

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Ref.: AL GBR 10/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

5 August 2026

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 61/22, 61/17 and 61/35.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **the harassment and intimidation faced by women and migrants' rights defender Nina Briggs as well as the alleged treatment she has faced during her ongoing skilled worker visa status process.**

Nina Briggs is a women human rights defender and leader of the **Migrant Workers' Union – Northern Ireland (MWU-NI)**, a worker and community organisation which collectively exercises their right to promote, protect and defend the rights of migrant and racialised communities in Northern Ireland. She is a publicly recognised anti-racism advocate and researcher whose work has directly documented and opposed racist hate crimes in Northern Ireland. She holds professional witness status with the Stormont Committee for Justice and All-Party Groups for Ethnic Minorities and Modern Slavery at the Northern Ireland Assembly and has regularly engaged with UN mechanisms. Nina Briggs developed a predictive early-warning model for racialised unrest that has been trialled with the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland. Nina Briggs is a woman of colour, originally from the United States of America. She has legally resided in the United Kingdom since 2012.

According to the information received:

In 2024, Nina Briggs publicly advocated against and documented significant racist disorder that took place across Northern Ireland. In particular, she made public statements referencing parliamentary language and its impact in generating racist hate crime, which has violently targeted racialised and ethnic minority communities.

Following her public visibility, it is alleged that she became the subject of harassment and intimidation while engaged in, or travelling to and from, activities linked to her human rights work.

In July 2025, whilst travelling by foot to Industrial Tribunals in Belfast City Centre, a group of unidentified individuals reportedly emerged from the Hideout

Bar on Donegal Pass and proceeded to chase her and two other men of colour away from the area. During the incident they allegedly shouted at them, "you don't belong in our country" and directed the racial slur "chink" at Nina Briggs. The incident was reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). It is reported that the PSNI later relayed that the investigation could not proceed because of the lack of CCTV evidence and due to Nina Briggs being unable to identify the individuals involved.

On 10 July 2025, outside the BBC Northern Ireland offices in Belfast, Nina Briggs engaged with colleagues who were holding a peaceful demonstration in the promotion, protection and defense of the rights of the Palestinian people. It is reported that an unidentified man approached the peaceful assembly from the direction of Sandy Row and forcibly pulled a Palestinian flag from one participant's hands, shoved two people, and shouted that they were "terrorists" and should "fight him like a real man". This was also allegedly directed at Nina Briggs. The participants did not respond to the threat; however, one participant sustained an injury to his hand after the flag had been forcibly removed. The incident was reported to the PSNI, who confirmed the date and time of the incident using CCTV footage but reportedly advised that they were unable to pursue the investigation because they could not identify the individual.

On 9 August 2025, Nina Briggs attended a peaceful counter-protest to a demonstration which was targeting the Ten Square hotel in Belfast for reportedly housing asylum seekers. She was present as a formal steward and had received formal training as a civilian legal observer, wearing an official high-visibility vest positioned at the front line supporting the formal separation between the two protests, whilst working alongside neighbourhood and riot police. During the counter-protest she was harassed, alongside another group of women by three identified men who approached them, filmed them without their consent and reportedly said to them "rebuke those migrants, you'll be sorry when they rape you." It is alleged that a female PSNI officer was also harassed by two of the identified men and physically shoved by them. Additionally, it is reported that two of the men have a violent criminal offender history, including allegations of racially motivated assaults and are linked to groups which have targeted migrant, racialised and ethnic minority communities. This incident was reported to the PSNI on 10 August 2025 and followed up on 15 August 2025. To date, it is unclear whether the PSNI have acted on this incident.

On 15 August 2025, Nina Briggs filmed a news story interview with Ulster Television (UTV) in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast at 3 p.m. regarding the online circulation of social media videos by so-called vigilante members, targeting people from migrant, racialised and ethnic minority communities in Belfast. The videos show people being challenged on the street on the basis of their ethnicity asking them to produce identification, as well as warning them to abstain from going to parks and public spaces and to stay away from children. In the interview Nina Briggs referred to the prolonged nature of such violence and intimidation. At 6 p.m., the news story was aired. At 7 p.m., the three identified individuals, who had harassed Nina Briggs at the 9 August 2025 counter-protest, reportedly called online for a demonstration in the same square where

Nina Briggs had given the interview, stating that they would “not be drowned out by woke actors.”

