

# Annex A4

## Media Statement

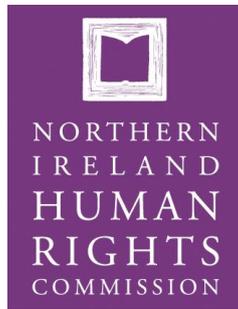
A Media Statement is a written or recorded communication directed at a specific audience (e.g. the media) for the purpose of announcing something newsworthy. It can be disseminated in many ways including on your website, via email, and via social media channels (e.g. Twitter and Facebook).

Points to note when drafting a UPR Media Statement:

- Choose a title likely to get media interest
- Include your institution logo and date of the media statement
- The media statement should be one A4 page
- There should be two – three key messages in the media statement
- Provide hyperlinks to further content where relevant (e.g. to the report on the UN site)
- Target the media statement to its audience (e.g. focus on text for the print media, and pictures and videos for social media)
- Include a quote from the highest placed source possible (e.g. your Chief Commissioner)
- When ending the media statement explain what will happen next
- Avoid technical language – use plain English which someone unfamiliar with the issues can understand. Avoid using acronyms where possible
- Get the release proof-read before disseminating it
- Include a 'Note to Editors' which contains more detailed content
  - Explain some of the UPR process, and where the content of this media statement falls within that process
  - Highlight the venue and date of the events you are highlighting
  - Provide links to further information where available
  - Highlight more recommendations and provide a list of a number of these if applicable
  - Focus on factual information – quote where necessary
- Disseminate your media statement to your identified media stakeholders
  - See [Stakeholder Database – Annex A2](#)
  - Upload your media statement to your website
  - Highlight the media statement, or key messages, through social media
- Ensure you have a named person and contact person on the press release so that the media can follow up on the issues raised

- Consider other strategies to promote your message including radio and television interviews

An example is provided on the next page:



**Press Release: Immediate**

**Date: 20 September 2012**

## **UK Human Rights Record Examined at United Nations**

The UK's three Human Rights Commissions are today [Thursday 20 September 2012] giving evidence on the UK's human rights record as part of the Universal Periodic Review process, where the UK is examined every four and a half years by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

NIHRC Chief Commissioner Professor Michael O'Flaherty stated:

*"As part of this crucial United Nations evidence session, the Human Rights Commission will today express its grave concern on the failure of the UK to respond to recommendations raised in UPR concerning Northern Ireland. We will use this opportunity to state that the UK's international human rights obligations apply across its territory and with equal effect in areas that have devolved authority. The Commission believes that the UK Government can still correct the gap in the response in time for their appearance before the Human Rights Council in Geneva."*

As part of the evidence session the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission will also:

- State that the Human Rights Act is an essential legal protection and that international organisations like the United Nations should scrutinise and challenge plans to scrap the Act.
- Express concern that the current UK Bill of Rights process may undermine existing protections in the Human Rights Act 1998.

**ENDS**

### **Further information:**

For further information please contact (Claire Martin, Communications Manager) (028) 9024 3987 (office) [REDACTED] (mobile).

### **Notes to editors**

1. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body first proposed in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) and established in 1999 by the Northern Ireland Act (1998). It is answerable to Parliament at Westminster.

2. Professor Alan Miller, Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission will deliver a joint statement on behalf of the three UK Commissions at the United Nations Human Rights Council on 20 September 2012. The session will be broadcast [here](#)
3. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's full submission on UPR is available [here](#)
4. In a joint statement, The Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission, to the Human Rights Council will warn of the growing alarm felt in all parts of the UK at public spending cuts.

The submission reads: "We are concerned by the effect of the economic crisis and austerity measures adopted by the UK Government on [the] enjoyment of human rights in the UK. We are particularly concerned with their potential effect on women, children, ethnic minorities and disabled people. We recommend that the UK Government ensures it respects human rights in budgetary decisions and carefully monitors the impact of policy on disadvantaged groups through equality and human rights impact assessments."

The joint submission also calls on the UK government to:

- Develop a plan to implement the recommendations which come from the Universal Periodic Review. The UK government should timetable when actions would be taken, with civil society and the commissions holding the government to account on its delivery.
- Sign and ratify international human rights treaties and protocols guaranteeing the right to individual petition. For example, the UK has still not ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, under which children would be able to bring allegations of human rights violations directly to the responsible UN Committee.
- Adopt the many specific recommendations made to it including improving legal safeguards for those in immigration detention, acting on the UK's record of violence against women and children in society, conditions of detention, especially for children and people with disabilities, and tackling discrimination, especially against members of ethnic or religious minorities.

At an earlier meeting in May other UN member states made several recommendations to the UK government, including that it:

- Develops a National Action Plan on Human Rights.
- Remove reservations or interpretive declarations to international human rights treaties;
- Incorporate international human rights standards, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, into domestic law;
- Comply with decisions of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Reconsider the continued legality of corporal punishment against children and raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility.
- Guarantee economic, social and cultural rights and ensure that human rights are taken into account in the context of economic austerity, particularly the rights of vulnerable groups and in the context of welfare reform;

- Take effective measures to combat all forms of violence against women and increase efforts to combat human trafficking.
- Recognise the human rights to water and sanitation.

5. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations. As one of the main features of the Council, the UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed.
6. The UPR was created through the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by resolution [60/251](#), which established the Human Rights Council itself. It is a cooperative process which, by 2011, will have reviewed the human rights records of every country. Currently, no other universal mechanism of this kind exists. The UPR is one of the key elements of the new Council which reminds States of their responsibility to fully respect and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The ultimate aim of this new mechanism is to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.