Why does Scotland need a HUMAN RIGHTS BILL?

It is your right to have a proper house for you and your family

It is your right to have a job with an adequate salary

It is your right to have free and accessible health care without waiting

It is your right to have a hot meal on your table

It is your right to have free and quality education for you and your children

It is your right to be seen and respected for who you are

Ask your MSP and the candidates to the Scottish Parliament to advance, support and vote for the Human Rights Bill.

Sign the online petition:
https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/first-minister-scotland-needs-human-rights-bill

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – GLASGOW WEST GROUP

The social security system in the UK has drifted far from the core principle of mitigating social risks and providing protection for an adequate standard of living. It does not stand up to the international human rights frameworks. The result is a system that, by design, perpetuates the deprivation of living standards for those reliant on it, subjecting them to orchestrated stigma and a systematic erosion of their dignity.

What's needed is a comprehensive, all-encompassing review of the social security system, one that sets a clear, ambitious framework, establishes minimum standards for living, and places the system on a stronger foundation rooted in human rights and principles of availability, adequacy and accessibility. At the same time, we must address the fundamental flaws in human rights and equality protections within our government systems – flaws that have allowed the erosion of our social security, health, food, and housing rights under policies that claim to be human rights-compliant.

The Human Rights Bill (HRB) is a draft Bill published in 2023 following a public consultation that would respond to those needs and address those flaws in Scotland. It proposes to incorporate several international human rights treaties into Scottish law and would impose legal duties on public authorities to respect these rights and give people a route to challenge violations through Scottish courts.

If passed, the HRB could reshape the way laws and policies are developed in Scotland. For example:

- **Human rights screening of laws**: The Scottish Parliament may need to scrutinise all proposed legislation to ensure compatibility with the new rights.
- **Stronger legal duties on public bodies**: Public authorities would have a duty to respect, protect, and fulfil these rights in their decisions and service delivery, making them more accountable.
- **Judicial review and remedies**: Individuals may be able to challenge failures in court if their rights under the HRB are not upheld, which could lead to legal consequences and policy changes.
- **Participatory governance**: The HRB envisions involving people and communities, especially marginalised groups, in shaping how their rights are realised — changing the top-down nature of decision-making.

Amnesty International Scotland strongly supports the Bill because it:

- **Strengthens rights protection**: The HRB goes beyond the UK's Human Rights Act by covering economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, which are currently not fully enforceable in UK law.
- **Holds public bodies to account**: It would require public bodies (like councils, health boards, etc.) to take human rights into account when making decisions, helping ensure fairness and dignity in daily life (e.g., access to housing, education, healthcare).
- **Prevents regression**: The UK Government has proposed reforms that would weaken human rights protections (e.g., through the now-paused Bill of Rights). The HRB is a way for Scotland to safeguard and advance rights instead.
- **Empowers local citizens**: By incorporating rights that people can claim and enforce domestically, the HRB empowers individuals and communities to demand better services and treatment.