



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council for the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Ireland

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

September 2024

Published by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

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The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission was established under statute on 1 November 2014 to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland, to promote a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding, to promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality, and to work towards the elimination of human rights abuses and discrimination.

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Introduction

1. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission ('the Commission') is the 'A' status National Human Rights Institution and the National Equality Body for Ireland.¹ As well as our broad mandate to protect and promote human rights and equality, we are Ireland's Independent Monitoring Mechanism under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ('CRPD'),² and the National Rapporteur on the Trafficking of Human Beings.³ We are the incoming co-ordinating National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, pending ratification.⁴ We have also taken up roles in relation to gender pay gap reporting,⁵ and upholding equality and rights protections on the island of Ireland following the UK's exit from the EU.⁶
2. We welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the implementation of recommendations made during Ireland's Third Periodic Review in 2021.⁷ The mid-term phase offers a critical opportunity to assess progress and renew commitments in advance of the Fourth Cycle review in 2026. While we commend the State on its preparation of a mid-term report, there are significant limitations to its approach, which focuses on policy and legislative outputs, rather than measuring outcomes and capturing the lived experience of individuals and communities.⁸ Our engagement with rights-holders and civil society highlights persistent challenges to the full realisation of human rights and equality for all, as well as gaps in the political will required to overcome them. This emphasises the importance of the establishment in Ireland of a permanent National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up (**Recommendation 157.45**).⁹
3. This submission focuses on priority issues, which require particular attention and resourcing by the State to be implemented.¹⁰ While positive steps taken since the last review are noted throughout, we are concerned that, overall, progress is falling short of what is required. We challenge the State's characterisation of its record as focused on "those with lived experience of inequality and disadvantage".¹¹

4. We encourage the State to consider the recommendations in this report and use the mid-term period as an opportunity for reflection and proactive preparation for the Fourth Cycle review.

National Human Rights Institution

5. As the NHRI, we challenge the assertion that the Commission has “sufficient resources to discharge its functions effectively”.¹² The Commission has a significantly expanded mandate since 2014 which has not been matched by annual budgetary increases **(Recommendations 157.34-157.36)**.¹³ The recently approved *EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies* provide that multi-mandate bodies must be given adequate human, technical and financial resources to perform their tasks effectively.¹⁴ Where new mandates are given to equality bodies, they should receive the financial and other resources to effectively exercise their mandates.¹⁵ Such budgetary allocation should be stable and multi-annual, to facilitate covering unanticipated costs;¹⁶ linked to the rising costs of inflation; account for public sector pay agreements and salary increments; and, allow a margin of budgetary contingency for responding to emerging human rights issues.

The Commission recommends that, as part of its transposition of the new EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies, the State engages in multi-annual budgetary planning and allocation at a level that ensures the effective discharge of all our statutory functions, and that our new mandates are accompanied by adequate and costed funding.

International Obligations

6. While we welcome Ireland's commitments on ratification,¹⁷ we are concerned with the continued slow progress over this Review Cycle to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (**Recommendations 157.3-157.5**), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (**Recommendations 157.30-157.33, 157.171**), the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (**Recommendations 157.5-157.6, 157.15, 157.21-157.29, 157.37**), and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (**Recommendations 157.7-157.9**).¹⁸ It is of particular note that Ireland signed OPCAT in October 2007; that signature ostensibly indicating the State's willingness to proceed to ratification and to refrain from acts that would defeat the purpose of the Protocol.¹⁹ Almost 17 years later after signing, we are now the only EU country that remains without a law to establish a National Preventive Mechanism.
7. It is important to note that the State's language regarding the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (**Recommendations 157.10-157.11, 157.13-157.14, 157.29**) is proactive and displays commitment.²⁰ This contrasts with their statement on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (**Recommendations 157.6, 157.12, 157.15-157.120**) where there is no commitment to progress ratification.²¹
8. International treaties (**Recommendations 157.38, 157.40-157.42, 157.44, 157.47, 157.49**) are not incorporated into Irish law,²² and the State is both unwilling to engage in constructive dialogue about treaty obligations²³ and adversarial towards individuals seeking to assert these rights.²⁴
9. As the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for UNCRPD, full implementation of the CRPD (**Recommendations 157.39, 157.241, 157.243**) requires a commitment to review and amend legislative frameworks, including the Equality Acts, Education for Persons with

