



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. In 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women encouraged the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.² The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommended that the United Kingdom ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.³ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the United Kingdom ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.⁴

3. In 2019, the Committee against Torture encouraged the United Kingdom to consider making the declaration under article 22 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual communications.⁵ In 2019, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance called upon the United Kingdom to accept the individual communications procedure under article 14 and to withdraw its interpretative declaration under article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.⁶

4. In 2017, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom withdraw its reservation to articles 18 and 24 (2) (a) and (b) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.⁷ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reiterated its previous recommendation that the United



Kingdom withdraw its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.⁸

5. UNICEF indicated that the United Kingdom had retained its interpretive declaration with regard to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.⁹ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) observed that the United Kingdom had not extended territorial application of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to Anguilla, Bermuda or the British Virgin Islands.¹⁰

6. The United Kingdom submitted an update in 2018 and a midterm report on the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the third cycle of the universal periodic review.¹¹

7. The United Kingdom made annual financial contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, in 2018 and 2019, the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery, in 2018 to 2021, the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council, in 2019 and 2021, and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, in 2020 and 2021.¹²

III. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

8. During the oral update at the fiftieth session of the Human Rights Council, in June 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concerns about plans in the United Kingdom to replace the Human Rights Act of 1998 with more limited legislation.¹³ UNICEF recommended that the United Kingdom maintain the same level of human rights protection provided by the Human Rights Act in the British Bill of Rights and include additional child-specific rights.¹⁴

9. While noting that the United Kingdom had a dualist legal system and that a combination of policies and legislation gave effect to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Committee against Torture recommended that the United Kingdom incorporate all the provisions of the Convention into its legislation.¹⁵ Similar recommendations were made by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with regard to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and by UNICEF, with regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁶

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

10. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that implementation of the outcome of the decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, or “Brexit”, did not result in a regression from the current levels of human rights protection.¹⁷

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights

A. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Equality and non-discrimination

11. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom explicitly incorporate into its national legislation protection from multiple and intersectional discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, disability or migrant, refugee and/or other status.¹⁸

12. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reiterated its concern that the applicability of the Equality Act of 2010 had not been extended to Northern Ireland.¹⁹ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom revise its legislation in Northern Ireland to ensure that it afforded protection to women, ensure the uniform application of the public sector equality duty and review the public sector equality duty to address situations of intersecting forms of discrimination.²⁰

13. While the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance noted with satisfaction that the United Kingdom had shown leadership in key areas, she found that the country still had much work to do in addressing structural forms of racial discrimination and equality.²¹ She recommended that the United Kingdom remove structural barriers to racial and ethnic minority communities' equal and non-discriminatory enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health and the right to an adequate standard of living.²²

2. Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

14. The Committee against Torture was concerned by the reports it had received reflecting a marked increase in the incidence of racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-disabled and anti-transgender crimes in recent years.²³

15. While the Committee against Torture appreciated the information provided by the Government on the regulations governing the use of electrical discharge weapons (tasers) and related specific training for law enforcement officials, it was concerned about the reported increase in their disproportionate use against members of minority groups.²⁴ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that the use of electrical discharge weapons was strictly compliant with the principles of necessity, subsidiarity and proportionality.²⁵

16. While appreciating the measures adopted to replace ageing prisons with a new penitentiary infrastructure, and efforts to reduce the use of short-term imprisonment in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Committee against Torture was concerned about overcrowding and poor conditions in some prisons holding male offenders in England and Wales.²⁶ The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance noted that racial and ethnic minority offenders were overrepresented in both the adult and youth prison estates.²⁷ The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment recommended that the United Kingdom take the steps necessary to ensure that the use of detention did not discriminate against certain groups of people and that arrests, stops and searches were not based on appearance or membership of national or ethnic groups.²⁸

17. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment recommended that the United Kingdom strengthen the oversight of the use of force in all detention settings to ensure that force was only used if it was strictly necessary and proportionate.²⁹ The Subcommittee recommended that the United Kingdom integrate the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment into the training curriculum for police and health-care professionals.³⁰

18. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the United Kingdom continue to develop alternative sentencing and custodial strategies for women convicted of minor offences.³¹ The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment recommended that the United Kingdom provide mental health care that met the needs of all detainees.³²

