



UK Mission to the  
United Nations  
in Geneva

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Peter Hall

## **United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland National Statement**

### **Universal Periodic Review – Serbia**

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Thank you Mr President

The UK commends Serbia for improving its legislative framework for the protection of human rights, including the rights of persons from minorities. Steps include legislative and institutional improvements concerning prevention of torture and ill-treatment, women's rights and media reforms. Serbia has a legislative and institutional framework for the observance of human rights. However, legislation needs to be implemented effectively and with adequate resources for enforcement.

We remain concerned about Serbia's disproportionately high number of cases before the European Court of Human Rights. We are also concerned that the cancellation of Belgrade Pride Parades in 2011 and 2012 represented a failure to ensure full enjoyment by all citizens of their rights to freedom of assembly and of expression.

We welcome steps taken by the Government to tackle threats to NGOs and media from extremist groups, but urge them to do more to protect all those who seek to defend human rights, in the face of such threats.

Protection and promotion of the human rights of those who are most vulnerable, including persons from minorities, is a test for all democratic societies. Cultural change will require time, and sustained efforts in combating prejudice at all levels.



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We recommend that Serbia

1. Publish and implement a plan to protect rights to freedom of assembly and expression, ensuring the police have adequate powers to ensure the safety of those present and that any crimes committed in connection will be thoroughly and transparently investigated.
2. Publish and implement a plan for human rights defenders addressing how the government will allow them to operate freely, independently without any harassment or interference and with details of how investigations will be pursued.

Finally, we welcome Serbia's apprehension of all remaining-ICTY fugitives and encourage continued full cooperation with the Tribunal.

Thank you Mr President