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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](http://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)

NDTi

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