Special Educational Needs Act (**Recommendation 157.15**), the Mental Health Acts, and to bring forward legislation to adequately safeguard individuals at risk and/or deprived of liberty.²⁵

The Commission recommends that the State proceeds with the immediate ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

The Commission recommends that the State conducts a comprehensive audit of its legislation to assess alignment with international treaties, and sets out the steps required to progress full domestic incorporation of international treaties.

International solidarity

Business and Human Rights

10. Although we note Ireland's active membership of the international community and commitment to working multilaterally in certain areas,²⁶ it is crucial that the same commitment is demonstrated in engagement with the international financial system and regulation of the significant number of companies working abroad (**Recommendations 157.76, 157.111**). Research indicates that Irish companies operating abroad are not adequately checking and taking responsibility for human rights harms within their supply chains.²⁷ Rights-holders who experience business-related adverse impacts face significant barriers to accessing a remedy, including due to the lack of collective redress mechanisms, significant legal costs, and limited legal aid or third party funding.²⁸ The State must respond to these challenges, including by requiring companies to undertake human rights due diligence.²⁹ The forthcoming second National Plan on Business and Human Rights should be published as a matter of priority,³⁰ and should align with other relevant areas, including anti-trafficking,³¹ climate change³² and artificial intelligence³³.

The Commission recommends that the State introduces mandatory human rights due diligence legislation, that includes the full value chain of all companies and environmental protections within its scope, prioritises transparency in reporting, and ensures effective sanctions and enforcement.

Tax Policies

11. When outlining measures taken to prevent human rights abuses abroad, the State report does not consider the implications of its taxation policies.³⁴ However, a number of UN Committees have raised concerns about Ireland's role in corporate tax avoidance and profit-shifting from low income countries.³⁵ Irish tax policies deprive developing countries of the right to increase their own tax revenue from corporate activity carried out in their territories and should be urgently addressed, including through constructive engagement in international tax negotiations at the UN and elsewhere.

The Commission recommends that the State addresses the identified tax structures which are impacting rights protections in other territories, and carries out ongoing independent and regular assessments of the impact of its policies on cross-border tax abuse.

Climate change

12. Despite references to high implementation of climate action policies in the State report,³⁶ Ireland remains a low performer in climate action, with 87% of energy needs met by fossil fuels in 2023 (**Recommendations 157.106-157.108**).³⁷ Ireland is also experiencing unprecedented biodiversity degradation, with 85% of protected areas in unfavourable conditions,³⁸ and inadequate implementation of the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss.³⁹

The Commission recommends that the State leverages all available resources, including domestic and EU financing mechanisms, to ensure transformative mitigation and adaptation actions in response to climate change and biodiversity loss.

13. It is well evidenced that the climate crisis has a disproportionate impact on structurally vulnerable groups and exacerbates existing inequalities, including for those living in poverty, young people, older people, disabled people, women, and minority ethnic people.⁴⁰ It is essential that such groups can participate in environmental decision-making (**Recommendation 157.109**). While the State report notes initiatives led by the National Dialogue on Climate Action, greater participation at a local level should be resourced, including through Public Participation Networks.⁴¹ Participation barriers must also be addressed, including skill gaps to effectively organise action, a lack of information on how to get involved, and negative perceptions of the impact that can be achieved.⁴²

The Commission recommends that the State fully realises procedural environmental rights by ensuring effective public participation in the formation of legal and policy measures, and wide access to justice.

