

## **Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

### ***Position Paper for the United Nations Human Rights Council***

The topics to be discussed before the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) are the following: I. Equitable Access to Safe Drinking Water as a Human Right II. Human Rights of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Adolescents III. The Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The United Kingdom is highly anticipating discussing the topics at hand in the upcoming conferences.

#### **I. Equitable Access to Safe Drinking Water as a Human Right**

The United Kingdom is reminding of the article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), in which "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family" is clearly stated. The right to water applies to everybody, it is an element to an adequate standard of living. Today, it is estimated that, each year, more than 5 million people die from diseases caused by unsafe water. Equitable access to safe drinking water is essential in protecting human rights, since the lack of sanitation, and insufficient water for hygiene threatens all SDG's. The UN General Assembly, through resolution 64/292, recognized since 2010 the human right to water and sanitation. Furthermore, last year, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the "human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation", underlining the urgency of this matter by catalyzing a positive development on the basis of already existing commitments under human rights treaties ( Index number: IOR 40/1601/2019 ). Supporting these resolutions, the UK is, nonetheless, worried that without the right measures, the Sustainable Development Goal on sanitation may not be globally met until 2030. The aim lies in reducing the amount of people with no or limited access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The UK targets water and sanitation aid all over the globe, specifically countries most needing support. Nationally, The Water Framework Directive (WFD) implementation in England and Wales developed a river basin management planning system, in 2000. The WFD, as a system, helps improving the ecological health of rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal and ground waters where 40% of surface waters in the EU have already attained the required quality standard. The United Kingdom believes that this issue of great importance can be aided in its resolution by providing the know-how, educational support and counseling by our advisers, professional specialists. The UN-Water GLAAS report released in 2017 mentions that the level of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) financing is not sufficient. Hence why we believe that financial support of these developments can not be guided from external political power because such needed long lasting sustainability should reside with the government and their respective sovereignty. Nevertheless, we call on partners in the international community to scale-up their support and target resources, equitably. Planning systems such as the WFD should serve as a model in preventing deterioration in the ecological status and preventing discharges that could be fatal in protecting safe drinking water, whilst preventing or limiting the input of pollutants. It lies in our hands to support those most in need in preventing unsafe water from circulating.

#### **II. Human Rights of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Adolescents**

During the Human Rights Council panel in 2017, the former High Commissioner Zeid pointed out that there were around 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children

recorded between 2015 and 2016. Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, elaborated that 90 % of children crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa and arriving in Italy were unaccompanied. Today, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a total of 7,272 unaccompanied children, 93% boys and 7% girls, were registered by the end of June in 2019. A resolution, adopted by consensus on 29 September 2016 during the Human Rights Council 33rd session (Agenda item 3), outlines this issue. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the annexes, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 71/1 of 19 September 2016 must be mentioned here as well. The United Kingdom is highly alerted about these numbers of migrant children being unaccompanied, highlighting, that immigration in and of itself is of big concern, since we as a nation need to be prepared to protect and support these innocent children, in the best way possible. Health and education needs of the young play an important role in how to manage their integration and healing of their traumatic events. The British Association of Social Workers (BASW), the largest professional association of registered social workers and qualified care managers in the United Kingdom, work and recognize the urgency of proper management in this issue. Furthermore, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is the UK's leading charity specializing in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. By only mentioning these two national organizations, it is hopefully understood that the proper funding and financial support is inevitable when it comes to protecting unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents. We support the BASW view on how essential proper assessment must take place. Both countries, the country of origin as well as the country of immigration, should feel responsible to help achieve the best interest of the child. The role of foster carers is therefore key, in providing the child or adolescent with necessary guidance. Therefore, a specific education plan, supervised by the government, should be introduced. Proper guardianship and legal representation does serve as an important support system, where the child is thereafter free to decide whether he wants to further integrate in the UK or if he would feel ready to return to his homeland, safely. In this way, safety is insured and the traumatized child can rebuild integrity.

### **III. The Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

The United Kingdom does recognize the Human Rights in the Occupied Palestine Territory as an issue of high importance. The "Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories", had the Council vote, in 2016, in order to create a database of businesses and activities in or related to Israel's settlements. We are worried about the situation in the Occupied Territories as well as the resulting deaths and injuries to innocent people on both parties. The United Kingdom has repeatedly urged both Israel and the Palestinian Authorities to take efficient action towards meaningful ceasefire. The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the evidence that medical and humanitarian assistance is being prevented from reaching those in need by the Israel Defence Forces. The United Kingdom has raised its concerns in the strongest terms to the Government of Israel, and urged Israel to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and investigate allegations of misconduct. The United Kingdom has urged both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to take steps to establish a meaningful ceasefire. We remind Israel once more of their responsibility to protect the Palestinian population. This territory has been often times divided by opposing religious standpoints as well as historical events. The United Kingdom does not support violations on any 'fact checking' missions as they contribute to an accurate representation of what is ongoing. Restriction of movement in the West bank does create disharmony and creates friction instead. The United Kingdom does not support resolutions that are impartial or one sided, we need the dialogue and to find compromise.