

24 April 2013 Universal Periodic Review – Uzbekistan

United Kingdom Statement

Thank you Mr President

Uzbekistan's report notes various actions to implement previous UPR recommendations. We welcome important reforms including death penalty abolition, introduction of habeas corpus and 2011's law on the treatment of detainees. Forthcoming laws designed to enhance public scrutiny of the executive represent a further step forward and set the context for continuing political reform.

However, significant issues remain at the level of implementation. Law enforcement officers prevent peaceful assembly of citizens; many news, opposition and human rights websites are blocked; barriers to the registration of human rights NGOs and independent political parties remain; and human rights defenders and independent journalists continue to report harassment from the security services. Reports surface regularly of the mistreatment and torture of detainees.

We recommend:

1) That before Parliamentary and Presidential elections, Uzbekistan ease registration procedures for independent political parties and for independent national and international NGOs;

2) That Uzbekistan introduce a definition of torture into its criminal code that is in line with Article 1 of CAT, establish an effective mechanism to investigate credible allegations of torture, ensuring that perpetrators are held to account, and put in place the necessary arrangements to ratify OPCAT.

We further call on Uzbekistan to release all wrongfully imprisoned human rights defenders, journalists, members of the political opposition, and others held on politically motivated charges.

Thank you Mr President