

Dear Prime Minister and Political Leaders,

This Human Rights Day comes at a significant moment. As civil society leaders, we write to mark seventy-five years since the European Convention on Human Rights, giving legal force to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and twenty-five years since our Human Rights Act brought these protections home into UK law.

These anniversaries remind us that human rights are not abstract ideals. They are the framework that protects people's dignity, limits the misuse of power, and helps to shape a fairer society. Across the UK, human rights have quietly and consistently made a difference in people's lives: ensuring dignity in care, fairness in housing, protection in education, accountability in public services, and justice when things go wrong.

Human rights protections need to be matched by strong political leadership and a clear commitment to put them into practice. The law provides the framework, but it is through the actions and choices of those in power that these protections become real in people's lives.

This year's Human Rights Day falls at a time when many people feel deep uncertainty about the future. These are serious and worrying times. It would be easy to look inward, to narrow our vision, or to allow hard-won protections to slip away through neglect or division. But we choose a different path.

We choose to look forward with determination and hope. The lesson of history is that human rights matter most when they are hardest to defend. In moments of uncertainty, they provide a shared foundation of fairness, dignity and accountability – the rules that keep our democracy decent and our society grounded in respect for each other's humanity.

This anniversary year is a chance to set out a bold and hopeful vision for human rights here at home. A vision of a UK that stands by its international commitments and strengthens, rather than weakens, the protections that have served our society for generations. A vision where human rights are part of everyday life – where people understand and can use their rights, and where public bodies have the knowledge and responsibility to uphold them. A vision of a democracy that plays by the rules, with government held to the same standards it expects of others.

We urge you, as political leaders, to:

- **Publicly reaffirm the UK's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Human Rights Act.**
- **Reject any proposals that weaken these frameworks and commit to securing them now and for the future.**
- **Invest in making human rights real, ensuring that communities, public bodies and individuals have the knowledge, resources and confidence to uphold them in practice.**
- **Lead with clarity and courage, being clear that human rights are not a partisan issue but the shared foundation of our democracy.**

Eighty years ago, the world chose to build a universal framework for human dignity. Seventy-five years ago, the UK helped shape it into a law for a continent ravaged by war. Twenty-five years ago, those protections became part of our lives at home.

As we near the end of 2025, at a time where fear, intolerance and division risks taking hold, we can choose to step forward together in support of universal human rights, confident in the values that have long defined us, and hopeful about the society we can build.

Yours sincerely,

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Katherine Hill, Director, 4in10 London's Child Poverty Network
Margaret Simpson MBE MSC FRSA, CEO, ABILITY BORDERS SCIO
Kari Gerstheimer, CEO & Founder, Access Social Care
Jeremy Crook OBE, Chief Executive, Action for Race Equality
Liz Bayram, CEO, Advice UK
Justine Forster, CEO, Advocacy Focus
Maya Uddin, Chief Executive, Advocacy Highland
Arlene Astley, Operations & Development Manager, AdvoCard
Angela Ellis, Chief Executive, Advonet
Aderonke Apata, Founder & CEO, African Rainbow Family
Cllr Faith Gakanje-Ajala, Founder, African Women
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Maya Esslemont, Director, After Exploitation
Katherine Crawford, Chief Executive, Age Scotland
Joe Powell, CEO, All Wales People First
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Vanessa Paynton, Executive Director, Art in Healthcare
Helen Trew, CEO, Art27 Scotland
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Kat Lorenz, Director, Asylum Support Appeals Project
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Danny Boyle, CEO, BEMIS Scotland
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Hazel Williams, CEO, Birthrights
Kate Mercer, Founder, Black Belt Advocacy
Romilly Greenhill, CEO, Bond
Professor Sam Baron, Chief Executive, British Association of
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Helen Wildbore, CEO, Care Rights UK
Helen Walker, CEO, Carers UK

Sam Smith, CEO, C-Change
Claire Stern, Deputy CEO, Central England Law Centre
Dr Eman Hani, CEO, Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
(CSREC)
Jayne Leeson MBE, CEO, Changing Our Lives
John O'Doherty, CEO, Children's Law Centre
Theresa Casey, , Choose Play (East Lothian Play Association)
Sian Summers-Rees, Chief Officer, City of Sanctuary UK
Anna Ritchie Allan, Executive Director, Close the Gap
Jim Bowen, Director, Clynyfw Care Farm CIC
Daniel Holder, Director, Committee on the Administration of
Justice (CAJ)
Community Plan for Holloway
Carolyn Sawers, Chief Executive, Corra Foundation
Alex Vessis, Chief Executive, Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support
(DCRS)
Debra Allcock Tyler, CEO, Directory of Social Change
Andrew MacKay, CEO, Disability Law Service
Kamran Mallick, CEO, Disability Rights UK
Rhian Davies, CEO, Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru
Sarah Offley, Chief Officer, Dudley Voices for Choice
Pamela Deans, Chief Executive, Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy
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Neill Clark, CEO, East Ayrshire Advocacy Services
Patricia Durr, CEO, ECPAT UK (Every Child Protected Against
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Parveen Ishaq, Office Manager, EDINBURGH AND LOTHIAN
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Maureen Martin, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Development Group
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Sarah Mann, CEO, Friends Families and Travellers
Asad Rehman, CEO, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Ben Whalley, CEO, Gaddum
Ian Bruce, Chief Executive, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector
Tressa Burke, Chief Executive, Glasgow Disability Alliance
Leonie Nimmo, Executive Director, GM Freeze
Sara Redmond, CEO, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)
Christine Goodall, Coordinator, HEAR Equality and Human Rights Network
Alison Pickup, CEO, Helen Bamber Foundation
Richard Robinson, CEO, Hourglass
Kate McCauley, CEO, Housing Rights
Andrea Coomber KC (Hon.), CEO, Howard League for Penal Reform
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Andrew Copson, CEO, Humanists UK
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Hannah Tough, CEO, Inclusion North CIC
Julie Hutton, CEO, Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross
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Louise King, JfKL Co-Lead / Director of the Children's Rights Alliance for England, Just for Kids Law, including the Children's Rights Alliance for England
Fiona Rutherford, Chief Executive, JUSTICE
Emma Hutton, CEO, JustRight Scotland
Lucy Peake, CEO, Kinship
Julie Bishop, Director, Law Centres Network
Jack Marshall BEM, Member Representative, Co-Chair, Learning Disability England
Sue James, CEO, Legal Action Group
Jamie Beagent, , Leigh Day Solicitors
Mary Fee, Coordinator, LETSlink London/UK
Akiko Hart, Director, Liberty
Ali Fiddy, Director, Maternity Action
Brian Dow, CEO, Mental Health UK
Tom Doyle, CEO, MESMAC
Fizza Qureshi, CEO, Migrants' Rights Network
Sarah Hughes, CEO, Mind
Lynette Charles, CEO, Mind in Haringey
Mohammed Aziz, Director, Mlegal
Lucy Fullard, Director, Mrs Lucy Fullard
Bryan Michell, Charity Coordinator, My Life My Choice
Vic Rayner, CEO, National Care Forum
Anna Feuchtwang, CEO, National Children's Bureau (NCB)
Bill Love, Executive Director, National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)
Rita Waters, Group CEO, National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)
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Mimi Unamoyo, Founder, Northern Ireland Refugees and Asylum Seekers Women Association (Bomoko NI)
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Suzanne Swinton, Director, Scottish Independent Advocacy
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Tracey McFall, CEO, Scottish Recovery Consortium
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Alix Lewer, CEO, The Include Project
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