

# United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland National Statement

## Universal Periodic Review – Dominican Republic

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The UK recognises the Government of the Dominican Republic's broad commitment to the protection of human rights and to addressing problems where they exist. We commend the ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the passing of the Law on the Equality of the Rights of People with a Disability. We welcome the appointment of the Ombudsman and encourage the Dominican government to strengthen the Ombudsman's office with adequate funding and the appointment of capable and independent investigators.

We further welcome the Dominican Government's action on some of the UK recommendations made in their previous UPR, including ongoing efforts to improve the prison system.

The UK recognises the reduction in the number of extrajudicial killings by the National Police but believe the statistics remain unacceptably high. We encourage the Dominican Government to introduce further human rights-based reform of the security services and the establishment of a fully independent oversight body to receive and investigate complaints.

The UK remains concerned by impunity, corruption and inefficiencies within the judicial system. This has the effect of denying access to justice to many citizens. As such, we welcome the frank and objective assessment of the challenges facing the judicial system which were

expressed by the President of the Supreme Court in his speech of 7 January.

The UK is also concerned by ongoing evidence of racial discrimination in Dominican society, in particular towards people of Haitian origin. While recognising that the Dominican government does not promote this behaviour, we believe that the authorities should do more to ensure that state officials at all levels stop discriminatory practices, including in relation to the process of issuing identity documents.

**We have 2 recommendations:**

- That the Government of the Dominican Republic considers the recommendations on reforms to the justice system made by the President of the Supreme Court in his speech of 7 January and identifies improvements which will help to guarantee the human right of access to justice. This should include thorough investigation of malpractice and a zero tolerance approach towards corruption.
  
- That the Government of the Dominican Republic prioritises the adequate resourcing and staffing of the Ombudsman's Office, ensures that State institutions, including the National Police, collaborate fully with the Office and considers a public campaign to demonstrate to Dominican citizens how this institution can help protect and guarantee their human rights.