

FACTSHEET 5

The UK's Fourth UPR: The Role of Parliamentarians

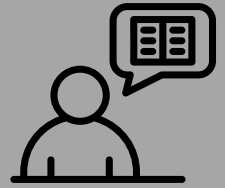


To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that progress is made on implementing the recommendations made to the UK in 2017 under the Universal Periodic Review process on children's rights and the elimination of child poverty

Richard Burgon MP, 2018

Summary

- The UPR is a process which all United Nations (UN) member states participate in every four-and-a-half years. It involves an assessment of a state's human rights situation and the making of recommendations to improve this. Between reviews, the state is expected to implement the recommendations.
- The UK's fourth UPR took place on the 10th November 2022.
- Parliamentarians in England and Wales have a pivotal role to play in promoting human rights and ensuring the UPR's success.
- This Factsheet provides information to parliamentarians in the UK on their role following the UK's review.



Parliaments and the UPR

- The UN have recognised the importance of parliamentarians in the UPR process. They play two key roles: 1) scrutinising governments' progress for implementing the UPR recommendations, and 2) facilitating the passage of legislation to improve human rights.
- Parliamentary human rights committees, such as the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR), are especially important. Its powers to collect evidence, produce reports, and make recommendations will prove especially useful for scrutinising UK Government progress.
- However, all parliamentarians should play a role, including through All-Party Parliamentary Groups. Some UPR recommendations will have implications for a wide range of policy areas and will fall within the remit of numerous committees and APPG's.
- Despite their importance, parliamentarians at Westminster have rarely engaged with the UK's UPR. In debates and question times, the UK's UPR has been mentioned on only 12 occasions since its first review in 2008. On the other hand, other countries UPRs have been mentioned on hundreds of occasions in foreign affairs debates.

**THE UPR
AND PARLIAMENT**

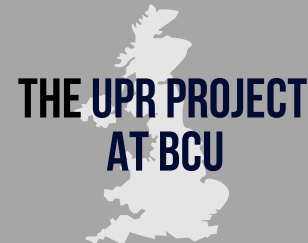
**LIMITED
AWARENESS
OF THE UPR**

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To engage more, parliamentarians can...

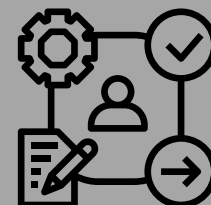
- Familiarise themselves with the UPR process and the UK's fourth review recommendations by checking our website (<https://bit.ly/3DcYGDP>) for factsheets and regular updates.
- Raise questions concerning all UK Government's plans for implementing recommendations in debates and question times.
- Participate in consultations – in previous cycles, the UK has held engagement events across the UK. Parliamentarians should be invited to these events and be actively consulted on the UPR.
- Scrutinise implementation progress between now and the UK's next review (2026/27): You can check on UK and Welsh Government progress by monitoring the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Human Rights Tracker' at <https://bit.ly/3TfyfTu>.
- Call for the UK's reports to the UPR to be put before Parliament and the Senedd. Unlike in other countries, the UK's reports to the UN are not routinely brought to the attention of parliamentarians.
- Work closely with civil society organisations (CSOs): The UPR Project at BCU is helping CSOs to build capacity and identify plans for monitoring UPR progress. Working in coalitions can be productive for affecting change.

**THE UK'S UPR
REPORTS ARE
NOT
PRESENTED
TO
PARLIAMENT**

**PARLIAMENTARIANS
ARE NOT
CONSULTED
IN
ADVANCE OF THE
UK'S UPR**

What is in it for parliamentarians?

- A primary objective of the UPR is to improve the human rights situation on the ground. CSO and parliamentary mobilisation will help realise this and improve the lives of those in the UK.
- All UK governments endorse the UPR and consistently indicate their strong support for the process.
- Therefore, pursuing your political interests through the lens of the UPR can be effective.



Civil society engagement project funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission
Provided by The UPR Project at BCU, Centre for Human Rights, Birmingham City University
For more info, search 'UPR Project at BCU' or go to <https://bit.ly/3DcYGDP>

