

MEDIA ADVISORY

UNITED KINGDOM

Amnesty International calls for strengthening of Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

On 5 October, the House of Lords debates the Northern Ireland Bill which establishes a Human Rights Commission for Northern Ireland. Amnesty International is releasing a briefing addressing parts of the bill which the organization believes fall short of what is required to ensure that the proposed Commission is strong, effective and independent.

In its briefing, Amnesty International calls on the House of Lords to:

- **Reinforce an inclusive definition of human rights** to cover the full range of human rights enshrined in international standards.
- **Vest the Commission with powers of investigation and litigation**, including the powers to investigate individual cases and patterns of alleged human rights abuse at the request of any person, organisation or body or on its own initiative, and to compel the production of evidence.
- **Strengthen its powers to review legislation**, ensuring that **all** proposed legislation be referred to the Commission by the Northern Ireland Assembly, that the decision on whether to comment rest solely with the Commission and that the Assembly respond to the Commission's comments.
- **Ensure adequate financial and human resources to safeguard the Commission's independence and effectiveness**. Commission members and personnel should be fully representative of the civil society of Northern Ireland and the Commission should be given adequate funding to enable it to carry out all of its functions in accordance with the priorities it sets.

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