

UK & Northern Ireland - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

United Kingdom, officially the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (NI), is a sovereign country lying off the north-western coast of the European mainland. The UK includes the island of Great Britain, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland and many smaller islands. NI is the only part of the UK that shares a land border with another sovereign state- the Republic of Ireland. Citizens of the UK and NI continue to face restrictions on rights due to counter-terrorism laws. In addition, women in NI face significant restrictions on access to reproductive rights. Furthermore, allegations of the use of torture by UK intelligence agencies and arm forces continue to demonstrate a lack of accountability.

Official language: English

Ethnic groups: 87.1% White European; 7.0% Asians; 3.0% Black British or Afro-Caribbean; 2.3% Indian; 2.0% Multiracial

Government: Unitary parliamentary and Constitutional monarchy

- Queen: Queen Elizabeth II
- Prime Minister: Theresa May

Death penalty: Abolished

Population: 6.6 million

Life expectancy: 80.96 years

Under-5 mortality: 4 per 1000

Adult literacy: 99 percent



Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)) ²



0.922 – Very High Human Development ³

According to the UNDP, the UK and NI enjoyed a gross national income per capita of \$39,116, could expect to have on average 17.4 years of schooling. Compared to other countries with comparable gross national income per capita, this is a very high HDI.

Section 2: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Respected ⁴

There are no reports from the government or corresponding agencies that have committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected ⁵

There are no reports of disappearances in the UK and NI by government authorities.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Partially respected ⁶

Allegations of war crimes committed by the UK armed forces in Iraq between 2003-2008 remain under preliminary examination. A 2014 request by the Irish government to review torture techniques used in NI in 1971-72 remains pending before the European Court of Human Rights.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Partially respected⁷

The law prohibits arbitrary arrests and detention. However, three-in-four black, Asian, or minority ethnic Britons feel that their communities are targeted by stop-and-search policies. In Bermuda, civil rights groups state that the stop-and-search law unfairly targets the Black community.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Respected⁸

The law provides for an independent judiciary. The UK and NI government respects the judicial independence and impartiality.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected⁹

There are no reports that the government has failed to respect the prohibitions. However, the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, grants intelligence and police forces greater surveillance powers; including new powers for interception and collection of communications.

Section 3: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)¹⁰



Score: 23.25, Rank: 40 / 180 – Mostly free, Diverse and Independent¹¹

The UK is one of the worst-ranked Western European Countries in the World Press Freedom Index due to its heavy-handed approach towards the press - often in the name of national security. Both Conservative and Labour parties restricted journalists' access to campaign events in 2017.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹²

There are no government restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Respected¹³

The law provides the right to the freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The government routinely respects these rights.

Freedom of religion



Respected¹⁴

The law prohibits "incitement to religious hatred" and discrimination on the grounds of religion. The government has reported significant increases in religiously motivated hate crimes.

Freedom of movement



Respected¹⁵

The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. However, in 2016 the government imposed terrorism prevention and investigation measures (TPIMS) on 6 citizens and one foreign national, which is a form of house arrest.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Partially respected^{16 17}

Despite allegations of abuse in immigration detention centres, the government has not imposed a maximum time limit for detention and continues to detain migrant children. The High Court ruled "Adults at Risk" policy on detention of victims of torture was unlawful.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{18 19}



1 / 7 – Free²⁰

Freedom of expression is protected in law, however there are concerns about the increase of government surveillance of citizens.

Section 4: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc.

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)²¹



1 / 7 – Free^{22 23}

The UK and NI regularly holds free elections and political rights are protected in law. In 2016, UK citizens voted to leave the EU, which holds political implications for UK citizens on the status of rights and protections from the EU.

Section 5: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²⁴



Score: 82%, Rank: 8 / 180 – Very little corruption²⁵

Reports of corruption are generally isolated and laws prohibiting corruption are well enforced. In 2016, London held an Anti-Corruption Summit for global leaders to adopt concrete commitments to prevent corruption, end impunity, and to empower and support citizens to report corruption.

Section 6: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Respected²⁶

Various domestic and international human rights groups investigate and publish their reports without government restriction. Parliament has a Joint Committee which investigates human rights matters and legislation affecting human rights in the country.

Section 7: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)²⁷



No threat listed – Limited dangers to minorities²⁸

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented in UK prisons (25% of prisoners are from ethnic minority backgrounds despite making up only 14% of the population)

Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)²⁹



Score: 77.4%, Rank: 15 / 149 – Somewhat unequal rights^{30 31}

Reproductive rights are restricted in NI and abortion remains criminalized. The UK government has yet to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence which it signed in 2012. Women continue to face discrimination in employment.

Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)³²



Score: 37.9%, Rank: 173 / 182 – Highly vulnerable³³

The UK and NI are not respecting the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's (CRC) principle of the 'best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. The UK and NI need to bring their domestic legislation more in line with the CRC.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Largely disrespected^{34 35}

Persons with disabilities are still treated as "second-class citizens" according to the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has criticized the UK for failing to ensure the rights of people with disabilities.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Partially respected³⁶

There is a rise of Islamophobia and anti-immigration sentiment across the UK. Travellers, Roma and persons of Africa, Afro-Caribbean, South Asian and Middle Eastern origin report mistreatment on racial or ethnic grounds.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Partially respected^{37 38 39}

NI remains the only part of the UK to deny same-sex couples the right to marriage. In Scotland, the second most common type of hate crime is against sexual orientation.

Section 8: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Respected⁴⁰

The law provides the rights of workers to form unions, collective bargaining and conduct legal strikes. However, the law does not cover workers in the armed forces, public-sector security services, police forces and freelance or temporary work.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Largely disrespected⁴¹

Although the law prohibits forced and compulsory labour such practices do occur. Forced Labour in the UK involves both foreign and domestic workers in low-skilled, low-paid manual labour sector. These individuals are poor, living on insecure incomes and poor living conditions.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Respected⁴²

UK law prohibits the employment of children under the age of 13 with some exceptions. However, there are legislative gaps in the prohibition of trafficking of children for labour and sexual exploitation in UK territories.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Respected⁴³

A new National Living Wage Law came into effect April 1st, 2017. However, Bermuda's law does not provide for a minimum wage.

Right to employment



4.3% - Reasonable unemployment⁴⁴

The unemployment rate is expected to remain stable

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

³ "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, United Kingdom" UNDP, based on 2017 or the most recent year available. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a “disappearance” is different than simple arbitrary detention because a “disappearance” is considered permanent.

⁶ “United Kingdom Human Rights Report 2017/2018” Retrieved February 19, 2019, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/united-kingdom/report-united-kingdom/>

⁷ “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹⁰ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹¹ “World Press Freedom Index.” Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2018. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://rsf.org/en/united-kingdom>.

¹² “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

¹³ “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

¹⁴ “United Kingdom.” International Religious Freedom Report for 2017. January 1, 2013. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>

¹⁵ “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

¹⁶ “United Kingdom.” World Report 2018: United Kingdom. January 1, 2018. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/201801world_report_web.pdf

¹⁷ “World Report 2018” Human Rights Watch. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019.

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/201801world_report_web.pdf

¹⁸ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁹ Freedom House’s Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed Dec. 9, 2014

<https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²⁰ “United Kingdom.” Freedom in the World 2018: United Kingdom. January 1, 2014. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/united-kingdom>

²¹ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed Dec. 9, 2014 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²² “United Kingdom.” Freedom in the World 2018: United Kingdom. January 1, 2014. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/united-kingdom>

²³ “World Report 2018” Human Rights Watch. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019.

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/201801world_report_web.pdf

²⁴ Transparency International (TI) publishes a “Corruption Perceptions Index” annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²⁵ “United Kingdom.” Corruption by Country. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019.

https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017.

²⁶ “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

²⁷ The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁸ “United Kingdom Human Rights Report 2017/2018” Retrieved February 19, 2019, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/united-kingdom/report-united-kingdom/>

²⁹ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

³⁰ “United Kingdom.” World Economic Forum. January 1, 2018. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf.

³¹ “United Kingdom Human Rights Report 2017/2018” Retrieved February 19, 2019, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/united-kingdom/report-united-kingdom/>

³² This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries

according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

³³ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed Feb. 20, 2019. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

³⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

³⁵ "United Kingdom Human Rights Report 2017/2018" Retrieved February 19, 2019, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/united-kingdom/report-united-kingdom/>

³⁶ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

³⁷ "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁸ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³⁹ "United Kingdom Human Rights Report 2017/2018" Retrieved February 19, 2019, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/united-kingdom/report-united-kingdom/>

⁴⁰ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 United Kingdom." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed Feb. 19, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277477.pdf>

⁴¹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁴² Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁴³ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country

⁴⁴ "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2018. Accessed Feb. 21, 2019. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_615594.pdf