

These are some of the things being said
about the Human Rights Act -

Save

“Charter for criminals and politically correct interest groups”

“Madness of dangerous criminals using the Human Rights Act to evade deportation must end” *Dominic Raab*

our

“The Human Rights Act has created a culture whereby criminals think that their human rights are more important than the right of the general public to feel safe in their communities”. *Daily Express*

“A nation imperilled by the Human Rights Act”. *Daily Mail*

“A charter for criminals and parasites”. *Daily Mail*

“Rights Con. Lawyers using the Human Rights act in bid to help Russian oligarchs dodge sanctions”. *Sun*

“The Sun says: Dominic Raab vows shake—up of ‘bonkers’ human rights legislation”. *Evening Standard*

“Dominic Raab says I’ll stop dangerous criminals abusing Human Rights Act to ‘line their pockets’ “. *Daily Telegraph*

Human

“Scrap the Human Rights Act and take back control” - *Daily Express*

“Scrap the Human Rights Act or more people will die in the Channel”. *Daily Telegraph*

Rights

Act

“The time has come for Britain to tell unelected Strasbourg judges that they have overstepped their authority”. *Daily Mail* [Note: Strasbourg judges are elected]

PTO for the truth

The quotes on the previous page are just a few randomly selected from the hundreds of similar pieces which regularly feature in some sections of our media. These, and other stories, paint a picture of an Act which is universally bad and the sooner it can be done away with the better. Many of the stories are exaggerated however, or involve other legislation and have nothing to do with the HRA. Some stories are simply made up. For example, there was tabloid fury that Denis Nilsen wanted access to pornography claiming it was his right under the act. He wasn't allowed any and the story in the *Mail* was simply untrue.

Theresa May made the famous allegation at the party conference that someone could not be deported because he had a pet cat and the act was to blame. The cat had nothing to do with the ruling which actually centred on faulty decision making at the Home Office.

The government, in the Queen's Speech on 10 May 2022, promised to abolish the act and replace it with a bill of rights. Abolishing the act has been a feature of successive Conservative manifestos.

What is the value of the act?

Amnesty International along with other human rights organisations have produced a list of reasons for keeping the act and the benefits it gives to citizens in the UK. There are too many to list* all but below are a selection:

- ◆ *It protects freedom of the press.* Thames Valley Police were bugging a journalist and gained access to her bank details. They also filmed her at home. A judge ruled that the police had breached her freedom of expression rights, a decision based on the HRA.
- ◆ *The Hillsborough families* were able to use the act to uncover how their 96 loved ones had died. After the tragedy, the families themselves were blamed. They were able to use the act to achieve a proper inquest and reveal the truth about police failings at the match.
- ◆ *It Protects soldiers.* A frequent story put out by the media claims the act is a danger to them. Snatch Land Rovers, deployed in Northern Ireland, were used in Iraq and Afghanistan where they became known as 'mobile coffins'. Families of the 37 soldiers who died in them used the act to challenge the government leading to an apology from the MoD. The vehicles are no longer used.
- ◆ *Challenging failure by the police to investigate sexual violence.* Two victims of the 'black cab rapist' John Worboys challenged the police and the Supreme Court ruled that they had failed to carry out a proper investigation. The case was brought under article 3 of the act.
- ◆ *Proper care in the NHS.* As many as 1,200 people died unnecessarily at Stafford hospital due to the 'appalling' standards of care provided. The families were able, using the HRA, to launch 119 claims against the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust. This forced the government to hold a public enquiry into what went wrong.

These, and many, many other examples show ordinary citizens using the HRA to gain justice, sometimes after years of resistance by government, the police, the Army or other public body. Although these stories are reported in the media, the role of the HRA is downplayed or even omitted altogether. We must defend the act and not allow it to be abolished or watered down.

Produced by the Salisbury Amnesty group www.salisburyai.com.

All stories and quotes accessed on 23 May 2022.

The group welcomes new members.

* The full list can be found at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/campaigns-blog/23-reasons-why-we-need-human-rights-act>

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