19. The Committee against Torture and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment recommended that the United Kingdom set out in legislation the mandate and powers of the secretariat and members of the national preventive mechanism, guarantee their operational independence and ensure that the mechanism's secretariat and member bodies received sufficient resources.³³

3. Human rights and counter-terrorism

20. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance noted that the more recent counter-terrorism laws and policies had exacerbated Islamophobic sentiment. She noted that leading concerns over the Prevent Strategy related to the lack of clear definitions of “extremism”, “terrorism” and “British values”. She also expressed her concerns that the ambiguity in terminology could set the stage for the disproportionate and discriminatory implementation of the “prevent duty” by teachers, professors, nurses and doctors, whom the Government had made the front-line agents in the fight against extremism.³⁴ The Special Rapporteur recommended that the United Kingdom suspend the “prevent duty” and conduct a comprehensive review of counter-terrorism measures to eliminate any discriminatory and disproportionate impact on racial, ethnic, and religious minorities.³⁵

4. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

21. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights took note of the decline in the number of civil legal aid cases and noted that the lack of access to legal aid exacerbated extreme poverty.³⁶ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom provide free or affordable legal aid for persons with disabilities and ensure that all persons with disabilities were provided with adequate procedural accommodation within the justice system.³⁷

22. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment recommended that the United Kingdom take urgent measures to tackle the causes of racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system.³⁸

23. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions title expressed concerns about the plans of the United Kingdom to introduce a law that provided de facto amnesty for serious human rights violations committed during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.³⁹

5. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

24. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance shared the concerns of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that the “prevent duty” created an atmosphere of suspicion towards members of Muslim communities, that it led to increased profiling on the basis of ethnicity and/or religion and adversely affected the rights to freedom of expression, education and freedom of religion.⁴⁰

25. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the increasing number of women who were represented in Parliament, the judiciary and the police force, but it expressed concern about the underrepresentation of women in political and public life, in particular in Northern Ireland.⁴¹ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom take measures to address the low representation of women in Northern Ireland and specific targeted measures to improve the representation of women in political and public life, including “Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic” women and women with disabilities, in Parliament, the judiciary and decision-making positions.⁴²

6. Right to privacy

26. The Human Rights Committee requested that the United Kingdom provide detailed information on the new safeguards applied to the surveillance regime and on the safeguards applied to requests from foreign governments to exchange intelligence and to surveillance activities carried out on or through the State party’s territory by personnel of allied powers.⁴³

7. Right to marriage and family life

27. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) observed that, although the legal minimum age of marriage in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was 18 years of age, in Scotland, the minimum age of marriage was 16 years of age

and marriage did not require parental consent.⁴⁴ UNESCO recommended that the United Kingdom consider harmonizing legislation to ensure that the minimum age of marriage for everyone was set at 18 years of age.⁴⁵

28. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that the new legal requirements for divorce provided for no-fault divorce, introduce an obligation for the celebrant of religious marriages, including Islamic marriages, to civilly register such marriages, and strengthen efforts to combat forced marriage.⁴⁶

8. Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons

29. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned that the definition of trafficking as set out in the Modern Slavery Act was conditioned on travel of the victim.⁴⁷ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that the definition of trafficking in persons was in line with the definition set out in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.⁴⁸ UNICEF recognized that the United Kingdom had an effective strategy to tackle human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery and had strengthened the system to identify and protect child victims.⁴⁹

30. The Committee against Torture recommended that the United Kingdom enhance its efforts to investigate claims of human trafficking and improve the training of law enforcement officers, prison personnel and other first responders.⁵⁰

9. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

31. In 2018, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that women were paid 17.9 per cent less per hour on average than men, that they were disproportionately engaged in part-time work and that long-term unemployment rates in Northern Ireland were more than twice those in the United Kingdom as a whole.⁵¹ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the United Kingdom increase opportunities for women to gain access to formal employment, introduce a mandatory duty on employers to protect women from sexual harassment and adopt specific measures to facilitate access for women belonging to marginalized groups to the labour market.⁵²

32. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom develop an effective employment policy for persons with disabilities aimed at ensuring decent work for them, ensure equal pay for work of equal value and ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to all persons with disabilities who require it in the workplace.⁵³

10. Right to social security

33. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that Scotland had established a promising social security system, guided by the principles of dignity and social security as a human right.⁵⁴

34. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was concerned about the reductions in social support, the unemployment allowance and Universal Credit payments and the insufficient compensation for disability-related costs.⁵⁵ UNICEF noted that the United Kingdom had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, by increasing payments through its Universal Credit welfare system to provide additional support for families struggling through the pandemic, but that the uplift was removed in October 2021.⁵⁶

11. Right to an adequate standard of living

35. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that, although the United Kingdom was the world's fifth largest economy, one fifth of its population lived in poverty.⁵⁷ He also noted that Scotland, despite having the lowest poverty rates in the United Kingdom had pockets of profound poverty and that Wales faced the highest relative poverty rate.⁵⁸ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about reports of the increasing number of women who were turning to prostitution

due to poverty.⁵⁹ The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance recommended that the United Kingdom combat persistent poverty, including by addressing unemployment and discriminatory practices regarding conditions of employment.⁶⁰ UNICEF affirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a serious impact on the number of people living in poverty.⁶¹ UNICEF recommended that the United Kingdom establish a time-measured whole-of-Government strategy for the eradication of child poverty.⁶²

36. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that children were arriving at school with empty stomachs and that schools were collecting food and sending it home because teachers knew that their students would otherwise go hungry. He recommended that the United Kingdom systematically measure food security.⁶³

37. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that Housing Benefit had been decimated, amid a real crisis in affordable housing.⁶⁴ He recommended that the United Kingdom reverse particularly regressive measures, such as the benefit cap and the reduction of the Housing Benefit.⁶⁵

12. Right to health

38. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned about obstacles faced by women belonging to marginalized groups, such as asylum-seeking and refugee women, migrant women and Roma and Traveller women, in gaining access to health-care services.⁶⁶ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom strengthen the implementation of programmes and policies aimed at providing effective access to health care for women belonging to marginalized groups.⁶⁷ The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance recommended that the United Kingdom improve the health outcomes of, and ensure the accessibility and availability of quality health-care services for, persons belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups.⁶⁸

39. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was concerned about the systemic, physical, attitudinal and communicative barriers preventing persons with disabilities from gaining access to mainstream health services.⁶⁹ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom develop a targeted, measurable and financed plan of action aiming at eliminating barriers to access to health care and services and measure its progress, especially in relation to persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and those with neurological and cognitive conditions.⁷⁰

13. Right to education

40. UNESCO recommended that the United Kingdom consider increasing its government expenditure on education to reach the 15 to 20 per cent threshold required under the Education 2030 Framework for Action.⁷¹

41. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women commended the measures adopted to encourage girls to consider jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, but it remained concerned about the continued underrepresentation of women in higher education and careers in those fields.⁷² The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom strengthen efforts to encourage girls to pursue non-traditional subjects and take measures to encourage girls to take up courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.⁷³ UNESCO recommended that the United Kingdom introduce legal protection for the right to education of pregnant and parenting women.⁷⁴

42. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was concerned about a dual education system that segregated children with disabilities in special schools and about the system was not equipped to respond to the requirements for high-quality inclusive education.⁷⁵ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom develop a comprehensive and coordinated legislative and policy framework for inclusive education and a time frame to ensure that mainstream schools fostered real inclusion of children with disabilities in the school environment.⁷⁶

14. Cultural rights

43. UNESCO encouraged the United Kingdom to ratify the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and to facilitate the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors, civil society and marginalized groups in cultural heritage and creative expression.⁷⁷

15. Development, the environment, and business and human rights

44. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women commended the measures taken in Scotland and Wales to halt the practice of hydraulic fracturing to extract fossil fuels (known as “fracking”), but it was concerned that women in rural areas in other territories of the United Kingdom were disproportionately affected by the harmful effects of fracking, environmental pollution and the effects of climate change.⁷⁸ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom ensure the equal participation of rural women in policymaking processes on disaster mitigation and climate change.⁷⁹

45. UNICEF recommended that the United Kingdom sign the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action and accelerate efforts to achieve “net zero” no later than 2050.⁸⁰

B. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women

46. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the research undertaken by the Advertising Standards Authority on the harmful effects of stereotypical imaging and the objectification of women in the media and in advertising.⁸¹ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom continue engaging with the media to eliminate stereotypical imaging and the objectification of women in the media.⁸²

47. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the United Kingdom adopt inclusive and accessible measures to facilitate access for women and girls to education, employment, health-care services and support services in rural areas.⁸³

48. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the adoption of measures to combat violence against women and girls in England and Wales and the national strategy of Scotland, entitled “Equally safe”.⁸⁴ It noted with particular concern however the inadequacy of laws and policies to protect women in Northern Ireland.⁸⁵ The Committee against Torture recommended that the United Kingdom take effective measures to address low prosecution and conviction rates for domestic abuse, ensure that all cases of gender-based violence were thoroughly investigated and provide mandatory training on the prosecution of gender-based violence to all justice officials and law enforcement personnel.⁸⁶

2. Children

49. UNICEF and the Committee against Torture were concerned that the age of criminal responsibility in England, Wales and Northern Ireland remained at 10 years of age, and that, in Scotland, it was recently raised from 8 to 12 years, which was not in accordance with international standards.⁸⁷ UNICEF recommended that the United Kingdom raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years of age.⁸⁸ The Committee against Torture recommended that the United Kingdom ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards and prohibit the application of solitary confinement to juveniles.⁸⁹

50. The Committee against Torture was seriously concerned that, in a February 2019 report, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse had found that 1,070 alleged incidents of child sexual abuse had taken place in the youth custodial estate in England and Wales between 2009 and 2017.⁹⁰ It recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that judges, prosecutors and members of the police received specialized training in preventing the abuse of children in detention and in dealing with claims of such abuse.⁹¹

51. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the United Kingdom ensure the full implementation of its legislation on female genital

mutilation and take further measures to prosecute perpetrators of that offence.⁹² Similar concerns were shared by the Committee against Torture.⁹³

52. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom incorporate the human rights model of disability into all laws and regulations concerning children and young people with disabilities and strengthen measures to prevent bullying and hate speech against children with disabilities.⁹⁴

3. Older persons

53. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that an abrupt and poorly implemented change in the State pension age for women between 60 and 66 years of age had severely and unconscionably penalized those who were on the cusp of retirement.⁹⁵

4. Persons with disabilities

54. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that persons with disabilities in the United Kingdom were more likely to be in poverty and to be unemployed.⁹⁶

55. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was concerned about the legislation that restricted the legal capacity of persons with disabilities on the basis of actual or perceived impairment.⁹⁷

56. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom strengthen its awareness-raising campaigns aimed at eliminating negative stereotypes and prejudice towards persons with disabilities.⁹⁸

57. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the United Kingdom identify outstanding gaps in terms of obligatory accessibility standards in all areas, such as the design of affordable and accessible physical environments, housing, information and communications technology, information formats and transport infrastructure, and including emergency services and green and public spaces in both urban and rural areas.⁹⁹

5. Indigenous peoples and minorities

58. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights noted that ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom were at a higher risk of becoming homeless and had poorer access to health care and that there were higher rates of infant mortality among ethnic minority groups.¹⁰⁰

59. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance recommended that the United Kingdom ensure the provision of adequate and culturally appropriate accommodation and access to basic services, in particular for members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.¹⁰¹

6. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

60. The Human Rights Committee requested the United Kingdom to provide information on efforts to address causes of suicide and self-harm among vulnerable populations in prison, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.¹⁰² The Committee on the Rights of the Child requested the United Kingdom to describe the measures taken to eliminate discrimination, with regard to health, education, alternative care and child justice, against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children.¹⁰³

7. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

61. UNHCR recognized that, in 2021, the United Kingdom had received the highest number of asylum applications since 2004.¹⁰⁴ The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance noted that there were significant differences between England and the rest of the United Kingdom in terms of approaches and openness to immigration.¹⁰⁵

62. The Committee against Torture noted with concern that the United Kingdom did not publish statistics indicating the number of persons expelled or returned despite persons'

concerns that they faced a risk of torture in the destination country.¹⁰⁶ The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that all immigration detainees had access to good quality, free legal advice and had effective access to fair and accessible procedures to challenge the decision to detain and/or deport.¹⁰⁷

63. UNHCR remained concerned about the shortage of alternatives to detention for asylum-seekers in the United Kingdom and the lack of a reasonable statutory time limit on immigration detention.¹⁰⁸ UNHCR recommended that the United Kingdom ensure that the detention of asylum-seekers was used only as a measure of last resort, set a reasonable statutory time limit on immigration detention and introduce more appropriate alternatives to detention for asylum-seekers.¹⁰⁹ UNICEF, the Committee against Torture and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment made similar recommendations.¹¹⁰