On 20 February 2026, Nina Briggs submitted a statement on behalf of the MWU-NI to the Northern Ireland Parades Commission concerning the ‘Our Northern Ireland Voice’ parade in Coleraine scheduled for 4 April 2026. The parade was notified with the purpose of ‘a united and respectful gathering, together for faith, family and future’, that ‘Northern Irish people come first’ and to ‘express their opposition to what they describe as uncontrolled immigration, as well as the presence of Houses in Multiple Occupation in Coleraine.’

In the background of their work directly supporting communities affected by racialised violence and hate crime during the 2024 and 2025 disturbances, the MWU-NI raised concerns that the parade posed the real risk of further intimidation to certain representations in the community, as the parade had been organised by persons associated with violence and intimidation against migrant, racialised and ethnic minority communities. They also raised concern that businesses in Coleraine were considering closing for the day because staff members— particularly workers of colour — did not feel safe travelling to or working in the town during the rally.

Other representations made to the Parades commission raised concern about the use of divisive and inflammatory language by those in support of the Parade, including the term ‘foreign infidels’ to refer to migrant, racialised and ethnic minority communities.

On 2 April 2026, after consideration of all the evidence, the Parade Commission determined that conditions should be placed on the parade to prevent disorder and protect the rights and freedoms of others, including that participants shall not engage in any behaviour which could, in the prevailing context, reasonably be perceived as being provocative, threatening, insulting or abusive to any person or group. They did so by recognising that the information they had received raised real concerns that there was a potential for people to utilise the parade as an opportunity to engage in deliberately provocative, threatening and abusive conduct directed towards members of the migrant, racialised, and ethnic minority communities.

On 4 April 2026, the parade proceeded. Nina Briggs attended a peaceful and registered counter-protest which gathered in the same area as the parade participants. They were separated by barriers and monitored by the PSNI. Two of the men previously identified and allegedly involved in harassing Nina Briggs, attended the parade as participants. The two men reportedly approached the counter-protestors, referring to them using terms such as “paedophile rapists” and “paedophile protectors” and told Nina Briggs to “go back to where she came from”. A complaint was made to the PSNI however it is reported that it was later determined that the images and videos provided were insufficient evidence to demonstrate a sustained pattern of harassment.

On the evening of 9 June 2026, hundreds of masked demonstrators gathered in East Belfast, following an extreme knife attack against a man, and allegedly

with the purpose of ‘protesting illegal immigration.’ The protests became violent and turned into a riot, involving the deliberate burning of homes occupied by minority, racialised and migrant communities. There are also reports of the targeting of commercial buildings owned by migrant, racialised and ethnic minority communities. Residents, including families with young children, were forced to evacuate their homes and were unable to return to their commercial property. The targeting of specific properties seems to have been aided by ‘doxxing’ through the sharing on social media and communication channels of a compiled list of personal data with linked addresses, identifying ‘migrants’, and referred to as a ‘hit list.’ This list was linked to the online sharing of public housing data. Public transport vehicles were set on fire, and unofficial check points were set up to deliberately check for the identification and presence of ‘migrants’ and targeting racialised and minority communities in cars by masked individuals.

Following these events, the Chief Constable of the PSNI confirmed that members of loyalist paramilitaries were present during the violent riots. Previous concern has been expressed at the international level regarding the role of paramilitary networks, groups and affiliated individuals in racist violence in Northern Ireland.¹ In its [eighth annual report](#) published on 8 December 2025, the Independent Reporting Commission expressed that intimidation, coercive control and threats linked to paramilitary groups persist in Northern Ireland, and the structures of paramilitary groups that continue intact can be used to facilitate organised crime and other forms of violence. Within this, they stated that particularly over the last two years, that the participation of individuals and groupings of individuals with clear links to paramilitarism in racist violence has undoubtedly served to exacerbate the situation in Northern Ireland in terms of anti-immigration unrest (paragraph 4.15).

Following the violence, Nina Briggs continued in her capacity as Head of the MWU-NI and assisted the emergency response coordinated with organisations, through staffing the South Belfast emergency response line, alongside colleagues assisting approximately 600 people with emergency accommodation, food, transport, and other support, including families whose homes had been attacked or who were identified as being at particular risk via presence on the circulated 'hit list'. She also conducted door-to-door welfare checks in South Belfast, visited affected businesses, and coordinated with MLA and MP offices to ensure affected individuals were aware of available support. As a consequence of the violence, it is reported that a further seven households who were members of the MWU-NI left Northern Ireland because they feared further attacks or no longer considered it safe to remain.

