On global Human Rights Day, 75+ groups from across the UK issue an open letter to the Prime Minister and political leaders, urging them to protect universal human rights in the UK.

Sunday 10 December, 2023

Media Release

06.12.2020

EMBARGOED 00.01am 10.12.2023

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On the 75th
anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR)
have coordinated an open letter to the Prime Minister and political leaders signed by 75+ organisations from across the UK.

Published on 10th
December 2023, global Human Rights Day, the letter highlights the United Nations' call for a "movement of shared humanity" - a sentiment reflected by the breadth of organisations that have signed it. Grassroots groups, local charities, international organisations, professional bodies, advocates and lawyers all working in different fields and for different causes have come together to call on the UK Government to reaffirm the commitment to universal human rights, honouring the fundamental principle that human rights are for everyone.

As well as celebrating the incredible mobilisation of civil society to speak up against the UK Government's unprincipled and unworkable Rights Removal Bill, which was ultimately scrapped this year, the letter highlights the impact that human rights have in the "small places close to home" – a phrase coined by UDHR architect Eleanor Roosevelt. It reflects on the role of the UDHR in inspiring the European Convention on Human Rights and ultimately the UK's own Human Rights Act.

Together, the organisations tell politicians, "Anchored by common fundamental values that reach beyond divides, the UDHR makes it clear that universal human rights are part of what it means to be human, and not gifts granted by the state."

Speaking on the release of the open letter, BIHR's CEO, Sanchita Hosali, said:

"Global Human Rights Day should be a time for us all in the UK to reflect on the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, agreed across nations in the aftermath of World War II 75 years ago to protect the equal dignity of each of us. Whether in our schools or workplaces, in community centres or housing offices, at police stations and courts, in hospitals and care homes, social work departments and Government offices, our universal human rights, shared by each and every one of us should be respected and protected by those in power."

"Sadly, here at home political debate is characterised by hostility to people's human rights and a government intent on removing its accountability to us all. Having seen off the very real risk from the Government to scrap our Human Rights Act in favour of a Rights Removal Bill, groups from across the UK have joined together to call on our Prime Minister and political leaders to do better. Yet just days ago we see the Government seeking to set down in law the removal of human rights protections for a whole group of people seeking safety in it's latest Rwanda Bill. As we mark the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, the Government must move beyond the popularist, often dog whistle politicking around human rights, and commit to realising the vision of universal human rights as a global blueprint for international, national, and local laws and policies."

-ENDS-

Notes

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Politics :: Human Rights :: UK Government :: Prime Minister :: Human Rights Act :: European Convention On Human Rights :: Human Rights Day :: UDHR :: Rwanda ::

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- The open letter, coordinated by the British Institute of Human Rights, will be sent to the Prime Minister and politicians on Friday 08 December 2023 and available publicly from 0.01am, Sunday 10 December 2023: bihr.org.uk/HRDay23. It will also be available in Easy Read and video formats, created with the kind support of My Life My Choice, Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities and Learning Disability England. To discuss prior access to the letter, please contact Sanchita Hosali, CEO, BIHR on ceo@bihr.org.uk

- The 10 December marks global Human Rights Day. On this day in 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) following WW2. In the preamble to the European Convention on Human Rights 1950, the Council of Europe reaffirms the UHDR aim of securing universal and effective observance of human rights. The UK's Human Rights Act 1998 creates legal duties that bring these Convention rights into UK law and makes the enforceable here at home.

- The British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR) is a registered charity working across the UK to achieve social change through human rights by working directly with people, communities and public bodies to change practice and amplify this evidence of human rights in action to influence policy. On 11th
  December 2023, BIHR will be hosting a Human Rights Day event in the House of Lords to launch new co-produced resources to support community groups to use human rights law to address social justice issues.

- The Human Rights Day open letter has been signed by 80 organisations:

The British Institute of Human Rights; Kinship; VoiceAbility; Access Social Care ; Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities ; Yorkshire MESMAC; Changing Our Lives; Civil Society Alliance; The Challenging Behaviour Foundation; René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights ; Hourglass; SMK Law Solicitors ; Unlock Democracy; The Judith Trust; C-Change Scotland; The Law Society of Northern Ireland; Human Rights Consortium Scotland; Helen Bamber Foundation; UNISON; Scottish Care ; Choice Support; Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE); Law Centres Network; Inclusion North ; Children's Rights Alliance for England, part of Just for Kids Law ; End Violence Against Women Coalition; Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations ; Parkinson's UK; National Care Forum; ForcesWatch; Business & Professional women UK; Carers UK; Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland); Learning Disability England; Older People's Commissioner for Wales; Runnymede Trust; Mothers' Union; Inclusion London; Latin American Women's Rights Service; Care Rights UK; Cloverleaf Advocacy 2000 Ltd; Release; All Wales People First ; End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW); National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi); WISH; Leigh Day; Juno Women's Aid; Campaign for Freedom of Information; Rights of Women; EachOther; ECPAT UK (Every Child Protected Against Trafficking); Clynfyw Care Farm; Praxis; Welsh Refugee Council; Equal Rights Trust; Rightful Lives; Freedom from Torture; British Geriatrics Society; The Public Interest Litigation Support (PILS) Project; The Howard league for Penal Reform; Sussex Interpreting Services; The Include Project ; Equally Ours; British Association of Social Workers (BASW); Southeast and East Asian Centre (SEEAC); Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance; Humanists UK; The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI); Liberty; English PEN; Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER); Fair Justice System Scotland; My Life My Choice; Turning Point; Rook Irwin Sweeney LLP; Association for Real Change; GM Freeze; Quakers in Britain; and Detention Action

- The British Institute of Human Rights is a registered charity (1101575) and registered company (4978121). Registered address (not open to visitors): BIHR, c/o Nordens Farringdon Ltd., 8 Coldbath Square, London, EC1R 5HL. Find us at bihr.org.uk or email info@bihr.org.uk.

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Human Rights Day Civil Society Open Letter to the Prime Minister and Political Leaders
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