



55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Agenda Item 4: General Debate

Oral Statement

21 March 2024

Delivered by Eunan McMullan

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Mr. President,

This is a joint statement of Franciscans International and Edmund Rice International on the human rights situation in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland (UK). We express our concern over the UK's failure to fulfil its international legal obligations including in regard to migration and asylum.

In the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill, the legislative response to the judgement of the UK Supreme Court declaring the government's Rwanda scheme to be illegal, the Equality and Human Rights Commission declared that the Bill itself also "undermines the universality of human rights by disapplying core provisions of the Human Rights Act" and noted that the Home Secretary "was unable to confirm that it complies with the European Convention on Human Rights".¹

In relation to the Illegal Migration Act 2023, the UK government did not follow the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission which, as a last resort, has taken a judicial review challenge to its compatibility with the European Convention of Human Rights and the Windsor Framework.²

In regard to the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 the UK legislation was found by the High Court in Belfast on 28th February 2024 to be incompatible with the European Convention of Human Rights and the Windsor Framework in no fewer than five aspects.³

Whilst Franciscans International and Edmund Rice International welcome the abandonment of the UK's plan to abolish the Human Rights Act, the State must fully implement its international human rights obligations.

I thank you.

¹ Statement of 29th January 2024 on the ECHR Website. [Rights watchdog responds to Safety of Rwanda Bill | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.echr.coe.int/eng/press-releases/20240129-uk-bill-safety-rwanda.aspx)

² In the matter of an Application for Judicial Review by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, heard in Belfast High Court from 29th to 31st January 2024. [Illegal Migration Act challenge Factsheet | Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission \(nihrc.org\)](https://www.nihrc.org/illegal-migration-act-challenge-factsheet/)

³ In the matter of an Application for Judicial review of Dillon and others – judgement of Colton J. on 28th February 2024 [Summary of Judgment - In re Dillon and others - NI Troubles \(Legacy and Reconciliation\) Act 2023 | Judiciary NI](https://www.judiciary.ni.gov.uk/summary-of-judgment-in-re-dillon-and-others-ni-troubles-legacy-and-reconciliation-act-2023/)



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