

Jess McQuail
c/o Doughty Street Chambers
54 Doughty Street
London WC1N 2LS

9 May 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you regarding a pending country visit from the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

We are organisations and individuals from across the UK working on the protection of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), and members of the [UK ESCR Network](#), chaired by Just Fair.

We wish to express our concern that an official request by the Rapporteur has been made to undertake a country visit to the UK, however in a letter dated 4 April 2024, Mark Spencer MP, in his capacity as Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries stated that it would not be feasible to invite the Special Rapporteur this year, thus effectively during the current Parliament.

On 22 November 2022, Professor Michael Fakhri, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, gave evidence to the UK Parliament's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee inquiry on food security. During this session Professor Fakhri informed the Committee that he had sent a request to the UK Government to carry out a country visit to the UK several months previously and that it was pending.

It is now more than 21 months since the Special Rapporteur requested to undertake a formal country visit to the UK in August 2022. We believe that now is an opportune time for a country visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food due to the [increasing levels of poverty](#), [food bank use](#), and [reports of hunger](#) that have remained persistent for a number of years and became more pronounced during the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.

As you are aware, United Nations special rapporteurs are international experts in their fields, and we believe an official country visit from the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food would provide expert opinion and innovative solutions on how to remedy some of these issues.

The UK Government positions itself as a world leader in human rights and part of this role is to fully engage with international human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the

expertise and advice offered through country visits such as that proposed by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

We, the undersigned support the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food's request to undertake a country visit to the UK and find it deeply disappointing that the UK Government will not be inviting the Special Rapporteur this year. We call on the UK Government to facilitate this visit in the current Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Just Fair

4in10 London's Child Poverty Network

African Caribbean Support Organisation NI (ACSONI)

Amnesty International UK

Angel Eyes NI

Asylum Link Merseyside

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)

Ballynafeigh Community Development Association

Belfast Central Mission

Belvoir Parish Church

Black Mountain Zen Centre

British Association of Social Workers Northern Ireland

Cardiff Third Sector Council (C3SC)

Cara-Friend

Carers NI

Caritas Shrewsbury

Centre for the Advancement of Development and Human Rights (CAD-HR)

Charles Burrell Centre

Children in Northern Ireland

Children's Legal Centre Wales

Citizens Advice Newcastle

Cliff Edge Coalition

Community Cook Up

Croftfoot Church Pantry Cafe / Foodbank

Donegall Pass Community Forum

Easter Team

Ecojustice Ireland

Equally Ours

Fairer Housing

Fans Supporting Foodbanks

Find Help NI

GEMS Northern Ireland

Granville Community Kitchen

Great Lumley Methodist Church

Greater Manchester Poverty Action

GRIPP – Growing Rights Instead of Poverty Partnership

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

Happy Women's Group
Haringey Solidarity Group
Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)
HEAR Equality and Human Rights Network
Human Rights Consortium Scotland
Human Rights Watch
Independent Food Aid Network
Kirkcaldy Foodbank
Laurence's Larder
Law Centre NI
Libération
Liberty
Making Rights Real
Morningside Community Project
Motor Neurone Disease Association
National Pensioners Convention
NI Federation of Housing Associations
Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network
Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network
One Parent Families Scotland
Observatory on Human Rights of Children, Swansea University
Participation and the Practice of Rights
People First (Self Advocacy)
PI84U Al Suffa
PlayBoard Northern Ireland
Quaker Social Action
Race Equality First
Reclaim the Agenda
Rene Cassin
Renters' Rights London
Richmond Fellowship
Roma Support Hub
Share the Worlds Resources
Streets Kitchen
Social Benefits Consortium
Sufra NW London
Sustain
The Childhood Trust
The Equality Trust
The Food Foundation
The Hong Kong Scots
The Magpie Project
United Against Racism
Windsor Women's Centre
Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales
Women's Platform
Women's Regional Consortium

Women's Resource & Development Agency
Women's Support Network