

Particular circumstances

... the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights, to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland, drawing as appropriate on international instruments and experience. These additional rights to reflect the principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem, and - taken together with the ECHR - to constitute a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland'

Particular circumstances

- Belfast Good Friday Agreement
- St Andrews Agreement
- Submissions from Forum members and sectors

Agreement's principles

- mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities
- parity of esteem
- “... commitment to the principles of partnership, equality and mutual respect and to the protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights ...”
(UK-RI Agreement)
- culture of tolerance
- non-violence

Agreement's specific rights

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (the Agreement) 'affirms' the following specific rights 'against the background of the recent history of communal conflict':

- the right of free political thought
- the right to freedom and expression of religion
- the right to pursue democratically national and political aspirations
- the right to seek constitutional change by peaceful and legitimate means
- the right to freely choose one's place of residence
- the right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity regardless of class, creed, disability, gender or ethnicity
- the right to freedom from sectarian harassment; and
- the right of women to full and equal political participation.

Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity, Human Rights, para 1

Agreement's general rights

- Equality and non-discrimination, including “in relation to religion and political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependants and sexual orientation”
- Reconciliation
- Rights of victims
- Religion, language, culture and heritage
- Citizenship, nationality and minorities
- Poverty, social exclusion and economic disadvantage
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Criminal justice, policing and prisoners
- Political representation and participation
- Parading and the use of symbols and emblems

St Andrews Agreement

The 'advancement of human rights, equality and mutual respect' were promoted through commitments with regard to

- **Poverty and social exclusion** ('Anti-Poverty and Social Exclusion strategy to tackle deprivation in both rural and urban communities')
- **Victims** (establishment of Victims Commissioner)
- **Bill of Rights** (establishment of Forum)
- **Equality** (Single Equality Bill)
- **Language, heritage and culture** (Irish Language Act and enhancement and development of Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture)
- **Parading** (TOR for review to examine issues around parading with a view to developing a long term strategy)
- **Employment** (Government to work with business, trade unions and ex-prisoner groups to reduce barriers to employment and enhance reintegration of former prisoners)
- **Policing** (50/50 recruitment arrangements to the PSNI)
- **NIHRC powers** (powers to compel evidence, access places of detention, bring judicial proceedings in its own name)
- **EU nationals** (access to posts in the civil service)

St Andrews Agreement basic commitment

“... fully committed to the fundamental principles of the Agreement: ... equality and human rights at the heart of the new dispensation in Northern Ireland”

- agreed by UK and RI Governments
- accepted by all NI political parties represented on the Forum