

Senedd Cross Party Group on Human Rights

3rd May 2022

Extraordinary online meeting

In attendance:

Sioned Williams MS Chair

Simon Hoffman

Members of the Wales Civil Society Cross Party Group on Human Rights were in attendance including:

Alicja Zalensiska

Charles Whitmore

Sean O'Neill

Elle Harwood

The meeting was called at short notice and some contributors were only able to attend part of the meeting. It was not possible to record all attendees.

The Chair welcomed attendees and explained that the meeting was in response to a Motion in the Senedd to be debated later in the day in response to the UK government's expressed intention to repeal the Human Rights Act and its other legislation which undermines human rights in the UK, including in Wales. The motion is:

In support of our goal to strengthen and advance human rights and equality in Wales, the Welsh Government:

- *Notes with grave concern the repeated moves by the UK Government to erode human rights.*
- *Believes that UK Government proposals to repeal the Human Rights Act risks undermining key protections for citizens and raises significant constitutional issues.*
- *Believes the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill undermines the rights of minority communities and jeopardises the right of lawful and peaceful protests.*
- *Agrees with the United Nations Special Rapporteur that the Nationality and Borders Bill would seriously undermine the protection of the human rights and lead to serious human rights violations.*
- *Calls on the UK Government to reverse its regressive approach on Human Rights and the resulting constitutional violations.*
- *Remains committed to the advancement of human rights, equality, justice and the protection of minority communities.*

The meeting discussed the motion and the UK government's conduct on human rights.

The meeting expressed its grave concern at the direction of travel on human rights in the UK and asked the chair to note this should the opportunity arise in the course of debating the motion.

The meeting resolved to invite the Counsel General for Wales and the Minister for Equality and Social Justice to the next ordinary meeting of the CPG to hear about the Welsh Government's position on the UK government's policies on human right, its response to attempts to repeal the Human Rights Act and its intentions to progress the recommendations from the research on SAEHR.

The meeting requested the chair to write to the Counsel General and MSJ expressing its concern at proposals to reform the Human Rights Act and the potential 'chilling effect' of this development on proposal to progress human rights in Wales.

The next meeting will be in June 2022.