



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

17 July 2023

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 41st session in November 2022. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 52nd session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/gb-index>), and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "[UPR practical guidance](#)" and the "[UN good practices](#)" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'V. Türk'.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. James Cleverly, MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The efforts of the United Kingdom to combat domestic abuse and violence against women and girls are welcome, including through the adoption of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and the development of the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2021), as well as of the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan (2022). The introduction of national laws and public policies aimed at combating hate crimes are also noted, including through the implementation of the Hate Crime Action Plan 2016 to 2020 to improve the United Kingdom's response to all forms of hate crime. The plans of the Scottish Government to develop a new hate crime strategy and to further support the implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 are also noteworthy.

It is critical that all new laws and policies comply with international human rights obligations. In particular, the United Kingdom is encouraged to ensure that any reform of the 1998 Human Rights Act, such as through the pending "Bill of Rights", provide the same, or enhanced, human rights protections afforded to individuals under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights), including the ability of individuals to enforce their rights. The United Kingdom is also encouraged to reconsider the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill and the Public Order Act, in line with its international human rights obligations.

The United Kingdom is encouraged to organize its immigration and asylum system to ensure that those fleeing persecution and seeking international protection can fully enjoy their human rights, including their right to seek asylum. The United Kingdom is further encouraged to consider withdrawing the Illegal Migration Bill, which would be at variance with the United Kingdom's obligations under international human rights and refugee law. This Bill also risks exacerbating the vulnerable situation of people arriving irregularly to the United Kingdom, as it gives extraordinary powers to the Secretary of State to remove anyone entering irregularly without assessment of individual circumstances.

The United Kingdom is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the parliament, the judiciary, the national human rights institutions, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is further encouraged to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council, [A/HRC/50/64](#).

Further, an important measure that can positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of the United Kingdom is encouraged to continue with the practice of submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
17 July 2023