Immigration System

Accommodation

14. Despite pledging to end the long-standing Direct Provision system by 2024, the State has confirmed that this commitment will not be met, and has replaced the White Paper on Ending Direct Provision with a new Comprehensive Accommodation Strategy (**Recommendations 157.251, 157.255, 157.260**).⁴³ Although it proposes to end reliance on ‘substandard accommodation and/or unscrupulous providers’, it continues the model of congregated settings, weakens the commitment to move to a State owned system, and fails to improve the inspection systems in place.⁴⁴
15. International protection and temporary protection applicants living in Direct Provision centres often find themselves living in overcrowded, deteriorating buildings, in conditions which make it difficult to ensure privacy and maintain cultural practices (**Recommendation 157.254**).⁴⁵ They experience difficulties in accessing basic amenities and services, including food preparation arrangements, transportation, healthcare, and leisure activities.⁴⁶ The remit of the Health Information and Quality Authority was recently expanded to independently monitor and inspect permanent international protection centres;⁴⁷ however, the remit does not extend to emergency and transit accommodation which is a concerning gap in independent oversight (**Recommendation 157.259**).⁴⁸
16. International Protection applicants do not have a choice regarding the location of their accommodation and requests for transfers are only granted in exceptional circumstances.⁴⁹ Due to the barriers international protection applicants face in leaving accommodation centres, we are of the view that legislative proposals to provide for the ratification of OPCAT⁵⁰ should include accommodation centres for international protection applicants as places of de facto detention where deprivation of liberty or detention may occur.⁵¹

The Commission recommends that the State redoubles its commitment to ending Direct Provision as a matter of urgency; and establishes a sustainable and not-for-profit system for international protection accommodation, including by ending the continued reliance on commercial providers for emergency provision, significantly increasing State-owned accommodation, and ensuring human rights-compliant reception conditions.

The Commission recommends that the independent monitoring role of the Health Information and Quality Authority is extended to emergency and transit accommodation centres to ensure full compliance with national standards.

17. We are seriously concerned about the rise in homelessness among international protection applicants, given their heightened vulnerability and trauma. This rise is linked to the regressive practice of not providing emergency accommodation to new arrivals which became official State policy in January 2023.⁵²

18. In 2023, we, for the first time, initiated legal action under our Act⁵³ against the State for failing to provide for the basic needs of international protection applicants. In 2024, the Irish High Court ruled the State had failed in its duty to provide for the basic needs, including accommodation, for international protections applicants who have recently arrived in Ireland seeking asylum.⁵⁴

The Commission recommends that the State immediately reverses its policy of not offering emergency accommodation to international protection applicants arriving in Ireland, in accordance with its obligations under domestic and international law.

Immigration detention

19. There is a lack of transparency around immigration detention in Ireland, including in relation to where immigration detainees are being placed, their length of stay, and the material conditions.⁵⁵ We are concerned that there is an absence of robust procedural safeguards in immigration detention settings including barriers to the justice system,

accessing legal aid and legal representation, and access to specialised healthcare services.⁵⁶

20. The State's decision to opt into the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, raises concerns about the significant expansion of immigration detention under the new 'accelerated border procedure,' and the potential reduction of procedural safeguards **(Recommendations 157.251; 157.254; 157.255; 157.260)**.⁵⁷

The Commission recommends that the State places procedural safeguards for all immigration detainees on a statutory footing, including access to legal representation, medical examination and an effective legal remedy.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Incorporation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

21. There are real costs and consequences of the failure to adequately protect economic, social and cultural ('ESC') rights in Ireland as demonstrated in the persistent and acute crises across healthcare, housing and economic equality. To ensure full protection of ESC rights in Ireland, ESC rights must be included as justiciable rights in the Irish Constitution, backed by appropriate supplementary statutory protections and policy measures.⁵⁸

The Commission recommends that the State enshrines economic, social and cultural rights in the Irish Constitution.

Housing

22. It has been nearly a decade since the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights referenced the 'difficult housing situation' in Ireland.⁵⁹ There has been an alarming lack of progress in the years since and the crisis has worsened.⁶⁰ High property prices,⁶¹ chronic undersupply,⁶² and a private rental market marred by inaccessibility and unaffordability⁶³ have created dire circumstances for many (**Recommendations 157.151-157.159**).