64. UNHCR recommended that the United Kingdom amend the immigration rules to make express provision for family reunification for any unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.¹¹¹

65. UNHCR noted that the draft nationality and borders bill would penalize most refugees seeking asylum, creating an asylum model that undermined established international refugee protection rules. It also observed problems with the admissibility of asylum claims, the criminalization of seeking asylum with a new criminal offence and the two-tiers approach.¹¹² In March 2021, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called upon the United Kingdom to ensure that the proposed nationality and border bill avoided undermining protection for refugees and other migrants.¹¹³ The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants noted that the nationality and borders bill would have a negative impact on the human rights of migrants and asylum-seekers arriving in the country.¹¹⁴ UNHCR recommended that the United Kingdom refrain from criminalizing acts of assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers done for personal or humanitarian motives and ensure that all refugees were not discriminated against on the grounds of their mode of arrival in the country.¹¹⁵

66. In June 2022, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons urged the United Kingdom to halt plans to transfer asylum-seekers to Rwanda and expressed concern that the country's asylum partnership arrangement violated international law and risked causing irreparable harm to people seeking international protection.¹¹⁶

67. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants referred to the situation and interception of irregular crossings of the English Channel by small boats.¹¹⁷

8. Stateless persons

68. While acknowledging that the United Kingdom had created procedures to identify and address statelessness, the Committee against Torture remained concerned about reports regarding the lengthy periods of arbitrary administrative detention of, and difficulties faced in gaining access to legal aid by, those undergoing the statelessness determination procedure and the cumbersome nature of that procedure.¹¹⁸ The Committee recommended that the United Kingdom improve the training provided to officials responsible for making statelessness determinations, facilitate access to legal aid for individuals making statelessness claims and strengthen identification and referral mechanisms for stateless persons.¹¹⁹

Notes

¹ [A/HRC/36/9](#), [A/HRC/36/9/Add.1](#) and [A/HRC/36/2](#).

² [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 63.

³ Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the universal periodic review of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, p. 2.

⁴ [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 30 (a).

⁵ [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 67.

⁶ [A/HRC/41/54/Add.2](#), para. 74 (a) (ii) and (iii).

⁷ [CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1](#), paras. 43 and 51.

- ⁸ CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 12.
- ⁹ Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 2.
- ¹⁰ Submission by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the universal periodic review of the United Kingdom, p.1.
- ¹¹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/gb-index>.
- ¹² See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *United Nations Human Rights Report 2021*, pp. 114, 127, 130 and 134; *United Nations Human Rights Report 2020*, pp. 108, 119, 130 and 139; *United Nations Human Rights Report 2019*, pp. 90, 99, 120, 124 and 125; *United Nations Human Rights Report 2018*, pp. 76, 78, 85 and 109–110.
- ¹³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/06/oral-update-global-human-rights-developments-and-activities-un-human-rights>. See also <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session27/GB/UKHCLetter.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 3.
- ¹⁵ CAT/C/GBR/CO/6, para. 9.
- ¹⁶ CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1, para.7; and Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 3.
- ¹⁷ A/HRC/41/54/Add.2, para. 74 (l).
- ¹⁸ CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1, para. 15.
- ¹⁹ CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 15.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 16 (a)–(c). See also A/HRC/41/54/Add.2.
- ²¹ A/HRC/41/54/Add.2, paras. 72–73.
- ²² *Ibid.*, para. 74 (j) (i).
- ²³ CAT/C/GBR/CO/6, para. 62.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 28.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 29.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 20.
- ²⁷ A/HRC/41/54/Add.2, para. 39.
- ²⁸ CAT/OP/GBR/ROSP/1, para. 66 (a).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 94 (a).
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 71.
- ³¹ CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 58 (b).
- ³² CAT/OP/GBR/ROSP/1, para. 94 (c).
- ³³ CAT/C/GBR/CO/6, para. 17; and CAT/OP/GBR/ROSP/1, para. 25.
- ³⁴ A/HRC/41/54/Add.2, paras. 45 and 48.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 74 (n).
- ³⁶ A/HRC/41/39/Add.1, para. 38.
- ³⁷ CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1, para. 33 (c)–(d).
- ³⁸ CAT/OP/GBR/ROSP/1, para. 66.
- ³⁹ See communication GBR 8/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26569>.
- ⁴⁰ A/HRC/41/54/Add.2, para. 48. See also CERD/C/GBR/CO/21-23, paras. 18–19.
- ⁴¹ CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 37.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, para. 38.
- ⁴³ CCPR/C/GBR/QPR/8, para. 23.
- ⁴⁴ Contribution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the universal periodic review of the United Kingdom, p. 7.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ⁴⁶ CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 60 (a)–(b).
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 33.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 34 (a).
- ⁴⁹ Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 4.
- ⁵⁰ CAT/C/GBR/CO/6, para. 59 (a) and (c).
- ⁵¹ A/HRC/41/39/Add.1, paras. 69 and 87.
- ⁵² CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 44 (b), and (e)–(f).
- ⁵³ CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1, para. 57 (a)–(b).
- ⁵⁴ A/HRC/41/39/Add.1, para. 90.
- ⁵⁵ CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1, para. 58.
- ⁵⁶ Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 5.
- ⁵⁷ A/HRC/41/39/Add.1, para. 3.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 89.
- ⁵⁹ CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8, para. 35.
- ⁶⁰ A/HRC/41/54/Add.2, para.74 (j) (v).
- ⁶¹ Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 5.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*

