



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTIONS

2021 CANDIDATE

UNITED KINGDOM

Status - Seeking Election

Previous Terms - 2006-08; 2009-11; 2014-16; 2017-19

Key measures the United Kingdom should commit to implement as a Council member

The following measures were developed by the International Service for Human Rights in consultation with: Mwatna for Human Rights; ALQST for Human Rights; Campaign Against Arms Trade; London Mining Network; CORE Coalition.

On Yemen:

The Group of International and Regional Eminent Experts on Yemen have [found](#) that the governments of Yemen and the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, as well as the Houthis and affiliated popular committees have enjoyed a “pervasive lack of accountability” for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. We call on the UK to:

- Support efforts towards accountability and redress for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Yemen, including by supporting the renewal and strengthening of the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts to include the preservation of evidence of violations and crimes related to the conflict.
- Continue supporting humanitarian programs in Yemen, in particular during COVID-19 pandemic
- Stop all arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, until it halts unlawful attacks, conducts credible investigations into alleged serious violations of international humanitarian law by its forces and forces under its control, and provides appropriate redress to civilian victims.

On mining companies: (the below asks are developed by the London Mining Network)

The UK should enact regulations to ensure that UK-listed mining companies are respecting human rights and ensuring environmental due diligence. The London Mining Network has previously submitted extensive evidence of the negative impacts of mining by UK-listed companies but this has not resulted in any action by the British Government to date. The so-called ‘corporate veil’, allows British-based companies to avoid legal responsibility for actions for which they bear moral responsibility simply by virtue of their convoluted corporate structure. We call on the UK to ensure that:

- The Financial Conduct Authority, or another statutory body, must be given the power, responsibility, funding and institutional capacity to enforce good conduct on all UK-listed mining companies, including those trading on the London Stock Exchange’s Alternative Investment Market. This must extend beyond matters of financial concern to shareholders and include compliance with human rights and environmental standards. This remit should cover the activities of all subsidiaries of London-listed mining companies. The powers and responsibili-

ties of the statutory body must include, at a minimum, the following:

- sanctioning companies that have violated the law in any overseas countries in which they are operating. UK-listed companies must comply with national regulations concerning biodiversity, ecological and environmental protection.
 - enforcement of corporate reporting requirements relating to environmental and social impacts contained in section 172 of the Companies Act 2006, and
 - ensuring that UK-listed companies recognize and respect all the international human rights, labour rights and environmental standards to which the UK is a signatory.
- Extractives companies should be compelled by law to publish much fuller information about the social and environmental impacts of their operations. This should be transparent and independently reviewed, for example as part of an annual social value audit.

Human Rights Defenders:

- Enhance UNHRC engagement with Human Rights Defenders - including indigenous peoples, land and environmental defenders - recognising the need for new approaches that take into account the collective aspects of prevention and protection.
- Engage with the Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTi): ZTi is a global coalition led by indigenous peoples, local community representatives and supportive NGOs, working collectively to address the root causes of intimidation, violence and killings linked to global supply chains.
- Engage with the Defending Land and Environmental Defenders Coalition (DD Coalition), Defenders in Development Campaign, and Protect the Protest: DD Coalition works to unify data collection on attacks on defenders and strengthen government and business safeguards for defenders; the Defenders in Development Campaign is made up of defenders and those who work with them on issues of development and human rights, and engages in collective action to ensure that communities and defenders can safely hold development financiers accountable; Protect the Protest is a global task force against a particular type of attack on defenders – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).
- Provide concrete steps and recommendations to address systemic violations of the rights of Human Rights Defenders in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- Support the UN and other multilateral efforts to elaborate and enforce responsibilities of third parties (including businesses and international financial institutions) to proactively seek to protect the rights of Human Rights Defenders.
- Develop a cross-government, adequately funded strategy on Human Rights Defenders, with particular consideration given to Indigenous peoples and HRDs facing specific risks, including women human rights defenders.
- Increase support and funding of innovative approaches to address the role and responsibilities of States and business in preventing attacks and threats.
- Reiterate support to the Special Rapporteur on HRDs as envisioned in the UK policy.
- Establish a review of UK laws to ensure increased protection of the collective rights of indigenous peoples, environmental and human rights defenders where they are threatened by UK business operations, including investments and supply chains.

- Actively protect and ensure the respect of the right of freedom of association, at home and abroad.

UN Binding Treaty:

Actively engage in and support the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights and ensure Human Rights Defenders, including indigenous peoples have an active role in the elaboration of the treaty.

A mandatory environmental and human rights due diligence law:

Bring into force legislation enshrining mandatory human rights due diligence and a corporate duty to prevent adverse human rights and environmental impacts - this would be a new duty for commercial and other organisations to prevent adverse human rights and environmental impacts in their domestic and international operations, products and services, including their supply and value chains