



United Kingdom

**Candidate for the
UN Human Rights Council
2026-2028**



Foreword by The Rt Hon David Lammy, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

I am proud to present the United Kingdom for election to the UN Human Rights Council for the term January 2026 to December 2028.

As Keir Starmer said to the UN General Assembly in his first speech there as Prime Minister, human rights speak to our inherent dignity, the very essence of what it is to be human.

The British Government is firmly committed to championing equal and inalienable rights for all. To upholding the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed seventy-seven years ago.

The Human Rights Council was established to live up to this promise. We need the Council to tackle the most pressing human rights challenges of today and prevent those of tomorrow.

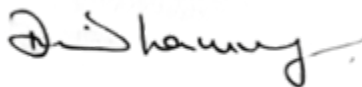
The international human rights system offers us all community and common purpose. It can only work when we work in a spirit of partnership and respect – member states, civil society, business and other actors, all seeking to overcome our differences and realise human rights for all.

This spirit is at the heart of the diplomatic and development partnerships this government is building all over the world. Over numerous terms on the Human Rights Council, the UK has also sought to work in this spirit. We support the tools and mechanisms at the Council’s disposal for strengthening human rights protection around the world. We would be honoured to serve a further term.

Our pledges for the 2026-28 term are grounded in UK priorities at home and abroad, drawing on our country’s democratic and inclusive values. They focus on some of the most pressing human rights challenges facing the international community:

- ▶ defending civic space and fundamental freedoms
 - ▶ upholding the rule of law
 - ▶ championing equal rights for all
 - ▶ responding to shared global challenges, such as modern slavery and climate change, by prioritising human rights and governance principles
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If given the opportunity to serve on the Council, we pledge to focus on practical action to realise our shared international human rights commitments. Only then can we succeed in giving everyone, all over the world, the dignity they deserve.



The Rt Hon David Lammy
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary

The UK pledges to defend civic space and fundamental freedoms

We will support civil society organisations and human rights defenders, giving a voice to those otherwise silenced.

We will promote freedom of expression, including a free media, and protect journalists and media workers from harm.





The UK pledges to uphold the rule of law

We remain committed to supporting a strong and independent UN human rights system and promoting compliance with international human rights law.

We will work to strengthen scrutiny and accountability for human rights crises around the world.

We will promote the realisation of SDG16 with a focus on access to justice, particularly for those belonging to marginalised groups.

The UK pledges to champion equal rights for all

We will continue to stand up for the rights of women and girls, as well as those of LGBT+ people and other marginalised groups.

We will tackle gender-based violence, including sexual violence in conflict, all forms of domestic violence and harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation or Child, Early and Forced Marriage, and trafficking of women and girls.

We will promote women's economic empowerment, driving the full participation of women in economic, political and public life.

We will defend Freedom of Religion or Belief for all, in line with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.



The FCDO has supported a programme in West Bengal, India to reduce the vulnerability of children in the climate sensitive areas of the Sundarbans to trafficking and child labour. Our partner ASHA carry out safety sessions with children and the community to increase awareness of the risks of trafficking and improve child protection measures.



Improving access to water, promoting climate-smart agriculture, empowering women, and improving livelihood options for rural communities in Sudan. As part of the project, horticultural groups and home gardens have been set-up, providing women with the knowledge and resources to grow vegetables for household consumption, and to sell in local markets. Picture credit: Practical Action.

The UK pledges to respond to shared global challenges by prioritising human rights and governance principles

We will tackle modern slavery and human rights abuses in global supply chains.

We will uphold human rights at work, consistent with international labour standards.

We will ensure that human rights and governance principles are embedded in the use of new technologies.

We will address the human rights impacts of the climate and nature emergency.



HM Government



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