- 63 [A/HRC/41/39/Add.1](#), para. 21 and 96 (b).
- 64 *Ibid.*, para. 36.
- 65 *Ibid.*, para. 96 (d).
- 66 [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 49.
- 67 *Ibid.*, para. 50.
- 68 [A/HRC/41/54/Add.2](#), para. 74 (j) (iv).
- 69 [CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1](#), para. 54 (a).
- 70 *Ibid.*, para. 55 (a).
- 71 Contribution of UNESCO, p.9.
- 72 [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 41.
- 73 *Ibid.*, para. 42 (a).
- 74 Contribution of UNESCO, p. 9.
- 75 [CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1](#), para. 52 (a) and (c).
- 76 *Ibid.*, para. 53 (a).
- 77 Contribution of UNESCO, pp. 9–10.
- 78 [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 53.
- 79 *Ibid.*, para. 54 (c).
- 80 Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 4.
- 81 [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 27.
- 82 *Ibid.*, para. 28.
- 83 *Ibid.*, para. 54 (a).
- 84 *Ibid.*, para. 29.
- 85 *Ibid.*
- 86 [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 57 (a) and (c).
- 87 Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 6; and [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 22.
- 88 Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 7.
- 89 [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 23.
- 90 *Ibid.*, para. 18.
- 91 *Ibid.*, para. 19 (c).
- 92 [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), para. 32.
- 93 [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 56.
- 94 [CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1](#), para. 21 (b) and (e).
- 95 [A/HRC/41/39/Add.1](#), para. 79.
- 96 *Ibid.*, para. 76.
- 97 [CRPD/C/GBR/CO/1](#), para. 30 (a).
- 98 *Ibid.*, para. 23.
- 99 *Ibid.*, para. 25 (a).
- 100 [A/HRC/41/39/Add.1](#), para. 81.
- 101 [A/HRC/41/54/Add.2](#), para. 74 (j) (iv).
- 102 [CCPR/C/GBR/QPR/8](#), para. 15. See also [CRC/C/GBR/QPR/6-7](#), para. 26 (e).
- 103 [CRC/C/GBR/QPR/6-7](#), para. 13 (c).
- 104 Submission by UNHCR, p. 1.
- 105 [A/HRC/41/54/Add.2](#), para. 58.
- 106 [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 52.
- 107 [CAT/OP/GBR/ROSP/1](#), para. 103 (b).
- 108 Submission by UNHCR, p. 3.
- 109 *Ibid.*
- 110 Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 7; [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 55 (b)–(c); and [CAT/OP/GBR/ROSP/1](#), para. 56. See also [CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/8](#), paras. 55–56.
- 111 Submission by UNHCR, p. 4.
- 112 *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5. See also Submission by the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, p. 7.
- 113 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/un-rights-chief-urges-revisions-uk-borders-bill>.
- 114 [A/HRC/50/31](#), para 31.
- 115 Submission by UNHCR, p.5.
- 116 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/un-expert-urges-uk-halt-transfer-asylum-seekers-rwanda>.
- 117 [A/HRC/50/31](#), para 30.
- 118 [CAT/C/GBR/CO/6](#), para. 38.
- 119 *Ibid.*, para. 39 (a)–(c).