23. Through engagement with civil society and rights holders, we see desire for a constitutional right to housing.⁶⁴ While not a perfect solution, it would symbolise the State's priorities and increase access to justice.⁶⁵ A referendum has been recommended by the Housing Commission⁶⁶ however, the State has not progressed this work, demonstrating a clear unwillingness to place ESC rights on a legal footing.

The Commission recommends that the State holds a referendum proposing the insertion of a right to housing into the Constitution.

24. The housing crisis exacerbates the challenges faced by structurally vulnerable groups (**Recommendations 157.81, 157.157**). The State has continuously been found to be

violating the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection under Article 16 of the European Social Charter through its failure to provide culturally appropriate accommodation to Travellers (**Recommendations 157.81, 157.149**).⁶⁷ Historical undersupply of appropriate accommodation and ongoing neglect of this supply issue have generated a scarcity, which has seen many Travellers homeless or living in unsuitable, overcrowded conditions while spending years on waiting lists or opting for culturally inappropriate accommodation due to a lack of alternatives.⁶⁸

The Commission recommends that increases to housing stock account for the cultural preferences of Travellers and immediate measures be taken to address substandard living conditions among existing stock.

25. We are concerned about the significant levels of institutionalisation in Ireland.⁶⁹ Despite evidence indicating that older adults prefer to age in place⁷⁰ and disabled people wish to live independently in the community,⁷¹ these preferences are not adequately respected in Ireland and both groups are often required to live in inappropriate institutional settings⁷² due to a lack of resources to facilitate independent living.⁷³

The Commission recommends that the State takes active measures to guarantee the right to independent living, including through increasing provision of universally designed housing and coordinated personal assistance services.

Health

26. We are strongly of the view that State efforts to ensure accessible, available, affordable and quality health services are falling significantly short of human rights obligations (**Recommendations 157.158, 157.161, 157.163, 157.165, 157.168, 157.170-157.171**).⁷⁴ In particular, we would like to draw attention to the provision of abortion (**Recommendations 157.160, 157.164, 157.166, 157.169, 157.172**).

27. Despite legislating for the provision of abortion in 2018, women living in Ireland continue to travel abroad to access reproductive healthcare due to strict limitations and restrictions

in the Irish regime.⁷⁵ In particular, the classification of fatal foetal abnormalities works to deny access while mandatory waiting periods, criminal penalties, and an unregulated system of conscientious objection combine to frustrate timely care.⁷⁶ In early 2023, the final report of the independent statutory review of the *Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018* was published and recommended reforms to address these issues.⁷⁷ We note with concern that it has been over a year since the Review was published and while the Government has implemented some recommendations, it has shown little urgency to implement any legislative amendments to the Act despite evidence of ongoing suffering and barriers for women in accessing services.⁷⁸

The Commission recommends that the State amends the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 in line with the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Operation of the Act, as a matter of urgency.

References

¹ See *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014*.

² Section 103 of the *Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022*.

³ IHREC, [Commission Takes on New Role as Ireland's National Rapporteur on the Trafficking of Human Beings](#) (2020).

⁴ To be provided under the *Inspection of Places of Detention Bill*, when enacted.

⁵ *Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021*.

⁶ In the wake of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU, the Commission, along with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland comprise the Article 2(1) Working Group of the Dedicated Mechanism.

⁷ United Nations Human Rights Council, [Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ireland](#), A/HRC/49/18 (14 December 2021). We also welcome the July 2022 letter from the then High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Irish Government drawing attention to issues which require particular attention during the third cycle of the UPR: [Letter by the High Commissioner to the Foreign Minister](#).

⁸ Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 1](#) (2024).

⁹ OHCHR, [National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up](#). See also, Danish Institute for Human Rights, [Interactions between National Human Rights Institutions and National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up: Research and Recommendations](#) (2023).

¹⁰ The issues identified in our mid-term report are informed by our *Strategy Statement 2022-2024*: IHREC, [Strategy Statement 2022-2024](#) (2022).

