**‘Upholding Human Rights in Wales**

Diolch yn fawr/ Thank you for your welcome and the invitation to speak in this new series of lectures on human rights and social justice.

Thank you to Councillor Rob Stewart the Leader of the City and County of Swansea for your opening remarks.

Your inspiring words reflect the commitment you made 2 years ago with your Swansea’s Human Rights City Status declaration, becoming the first City in Wales to achieve this status. We congratulate you, your partners and most of all, your citizens. I applaud the work that was undertaken to reach this goal and the ongoing actions to make this a reality for the people of Swansea.

A role model for local government in Wales.

The First Minister, Mark Drakeford, has joined you each step of the way to celebrate your efforts and he has welcomed the partnerships that you have fostered to make this declaration a reality – with Swansea University helping to embed human rights in activities, training and cultural events.

Can I pause to pay tribute to Mark for his exemplary leadership over the past 5 years. Truly a Titan of Welsh politics. Wales been fortunate with his leadership and commitment to human rights and social justice underpinning his politics and the way he has governed through the most testing of times in the first quarter century of devolution.

In my time with you tonight I want to reflect on the many ways in which we are seeking in Wales to be a Nation that upholds and embraces human rights in our policies, laws, partnerships and culture.

This new lecture series provides an opportunity for reflection on the challenges we face to uphold and sustain human rights and I am grateful to make my contribution tonight as a human rights activist, politician and Minister for Social Justice in the Welsh Government.

It is fitting that this lecture is held at a time when we mark the 75th anniversary of Human Rights Day (10th December). Counsel General Mick Antoniw MS and I published our annual statement last week to celebrate Human Rights Day. We marked the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Humans Rights at a Conference the Welsh Government sponsored at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff organised by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs.

It was on the 10th December 1948 that fifty UN States stood united in their adoption of the Universal Declaration. This ground-breaking commitment introduced fundamental rights and freedoms for every single person into international law. This includes the principle that these rights are indivisible and interdependent. Governments should not be able to pick and choose which rights are respected, something which is being forgotten in the continuing and deeply worrying debate about human rights in the UK, not least with the Rwanda bill.

In my lecture tonight, I will be reflecting on our commitment as a Welsh Government over the past 25 years to embedding human rights in our legislation and culture of policy making.

I will set out the ways we have been challenging the ongoing assault on human rights by the UK Government which have directly undermined our human rights goals here in Wales.

Our goal, which is to consolidate and sustain human rights in Wales, has required us to commit to ‘defending or safeguarding human rights’ over the past decade or so.

We have spent time over the past 2 years opposing the UK government’s attempts to repeal the Human Rights Act with a ‘so called’ Bill of Rights.

Opposition to such a backward step was fierce and widespread not least from the legal profession and academic communities here and across the UK but also from I was pleased to help develop the evidence to oppose the proposed Bill of Rights, consulting with the Race and Disability Equality Forums and the Human Rights Advisory Group.

This Advisory Group, which I co-chair with the Counsel General, has been set up to take forward the recommendations set out in the research report ‘Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human rights’ commissioned by the Welsh Government and led by Professor Simon Hoffman, with colleagues from Bangor University, Diverse Cymru and Young Wales.

A key recommendation for the Welsh Government arising from the research was to undertake preparatory work on options for incorporation of UN Conventions int Welsh law.

A Legislative Options Working sub-Group is now working to scope how we can make progress with our commitment to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRDP) and CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women into Welsh Law.

A feature of our work to oppose the repeal the Human Rights Act has been the evidence we gained through widespread engagement with legal, academic sectors and those with lived experience.

The proposal for a Bill of Rights was dropped more than once, as a result of the frequent ministerial changes in the UK Government a merry-go-round we have all become accustomed to, including those appointed to the post of Justice Secretary. The proposal was finally ditched when Mr Raab, known for his obsession with the Bill, left the government.

However, the attacks on human rights continue at UKG level, pervading the legislation with which we have battling with in recent years. These include the Nationality and Borders Act, the Police, Courts and Sentencing and the Illegal Migration Acts, with more to come as a result of the King’s Speech. The early 2020s will be seen as a remarkable exercise in UK legislative pick n’mix when it comes to human rights.

The first page of the Safety of Rwanda Bill contains the remarkable admission - yet increasingly common – admission by the Home Secretary that he cannot state that the Bill is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. It cheerfully disapplies certain provisions in the Human Rights Act. It has alarmed lawyers, it should alarm all of us.

