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Allister responds to NIHRC Bill of Rights report

10 December 2008

“I will study the detail of the report published today with interest but, as I made clear when the Bill of Rights Forum published their recommendations earlier this year, I reject the principle of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. While the DUP and UUP may agree that Northern Ireland requires such a piece of legislation I do not. Her Majesty’s Government is currently pursuing a Bill of Rights for the UK as a whole. Northern Ireland should not be excluded from this process and treated as a place apart.

“Unionists will doubtless note that the NIHRC met with the Irish Human Rights Commission “on a regular basis”. This would appear to be part of more unwarranted Southern interference in our affairs.

“It is also interesting that the report makes numerous references to so called “cultural rights” and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language. As I have warned in the past, this will be used as cover for additional Irish language provision which will help to dilute the Britishness of Northern Ireland.

“I also note that the report claims that the Programme for Government and the draft Victims and Survivors Strategy “recognises” the special needs of victims. There is no hint that any new Bill will seek to change the outrageous definition currently on the statute books which equates innocent victims with those who were killed or injured while engaged in terrorism.

“I regret that the report offers no protection for the unborn child and states that it would be “inappropriate” for the Bill to make any reference to abortion. How can any Bill claim to enshrine rights when the most vulnerable in our society – the unborn – are left unprotected by its provisions?”

“As for the attempt to promote social agenda issues as something suitable for a Bill of Rights, this is preposterous politicking. These are matters for elected governments to promote and change according to their mandate, they should not be in a Bill of Rights. However, as with the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights these are all set forth as “rights”, when they are patently wholly political issues.”

NI politics

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