

POSITION PAPER EXEMPLAR

Topic: Treatment of the Mentally Ill in the Legal System

Country: United Kingdom

Committee: Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Kingdom today is shaped by parliamentary democracy as well as advances in technology. It plays a vital role as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. As one of the founding members of NATO, the United Kingdom is committed to providing security for numerous countries and their citizens. With a population of over 66 million people accounting for England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland—all with many ethnic groups—the delegation promotes diversity and international relations. The current chief of state is Queen Elizabeth II followed by the head of the government, Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The United Kingdom works closely with import partners such as Germany, China, France, and Belgium to provide goods and services to each other, promoting cultural exchange and growth. Recently, the pressing concern for the delegation and affiliated countries is the treatment of prisoners with mental disorders. There are challenges combating this issue with the Prison Mental Health Unit currently underway to improve the treatment of prisons.

Mental health is an overlooked issue regarding the widespread stigma associated with those diagnosed with mental disorders. Many justice systems face obstacles when trialing people with mental illnesses because the system is not catered to those who have underlying neurological issues. One study conducted in England and Wales showed that ten percent of prisoners experienced psychotic disorders while sixty-one percent had personality disorders—which were likely to grow into psychotic disorders. Thus, the numbers proved that prisons contribute to one's declining mental health. Victims of mental disorders are oftentimes subjected to horrible conditions during childhood such as sexual and physical abuse, resulting in trauma. Reasons behind this may include substance abuse in a household, poverty, and inequality.

The United Kingdom recognises its past actions in addressing the issue during the early twentieth century. In the past, prisoners with mental disorders were referred to as lunatic asylums; a failure on the nation's part to aid victims of psychotic disorders. Consequently, the notorious conditions of these institutions drove patients mad. The Severalls Asylum was renowned for unethical psychiatric experiments such as lobotomies and Electroconvulsive Therapy. The United Kingdom demolished these sites in the 1990s after the stigmatization of mental illnesses ceased. The Mental Health Act passed in 1983 currently protects mentally ill persons. All detained with mental illnesses will be taken to safety with the help of authorities under the Section 135 warrant. Detainees can receive proper treatment from certified mental health professionals. Additionally, the United Kingdom allows defendants to plead insanity provided they successfully prove that they were void of reason upon committing a crime. The United Kingdom acknowledges the efforts made by other nations in improving the justice system for mentally ill persons such as Canada, Romania, Germany, and the United States. Creating psychosocial rehabilitation centres and providing sufficient training to health care providers

improves the accessibility of healthcare services worldwide. Advancements made in the United Kingdom have allowed for accessible mental health care under the National Health Services which covers medical expenses. All citizens are subjected to this right without prejudice or discrimination.

In the future, the United Kingdom strives to work closely with the education system to provide mental health training to police officers, judges, lawyers, including those working in the justice system and healthcare sector. This initiative will allow workers to approach people with mental disorders with empathy and proper training. The legal system should deter mental health care from prisons; mentally ill persons should be receiving proper treatment in psychiatric wards. This is because one should not be punished for having a mental disorder. Another solution would be to raise the standards of prison management to ideal living conditions while monitoring prisoners. Environmental factors need to be addressed and dealt with to prevent people from becoming prone to mental disorders, such as drug abuse and child abuse. Schools should have neuropsychologists conducting evaluations for students to better understand the child's environment and ensure they are not displaying abusive behaviour. The same should be done for those in the legal system, to ensure that a person is improving from treatment, rather than suffering. Most importantly, prisons should be redesigned to improve a person's mental state, not contribute to their madness.

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Topic: Rights to Assemble

Country: United Kingdom

Committee: Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Kingdom's role in the United Nations has allowed for the European Union to advance in protecting the rights of democratic countries. England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland are included within the rights pertaining to citizens on rights to assemble, including the freedom to do so provided it does not disrupt order within an area. As a democratic country and part of the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom allows civilians to assemble and protest peacefully under the charters and resolutions adopted decades ago. Throughout Britain's history with a heavily implemented monarchy, the laws adopted further contributed to the fairness and rights of citizens, such as the Magna Carta in 1215. Thus, the United Kingdom's human rights dating back 800 years ago is very telling in how far the United Kingdom and its allies have come in promoting these universal laws.

The vast majority of protests taking place in London have been done peacefully and without punishing the protestors. The United Kingdom strives to provide the right to assembly as a fundamental right to every citizen, as well as those beyond the Commonwealth. Being able to peacefully protest contributes to British democracy. In Article 19 and Article 22 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, civilians have the right to assemble through forming and joining trade unions for a person's interest. This article includes freedom of association, with no restrictions on how a person may exercise this right. The ICCPR passed with 74 signatories in 1976, showing the universality of rights to assemble. Furthermore, the European Convention on Human Rights is incorporated within the United Kingdom's Human Rights Act, which was implemented in 1998. The boundaries of protesting come into play when an individual breaches peace, and may be charged or arrested under the Public Order Act 1986. Similarly in France—although they do not explicitly have laws protecting rights to assemble—anyone who disrupts order or peace may face consequences.

When Britain handed over the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997, Hong Kong was allowed to keep its own political and economic system. They may remain an autonomous country until 2047. In doing so, Hong Kong's government system differs greatly from China's. Recently, China's attempt in regaining control of Hong Kong is due to the country's original establishment as a free trade port, which was against China's will. By giving autonomy to Hong Kong, the United Kingdom expresses its neutrality in political tensions, but will not tolerate the violation of human rights; one of them being the right to assemble. Other places such as Kashmir and Palestine have had their rights violated through brute force by third parties. It is important to note that the conflict is not invoked through differences of religion. The United Kingdom looks

favourably upon allowing nations to keep their autonomy to avoid dispute. Such nations are not only the ones prone to the violation of rights to assemble.

The United Kingdom strives to make a universal effort to ensure every person has basic human rights which are not being violated. This includes working with the United Nations to discuss the autonomy of nations that are currently protesting for their rights to assemble. As a member of the Security Council, the United Kingdom calls on all countries to provide a safe environment for their citizens in their rights to assemble. Hence, they should be protected by laws. Nations that have no laws protecting their citizens' rights should consider creating a charter or joining a union with other nations that ensure the protection of civilians, including the right to assemble. The right to assemble is unheard of in many authoritative-style countries, which disallows freedom of speech. These government structures should consider having elected representatives for other government sectors to allow freedom of expression on political matters. Due to the nature of dictatorships, it is common to have a repetitive cycle of leaders that only appoint their kin as the next leader. This can be detrimental if leaders do not act in the nation's best interest. Any country should be serving its citizens, just how the citizens contribute to the country. This can lead to fewer protests and overall, allow people to assemble reasonably in order to voice their opinion. Lastly, countries that are not in favour of peaceful protests should be able to have the means to communicate with individuals who have pressing concerns without punishment.

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