¹¹ Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 1](#) (2024), p. 27.

¹² Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 2](#) (2024), p. 6.

¹³ See the introduction to this report. In 2017, the Commission had a budgetary allocation of 6.5 million euros and an approved staffing level of 47 posts: Council of Europe, [ECRI Report on Ireland \(Fifth Monitoring Cycle\)](#) (2019), para. 20. IHREC has been allocated approximately €8.4m for 2024: Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, [Revised Estimates for Public Services 2024](#) (2024), p. 14. As of 31 December 2023, the staff complement at the Commission was 89 people: IHREC, [Annual Report 2023](#) (2024), p. 112.

¹⁴ Council of the European Union, [Strengthening the role of equality bodies across the EU: Council adopts two directives](#) (2024).

¹⁵ Recital 20 of the [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU](#); and Recital 21 of the [Council Directive \(EU\) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC](#).

¹⁶ Recital 21 of the [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU](#); and Recital 22 of the [Council Directive \(EU\) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC](#).

¹⁷ Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 2](#) (2024).

¹⁸ IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 13-14.

¹⁹ Articles 10 and 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties 1969.

²⁰ Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 2](#) (2024), p. 2.

²¹ Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 2](#) (2024), p. 1.

²² Committee on Economic, [Social and Cultural Rights, Replies of Ireland to the List of Issues in relation to its Fourth Periodic Report](#) (2023), paras. 1-4.

²³ IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 14-15.

²⁴ The State has taken extremely defensive positions against the assertion of rights in the context of disability services and supports, nursing homes, and healthcare: IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 13-14.

²⁵ IHREC, [Key equality and human rights recommendations for the next Government](#) (2024), p. 1.

²⁶ See for example Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 1](#) (2024), p. 27; Government of Ireland, [Minister's Opening Statement: ICESCR Review](#) (2024).

²⁷ B.F. Hogan, ML Rhodes and M. Lawlor, [Irish Business and Human Rights: A snapshot of large firms operating in Ireland](#) (2020). See also IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 27-31.

²⁸ Dr Rachel Widdis, [Review of access to remedy in Ireland](#) (2020), p. 1. See also FLAC, [Annual Report 2021](#) (2022).

²⁹ We have recommended for the full and expansive implementation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive: IHREC, [Observations on the draft second National Plan on Business and Human Rights](#) (2024), pp. 5-6.

³⁰ IHREC, [Observations on the draft second National Plan on Business and Human Rights](#) (2024).

³¹ We have recommended for the full and expansive implementation of the EU Regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the EU market: IHREC, [Observations on the draft second National Plan on Business and Human Rights](#) (2024), pp. 5-6; IHREC, [Trafficking in Human Beings in Ireland: Second Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive](#) (2023), pp. 73-74.

³² IHREC, [Policy Statement on a Just Transition](#) (2023), p. 22; IHREC, [Ireland and the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (2023), p. 37.

³³ The Plan should align with legislative developments including the [European Union Regulation laying down harmonised rules of Artificial Intelligence \(Artificial Intelligence Act\)](#) and the [Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#).

³⁴ See the State's response to recommendations 157.76 and 157.111. Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 2](#) (2024), pp. 16-17, 23-24.

³⁵ See for example CRC, [Concluding Observations on the combined fifth and sixth reports of Ireland](#) (2023) para. 13 (f); CESCR, [Concluding Observations on the fourth periodic report of Ireland](#) (2024), paras 14-15. Ireland was ranked 11th on the Corporate Tax Haven Index 2021 and is responsible for approximately 3.3% of global corporate tax abuse despite having less than 0.1% of the global population. See Tax Justice Network, [Corporate Tax Haven Index – 2021 Results](#) (2021).

³⁶ Government of Ireland, [Mid-Term Report to the UN Human Rights Council 2024 Universal Periodic Review: Part 2](#) (2024), p. 21.