On 13 June 2026, an anti-racism rally was organised outside Belfast City Hall in protest against the violent unrest in the days prior. Nina Briggs attended the peaceful protest to further promote, protect and defend the rights of targeted communities and to advocate against racist hate crime. While she aided another individual at a signup table for the conglomeration of organisations that provided had provided emergency support after the riots, one of the identified

¹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Concluding observations on the combined 24th to 26th periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, CERD/C/GBR/CO/24-26

men who had previously harassed her, reportedly walked up immediately behind her and brushed against her person. He then proceeded to walk to the opposite side of the area where he attended a counter protest to the rally. He then began to film her colleagues without their consent.

Visa Status

Nina Briggs has legally resided in the United Kingdom since 2012.

Between May and June 2026, it is alleged that the UK Home Office mishandled Nina Briggs's visa status process and immigration data.

On 27 May 2026, her skilled worker application was refused. The Home Office stated that her Section 3C leave did not exist. It is reported that the Home Office's own legal team had submitted evidence to the Immigration Tribunal in December 2025 confirming the existence of the associated appeal from which that leave derived.

During this time, despite having contact details that remained unchanged since November 2021, the Home Office reportedly communicated substantive case updates to her elected representatives rather than directly to her, including a telephone briefing to her MP's office on 4 June 2026 that was not relayed to her.

On 23 June 2026, the Minister for Migration and Citizenship submitted in writing that the refusal was wrong and apologised. On 3 July 2026, a formal complaint response reiterated this admission.

As a result of the refusal issued in May 2026, it is reported that her right to work was wrongfully suspended for approximately one month and that she has incurred approximately 3,000 GBP in legal fees and lost 800-900 GBP in income. Additionally, she was forced to disclose highly sensitive personal history, including regarding her [REDACTED], to elected colleagues whom she knows in a professional capacity. This was allegedly as a result of the Home Office not engaging with her directly. As it stands, it is unclear whether she has an immediate route to legal or financial redress.

A complaint has been submitted to the Information Commissioner's Office and a complaint review request to UKVI. The administrative review and Skilled Worker Visa reconsideration remain outstanding.

Without wishing to prejudge the information received, we are seriously concerned about the reported pattern of harassment and intimidation towards Nina Briggs which appears to be connected with her human rights work documenting and advocating against racist hate crime. Such acts appear to have been carried out to silence and deter her exercise of the right to promote, protect and defend the rights of migrant, racialised, and ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland.

We also express our concern that within this context of intimidation and harassment, her visa application has been mishandled and through which she has

acquired additional costs and restrictions to her work. The alleged lack of direct communication from the relevant authorities is a cause for concern, specifically in the context of having to relay sensitive information to third parties.

We wish to underscore that, as a woman human rights defender, she is exposed to heightened risks that extend beyond those associated with being either a human rights defender or a woman alone. Jurisprudence and reports by international human rights mechanisms have recognized that the vulnerability she faces is qualitatively different in nature. Additionally, this situation is further compounded by intersecting forms of discrimination. Risks are intensified for women human rights defenders in all their diversity, particularly those who face multiple and interconnected forms of discrimination stemming, among other factors, from structural racism, exclusion and status as a migrant.

We also wish to raise serious concern about the wider environment of violence, threats, harassment and stigmatisation, in person and online, faced by migrant, racialised and ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland, and the chilling effect that such an environment has on the fundamental work and right of human rights defenders and civil society organisations to collectively promote, protect and defend human rights. We also wish to express particular concern regarding the role of paramilitary networks, groups and affiliated individuals in perpetrating such acts of racist violence and intimidation against ethnic minorities and migrants.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide detailed information on the status of any investigations into the abovementioned allegations and on measures undertaken to identify and sanction the perpetrators. If no such steps have been taken, please explain how this is compatible with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's obligations under international human rights law (see annex).
3. Please provide information on any steps taken or that your Excellency's Government plans to undertake to guarantee the safety and physical integrity of Nina Briggs and members of the MWU-NI in light of the above-detailed allegations. If no such steps have been taken, please explain how this is compatible with the United Kingdom's obligations under international human rights law (see annex).
4. Please provide further information on what steps have been taken to ensure Nina Briggs's right to an effective remedy, including regarding the

loss of earnings and costs associated with the erroneous refusal of her visa consideration, and the steps taken to guarantee her right to non-repetition in relation to the visa procedure.

5. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that human rights defenders, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in particular those working to defend the rights of racialised, migrant and minority communities and advocating against racist hate crime, are able to exercise their right to promote, protect and defend human rights, in a safe and enabling environment, free from the fear of reprisals and any physical, online, judicial or other forms of intimidation and harassment. Please include information about specific steps taken to protect human rights defenders and civil society organisations working in Northern Ireland from paramilitary networks, groups and affiliated individuals.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency's Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency's Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

We request that a copy of this communication is transmitted to all relevant authorities, including the Northern Ireland Executive.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to prevent the re-occurrence of such alleged violation and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

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Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Gehad Madi
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

Ashwini K.P.
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination,
xenophobia and related intolerance

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the following human rights norms and standards.

We refer your Excellency's Government to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ratified on 20 May 1976, and in particular to article 2(3), 9, 19, 21 and 22 which guarantees the right to an effective remedy, right to security of person, the right to the freedom of expression and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

In its general comment No. 31, the Human Rights Committee clarified that article 2(3) entails an obligation to conduct prompt, thorough, effective, independent and impartial investigations into alleged violations to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice ([CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13](#), paras. 15, 18).

The right to security of person as established by article 9 refers to protection against physical or psychological injury, or attacks on physical and moral integrity, and obliges State parties to take appropriate measures to protect individuals from foreseeable threats to their life or physical integrity from any State or non-State actor. As the Human Rights Committee has underlined, States parties should respond appropriately to patterns of violence against certain categories of victims, such as intimidation of human rights defenders, and should take appropriate measures to protect the victims of such violence ([CCPR/GC/35](#), para. 9). Where individuals are exposed to repeated threats or acts of intimidation linked to the exercise of their rights, the obligation to ensure security of person requires timely and effective action by competent authorities.

Article 19 requires the States parties to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds. As interpreted by the Human Rights Committee in general comment No. 34 ([CCPR/C/GC/34](#)), such information and ideas include, *inter alia*, political discourse, commentary on public affairs, discussion of human rights, and journalism (paragraph 11).

The Committee further asserts that there is a duty of States to put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression (para. 23). Recognising how journalists and persons who engage in the gathering and analysis of information on the human rights situation and who publish human rights-related reports, including judges and lawyers, are frequently subjected to threats, intimidation and attacks because of their activities, the Committee stresses that "all such attacks should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion, and the perpetrators prosecuted, and the victims, or, in the case of killings, their representatives, be in receipt of appropriate forms of redress" (para. 23).

Any restriction on the right to freedom of expression must be compatible with the requirements set out in article 19(3) ICCPR. Under these requirements, restrictions

must (i) be provided by law; (ii) pursue one of the legitimate aims for restriction, which are the respect of the rights or reputations of others and the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals; and (iii) be necessary and proportionate for those objectives. The State has the burden of proof to demonstrate that any such restrictions are compatible with the Covenant, and restrictions must always be “the least intrusive instrument among those which might achieve their protective function” ([CCPR/C/GC/34](#), para. 34).

Article 19(3) may never be invoked to justify the muzzling of any advocacy of democratic tenets and human rights (para. 23). Nor, under any circumstance, can an attack on a person, because of the exercise of their freedom of opinion or expression, including such forms of attack as arbitrary arrest and torture, be compatible with article 19 (para. 23).

Article 21 states that “[t]he right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others”. The Human Rights Committee further stated that “[a]rticle 21 of the Covenant protects peaceful assemblies wherever they take place: outdoors, indoors and online; in public and private spaces; or a combination thereof. Such assemblies may take many forms, including demonstrations, protests, meetings, processions, rallies, sit-ins, candlelit vigils and flash mobs. They are protected under article 21 whether they are stationary, such as pickets, or mobile, such as processions or marches” ([CCPR/C/GC/37](#), para. 6).

Furthermore, article 22 of the ICCPR protects the right to freedom of association with others. It stipulates that “everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others” and that “no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals.

As stated in a report by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, States not only have a negative obligation to abstain from unduly interfering with the rights of peaceful assembly and of association but also have a positive obligation to facilitate and protect these rights in accordance with international human rights standards ([A/HRC/17/27](#), para. 66; and [A/HRC/29/25/Add.1](#)). This means ensuring that the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are enjoyed by everyone, without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status ((A/HRC/41/41, para. 13, see also article 2 (1) of the ICCPR).

States furthermore have an obligation not only to refrain from violating the rights of individuals involved in an assembly, but to ensure the rights of those who participate or are affected by them, and to facilitate an enabling environment (A/HRC/31/66, para. 13). Particular attention must be paid to the rights and needs of individuals from groups or populations at higher risk of facing discrimination and

marginalization”, such as women, persons with disabilities and persons belonging to minority groups ([A/HRC/53/38/Add.4](#), para. 21).