I stated yesterday in the Senedd how appalled I was that the so called ‘Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration )Bill’ was passed on Tuesday to the next stage in Westminster. I am equally concerned about the announcements of restrictions on the rights of legal migrants which will directly undermine many of our public services in Wales and are likely to be unworkable.

In defending human rights and opposing these laws, we in Wales constantly encounter the impact of the ‘jagged edge’ along the boundary between devolved powers and responsibilities and those of the UK Government. This has been delineated by Dr Robert Jones and Professor Richard Wyn Jones of the Wales Governance Centre in their study of the Welsh criminal justice system and expounded in detail in the Thomas Commission report which makes the case for the devolution of justice to Wales.

It is worth underlining that the founding legislation of Welsh devolution is underpinned by the Human Rights Act. We proudly uphold our unique commitment in the Government of Wales legislation (GOWA)to have due regard to equality of opportunity in our decision making.

All Senedd legislation must be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to be in competence and the Human Rights Act 1998 is a protected enactment under the GOWA meaning that the Senedd cannot modify that Act.

Can I at this point pay tribute to my Senedd colleagues representing Swansea and Gower and remember particularly the contribution of the late Val Feld the member for Swansea West who was a pioneer in the field of human rights.

Former Director of Shelter Cymru and the Equal Opportunities Commission, Val campaigned successfully for the inclusion of that duty in GOWA 1998. We acknowledged her contribution by awarding the first purple plaque honouring remarkable women in Wales on our Senedd wall.

Val was a founding mother of devolution.

She was also visionary in her understanding of how we engage and involve with people suffering failings in our responsibilities towards upholding of human rights.

The responsibility for those ‘in power’ in elected and executive positions to uphold human rights has never been greater.

This has to be a ‘whole government’ commitment interacting across social justice, education, health and social care, housing, climate change and constitutional affairs portfolios.

Safeguarding human rights? Upholding and enhancing human rights? We are working on all fronts. We are defending human rights in relation to UK policies, legislation and continuing austerity measures but also focusing on what we can do with our powers and responsibilities to promote and embed human rights in all we do in government.

In the words of the First Minister, our vision in the Welsh Government remains ‘to actively safeguard and promote equality and human rights to all individuals and all communities in every part of Wales, with no exception’.

To fulfil that vision we work with our schools, communities, workplaces, trade unions, further education colleges and universities to grasp that understanding of what we need to do to safeguard and uphold human rights in Wales. It was great to meet the human rights defenders in the Temple of Peace last week, ambassadors for older people , refugees and many others.

You will note how I have spoken about a range of Forums and advisory Groups we are working with in the field of equality and human rights.

We are actively seeking to safeguard and uphold human rights by engaging with groups and people with ‘lived experience’ and their representatives: to learn from peoples’ daily lives of how the delivery of services, implementation of policies and budgetary decisions impact on their human rights.

I believe this has helped us to make the case to defend human rights but also to develop new policies and laws for which we have the powers to enact.

As a Welsh Government we are committed to promoting and upholding human rights for children and young people, black, asian and ethnic minorities, disabled people and the LGBTQ+ community as well as those who are impacted by homelessness, climate change, migration, punitive welfare cuts and the impact of austerity on public services.

I was able to engage with people who have experienced discrimination and poverty when I met with the Swansea Poverty Commission and heard first hand what people ‘in poverty’ felt we should be doing to safeguard and promote their human rights.

This engagement also helped us understand how we implement and monitor the Equality Act 2010 socio economic duty enacted by the Welsh Government in 2021 as we consider the impact of our decisions in tackling poverty and inequality as a result of socio economic status, of class, as well as protected characteristics. The socio economic duty helps us deliver and monitor policies through this wider lens.

I now want to give some examples of how we have sought to uphold the human rights of some of the most marginalised people in Wales.

When the Police, Courts and Sentencing Bill was proceeding through Westminster in 2021-22, I met with the Race Equality Forum to discuss the impact the proposed legislation could have on the human rights of gypsy, Roma and traveller people and communities. These were punitive measures to criminalise travellers staying temporarily on unauthorised sites in Wales when transit stops are made for journeys to festivals and family visits.

We have a responsibility under the Housing Act 2014 to provide transit sites and we are working with local authorities locally and regionally to establish sites.

In accordance with the Sewel convention (whereby any piece of UK legislation which impacts on our powers is subject to a Legislative Consent Motion) we debated this in the Senedd and the Motion was opposed.

Moving the motion to oppose the Police, Courts and Sentencing Bill, I told the Senedd that I had asked the UK Government to reconsider their approach in the Bill on unauthorised encampments. I described this as a sledgehammer approach that will impact ‘disproportionately’ on members of our Gypsy and Traveller communities.