³⁷ IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 20-27; Climate Change Advisory Council, [Annual Review 2023](#) (2023), p. 29; IHREC, [Ireland and the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (2023) pp. 34-36.

³⁸ Citizens' Assembly, [Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss](#) (2023), p. 7.

³⁹ In March 2023, the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss published its final report to the Irish Government outlining a series of measures needed to transform Ireland's relationship with the natural environment: Citizens' Assembly, [Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss](#) (2023).

⁴⁰ See generally IHREC, [Policy Statement on a Just Transition](#) (2023).

⁴¹ Public Participation Networks (PPNs) are networks for local authorities to connect with community groups around the country. They uniquely positioned to identify local needs and the resources required. See Department of Rural and Community Development, [Public Participation Networks](#) (2023) and Department of Rural and Community Development, [Public Participation Networks: Annual Report 2021](#) (2021), p. 51. See also IHREC, [Policy Statement on a Just Transition](#) (2023) p. 24.

⁴² 54% of respondents in a survey of young people reported feeling that they are not listened to when they engage on this issue. ECO-UNESCO, [Youth Climate Justice Survey 2022](#) (2022).

⁴³ Government of Ireland, [Comprehensive Accommodation Strategy for International Protection Applicants](#) (2024).

⁴⁴ IHREC, [Ireland and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (2024), p. 60.

⁴⁵ Irish Refugee Council, [Living in International Protection Accommodation: Exploring the Experiences of Families and Children in Direct Provision](#) (2023); IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), p. 121.

⁴⁶ S. Cid, [Living in International Protection Accommodation: Exploring the Experiences of Families and Children in Direct Provision](#) (Irish Refugee Council (2023); IHREC, [Ireland and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (2024), pp. 58-59.

⁴⁷ The first reports published in April 2024 highlight concerning levels of non-compliance with national standards: HIQA, [HIQA publishes first inspection reports on International Protection Accommodation Service centres](#) (April 2024).

⁴⁸ IHREC, [Ireland and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (2024), p. 60.

⁴⁹ Irish Refugee Council, [Country Report: Freedom of Movement](#) (2023).

⁵⁰ *Inspection of Places of Detention Bill*.

⁵¹ IHREC, [Submission on the General Scheme of the Inspection of Places of Detention Bill](#) (2022), p. 34.

⁵² Since December 2023, 5,173 male international protection applicants who arrived to Ireland were not offered accommodation on arrival, and many have been forced to sleep on the street as a result. On 30 August 2024, 2,577 male applicants were awaiting an offer of accommodation. Applicants not provided with accommodation are receiving a temporary increase in a contingency payment to €113.80/week. Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, [Statistics on International Protection Applicants not offered accommodation](#) (August 2024).

⁵³ Section 41 of the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014*.

⁵⁴ IHREC, [Commission welcomes significant judgment on the human rights of international protection applicants in landmark case](#) (August 2024).

⁵⁵ IHREC, [Ireland and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (2024) p. 22; EMN/ESRI, [Detention and alternatives to detention in international protection and return procedures in Ireland](#) (2021).

⁵⁶ IHREC, [Ireland and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (2024) p. 24.

⁵⁷ IHREC, [Ireland and the 6th Monitoring Cycle of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](#) (2024), pp 28-30. We are particularly concerned about the impact on children, families, and trafficking victims as existing research highlights fundamental rights violations in immigration detention centres, including limited access to legal representation, information, and contact with relatives, as well as experiences of violence.

⁵⁸ For more on the Domestic incorporation of ESC rights see: IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 13-15.

⁵⁹ CESCR, [Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Ireland](#) (2015), paras. 26-27.

⁶⁰ The official record for the number of homeless people in the State has been broken seven times in the preceding seven months of 2024. Most recently, 14,429 people, including 4,401 children were homeless in the State in the month of July. An increase of over 1,000 people since the end of 2023. Please note that these figures only capture individuals who tried to access emergency accommodation in the month and so the real figures are likely much higher. See: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, [Homeless Report – July 2024](#) (30 August 2024).

