, and their families in Northern Ireland to utilise the legal guarantees of the right to life under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, a legal instrument which was transposed into UK law as a result of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. These guarantees include the right to have an effective investigation into state failings to guarantee the right to life, especially failure to take steps to protect the lives of victims who were at risk of state collusion with paramilitaries.

We contend that any amendments to the Legacy Bill cannot save this fundamentally flawed legislation. The Stormont House Agreement of 2014 was a political accommodation between the UK and Irish governments, and a majority of parties that made up the Northern Ireland Executive, which had widespread acceptance from all communities as a means to address legacy issues for victims, survivors, and their families. Accordingly, we urge you to convey to Prime Minister Sunak that, in order to comply with international law, the UK should withdraw the Legacy Bill and revert to the framework outlined in the Stormont House Agreement.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah St Vincent
Executive Director
Rights and Security International



Mike Breen
President and CEO
Human Rights First



Suzanne Adely
President
National Lawyers Guild



Kerry Kennedy
President
RFK Human Rights