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“UN TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER AUSTERITY BREACHES INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS”

The UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has announced that it will be investigating:

1. Whether welfare reforms have impacted disproportionately on disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, single parents, children and Roma?
2. Whether the government’s proposals for further welfare reform, including changes to tax credits, will leave people in receipt of state benefits without an adequate standard of living?
3. What steps are being taken to reduce reliance on emergency food aid from food-banks? Over a million people last year.
4. Whether welfare reform is contributing to the deficit in housing?
5. Whether enough is being done to ensure adequate supply of social and affordable housing, particularly to the most disadvantage and marginalised individuals including low-income individuals as well as persons with disabilities.
6. Whether mental health services are adequate in light of recent cuts?

Representatives from Just Fair met with CESCR on 14 October 2015 to highlight concerns that successive UK Government policies have led to violations of the right to food, housing, adequate healthcare for migrants and people with mental health problems and the economic and social rights of disabled people.

The Committee has listened to these concerns and has announced that it will investigate the questions set out above. **It will then make findings in June 2016**

“The decision of the Committee to investigate these issues is timely and welcome. We and many others are concerned about the adverse impact austerity policies have had on the least well off and already marginalized in society, including those in work. In the one of the richest countries in the world people do not have enough food to eat or decent housing to live in. Worst of all the measures have hit children, single mothers and people with disabilities the hardest. As the tax credits scandal shows, the public is turning against these policies precisely because they are so unfair.”

Jamie Burton
Chair, Just Fair

Note to editors

CESC is the UN Committee that monitors state's compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966. The UK ratified the Convention in

On 26 October 2015, the CESCR published the list of issues that it has asked the UK Government to respond to as part of its sixth periodic review of the UK. The CESCR is expected to publish its findings in 2016.

The full list of issues can be found here:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fGBR%2fQ%2f6&Lang=en

Just Fair is a charity with the intention of advancing the case for human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, in the UK. The 'Just Fair Consortium' is made up of over seventy charities and non-governmental organisations. A list of consortium members can be found at: <http://www.just-fair.co.uk/#!about1/ceru>

Over the past 19 months Just Fair has published a series of reports that have highlighted the impact that austerity measures have had on economic and social rights in the UK. These reports can be found at: <http://www.just-fair.co.uk/#!reports/c21kz>

Just Fair's submission to the CESCR can be accessed via the United Nations website at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=969&Lang=en

It is also attached to this email.

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