⁶¹ In the 12 months to May 2024 property prices rose by 8.2%. Current prices are 10% higher than the pre-financial crash peak and 144.5% higher than their lowest point in 2013. See: Central Statistics Office, [Residential Property Price Index June 2024](#) (2024); Irish Examiner, [House price rises means first-time buyers 'unable to purchase home'](#) (2024)

⁶² The Parliamentary Budget Office has said there are currently 115,425 households who have an 'ongoing need' for social housing including 58,824 on waiting lists, See: Parliamentary Budget Office, [Social Housing – Ongoing Need 2023](#), (2024), p. 6. The State is consistently failing to meet its own targets for the delivery of new units. The Government has targeted the construction of 9,300 new social housing units in 2024, only 158 have been

delivered in the first quarter of 2024, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, [Social Housing Construction Projects – Status Report Q1 2024](#), (2024).

⁶³ A snapshot study undertaken by The Simon Community in June found that there were only 43 properties in the State available to rent for individuals who rely on the Housing Assistance Payment ('HAP'), a form of rent supplement, to afford their rent. 93% of these properties were located in the Dublin region. In 10 of 16 areas studied there were no properties available to rent using HAP. See: Simon Communities of Ireland, [Locked Out of the Market Study June 2024 – The Gap Between HAP Limits and Market Rents](#) (2024).

⁶⁴ We further note that in 2014, a large majority (84%) of the Constitutional Convention voted in favour of constitutional recognition of the right to housing. IHREC, [The Incorporation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights into the Irish Constitution](#) (2023), pp. 10-11.

⁶⁵ IHREC, [Submission to the Public Consultation on a Referendum on Housing in Ireland](#) (2022).

⁶⁶ The Housing Commission, [Report and proposed wording for an amendment to Bunreacht na hÉireann Constitution of Ireland](#), (2023).

⁶⁷ European Social Charter, [Follow-Up to Decisions on the Merits of Collective Complaints – Findings 2023](#), (2024), pp. 124-130.

⁶⁸ For more context see: IHREC, [Comments on Ireland's 20th National Report on the Implementation of the European Social Charter](#) (2023), pp. 6-18.

⁶⁹ IHREC, [Policy Statement on Care](#) (2023).

⁷⁰ IHREC, [Policy Statement on Care](#) (2023), pp. 59-64.

⁷¹ Article 19 of the UNCPRD includes a right to a range of in-home, residential and community support services, including personal assistance. IHREC, [Policy Statement on Care](#) (2023), p. 14.

⁷² 1,300 people under the age of 65 have been inappropriately placed in nursing homes.

⁷³ Engagement with civil society has highlighted the need for universally designed social, public and private housing, personal assistance and easily accessible essential services in the community; National Disability Authority, [The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#) (2023); ALONE & Threshold, [Double Deficit: Older and Ageing Persons in the Irish Private Rental Sector](#) (2023), pp. 65-66; IHREC, [Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (2023), pp. 91-92. See also: IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 109-111.

⁷⁴ For more see: IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (2024), pp. 122-137.

⁷⁵ In 2022, 201 women travelled to England & Wales to access a termination. The Irish Times, [Most Irish women who went to UK for abortion did so due to physical or mental health injury risk](#) (2024) For more on the issues in the Irish regime see: IHREC, [Submission to the Review of the Health \(Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy\) Act 2018](#) (2022).

⁷⁶ During the last review of Ireland, the Human Rights Committee identified these provisions of the Act as creating challenges preventing women and girls from accessing abortion, particularly those from vulnerable situations or rural communities and expressed concern about reports of women being denied or unable to access terminations. See: Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Ireland](#) (2022) CCPR/C/IRL/CO/5, paras. 25-26.

⁷⁷ O'Shea, Marie, [The Independent Review of the Operation of the Health \(Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy\) Act 2018](#) (2023).

⁷⁸ According to the Minister for Health, 18 months post-publication of the review, the legislative recommendations provided are yet to be considered by Cabinet: Dáil Éireann, [Written Answers](#) (13 June 2024).

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