THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

What is the ECHR?

Following the atrocities of World War II, countries were united in their mission to ensure governments-of-the-day would never again be able to pick and choose who gets rights and who doesn't. The UK helped to draft the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) which 46 countries have now signed up to. It contains the 16 rights brought into UK law through the Human Rights Act and helps hold the Government and bodies responsible for upholding all our rights (like healthcare professionals, social workers, schools and courts) accountable.

Find out more at bihr.org.uk/ECHR

If someone has their rights breached by a government and they have exhausted all options in the UK, they can take a case to the European Court of Human Rights. The Court is made up of independent judges from all Member States (including the UK).

The European Convention on Human Rights was inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UK's Human Rights Act takes 16 rights from the Convention and puts them into UK law. These are also protected by the Devolution Acts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Just two countries have left the ECHR: Russia, which was expelled for its aggression against Ukraine, and Greece, which left in 1967 while under a military regime accused of mental and physical torture. Greece re-joined in 1974 once democracy was restored.

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