In the context of the alleged facts, the International the Human Rights Committee has clarified, articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR are "compatible with and complement each other," and advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is subject to prohibition by law, provided that any restriction also complies with the requirements of legality, necessity and proportionality under article 19(3) ([CCPR/C/GC/34](#), paras. 50–52). Likewise, the protection afforded by article 21 does not extend to violence or to conduct amounting to intimidation or incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and any restrictions must remain exceptional, individualized, and strictly necessary in a democratic society ([CCPR/C/GC/37](#), paras. 50 and 51). Based on previous legal provisions, States should therefore respond decisively to acts of violence and unlawful incitement associated with assemblies, while ensuring that such measures are narrowly tailored and do not undermine the protection afforded to peaceful protest, legitimate dissent, or human rights advocacy.

Furthermore, the Rabat Plan of Action provides an international framework for distinguishing protected expression from advocacy of hatred that may legitimately give rise to State intervention. It emphasizes that restrictions should be reserved for the exceptional circumstances in which expression reaches the high threshold of article 20(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, assessed through a rigorous evaluation of context, the speaker's position, intent, content and form, extent of dissemination, and the likelihood, including imminence, of resulting harm. This threshold is designed precisely to ensure that measures against incitement do not become a vehicle for suppressing legitimate criticism, advocacy, or peaceful dissent. At the same time, where public mobilization is accompanied by advocacy of hatred that intentionally incites discrimination, hostility, or violence against individuals or groups—including attacks directed at persons because of their work defending the rights of migrants or violence against businesses associated with a particular community—States have a positive obligation to respond in accordance with international human rights law, while ensuring that any restrictions remain lawful, necessary, and proportionate.

We would also like to refer your Excellency's Government to the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In particular, we would like to refer to articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration which state that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We would like in particular to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government the following provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders:

- article 5 (a) and (b), which provides for the right to meet or assemble peacefully and to form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups.
- article 6(b), which establishes that everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others' views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- article 9, which establishes in the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right to benefit from an effective remedy and to be protected in the event of the violation of those rights.
- article 12, paragraphs 2 and 3, which provides that the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of everyone against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the Declaration.

We also wish to refer to General Assembly resolution [A/RES/68/181](#) on the promotion of the Declaration and protecting women human rights defenders, which stresses that “respect and support for the activities of human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, is essential to the overall enjoyment of human rights”, and condemns “all human rights violations and abuses committed against persons engaged in promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms”. It further highlights “the important role of women human rights defenders in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, to which everyone is entitled without distinction of any kind, including in addressing all forms of human rights violations, combating impunity, fighting poverty and discrimination and promoting access to justice, democracy, the full participation of women in society, tolerance, human dignity and the right to development, while recalling that the exercise of these rights carries duties and responsibilities set out in the Declaration”.

We remind your Excellency's of its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 7 March 1969. We recall under article 1 of the said Convention, “racial discrimination” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference. Article 2 (1) outlines a comprehensive prohibition of racial discrimination. It imposes a positive duty upon States and all public authorities, at both national and local levels, to refrain from engaging in any act or practice of racial discrimination. This obligation extends further: States must neither sponsor, defend nor support racial discrimination perpetrated by any person, group or organization, including those that propagate doctrines of racial superiority or incite racial intolerance. Article 5, to be read in conjugation with the prohibition of racial discrimination outlined article 2, guarantees the right of everyone, without distinction

as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, in the enjoyment of a number of rights, including political rights; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of peaceful assembly and association; and the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution. Under article 4, States parties shall condemn and prohibit all forms of racial hatred and discrimination, criminalize the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination and racial violence, and ban organizations and propaganda activities that promote or incite racial discrimination. Participation in such organizations or activities must also be punishable by law.

In its 2024 concluding observations, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about reports of paramilitary groups and affiliated individuals perpetrating acts of racist violence and intimidation (CERD/C/GBR/CO/24-26). The Committee recommended that the State party, in particular the government of Northern Ireland, adopt robust measures to prevent and combat paramilitary racist violence and intimidation against ethnic minorities and migrants in Northern Ireland, systematically collect information on these acts of violence and intimidation and ensure that cases of paramilitary racist violence and intimidation are promptly and effectively investigated, prosecuted and punished with appropriate sanctions and that victims have access to effective protection and redress.