As has happened on a number of occasions with LCMs on UK government legislation, they took no notice and the law was passed unamended, undermining the human rights of gypsy, roma, traveller people. Despite the threat of this new law we have been working with our policing colleagues and local government in Wales developing a protocol for working together to ensure that, if circumstances arise, we can engage with the community and manage the transit patterns.

Last month I met with Torfaen Councillor Sue Malson appointed as Champion for Gypsies and Travellers in the County. She proudly declared her gypsy traveller heritage and provided advice and guidance on the reasons why we need to provide these transit sites. We are now addressing this in the Gwent Public Service Board to find a way forward which I hope will be mirrored across Wales with local authorities appointing champions like Councillor Malson for their gypsy, roma, traveller communities.

The needs and experiences of the gipsy and traveller community are addressed in our Anti Racist Wales Action Plan which we developed with black, Asian and minority ethnic people across Wales and is now in the second year of implementation.

The Welsh Government is committed to creating an anti-racist nation. Launched in June 2022, it is built on the vales of anti-racism and calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequality. The first year was used for developing a strong governance structure upon which cultural and systemic anti-racist change can be built.

The Anti Racist Action Plan (ARWAP) also came about because of our response to the Covid-19 pandemic. During those early weeks of the pandemic we became aware of the deepening inequalities and disproportionate impact of Coronavirus on black, Asian and ethnic minority people.

When Race Council Cymru wrote to the First Minister about the growing awareness of the illness and loss of life amongst Black and ethnic minority people in the early weeks of the pandemic, especially in the NHS, we worked with key professionals and experts in the community to address this. This lead to the development of the Workforce risk assessment tool and the report on the socio economic impacts of Covid-19 on the community.

Led by Judge Ray Singh, Professors Keshav Singhal, Emmanuel Ogbonna and Uzo Uwobi we set up a number of advisory groups to address the structural inequalities that were all too clear. Following the horrific killing of George Floyd we engaged with Black Lives Matters groups in Wales. There was a growing recognition that a ‘Race Equality Plan’ would not be good enough.

We commissioned Gaynor Legall, the first black Cardiff city councillor to undertake a review of monuments and street names associated with the Slave Trade.

The First Minister also instigated a review of the curriculum by Professor Charlotte Williams leading to the mandatory inclusion of black history in our curriculum now being implemented across Wales. During the development of the Plan the unveiling of the statue of Betty Campbell MBE the first black head teacher in Wales at Mount Stuart Square School, took place in the centre of Cardiff.

I’ll pause to say something about the unveiling of the statue in September 2021. The pandemic was lifting and the gathering together in person of so many supporters, activists, family members of Betty Campbell and her Butetown community was remarkable.

Whilst I have spoken of challenge and attacks on human rights we must also acknowledge public support for human rights. Only last week a poll released ahead of International Human Rights Day showed strong support for human rights protections in Wales.

This public support was exemplified in the response to the commissioning of the Betty Campbell statue. This came about as a result of the Monumental Women Campaign identifying historic Welsh women in their plans to commission statues across Wales. Betty was in a shortlist of 5 from 50 hidden women heroes in a BBC poll.

Thousands voted in that poll and they voted for Betty Campbell to be the first statue to be commissioned.

Betty Campbell campaigned all her adult life for black history to be a mandatory part of the curriculum. That has now come about in Cynefin which is being implemented in all schools in Wales.

Speaking about the new curriculum it is helpful to reflect on the commitment to human rights as a cross cutting theme with one of the four purposes of the new curriculum that all learners will become ethical, informed citizens .

Understanding human rights and the sources of these rights forms part of this, including learning about the UNCRC and the UNCRPD; the development of values, attitude and behaviours that reflect human rights values.

This is fundamental to the curriculum cross cutting theme of celebrating diversity. I would like to applaud the work of the Diversity Anti Racist Practice Learning (DARPL) being undertaken with over 20,000 teachers is making a positive impact in helping build the cultural change that is necessary to underpin the Anti racist Wales Action Plan.

In launching the Anti racist Wales Action Plan we were responding to the call to move from rhetoric into meaningful anti racist action across government and society in Wales and education is at the heart of the change we need.

There was equally a call for a new form of accountability over and above the scrutiny in the Senedd and this is fundamental if we are to fill the ‘implementation gap’ that so often follows good policy intentions, plans and strategies. This is essential if we are to fulfil our commitment towards advancing equality and strengthening human rights in a meaningful way.

The governance structure for the Anti racist Wales action plan is key to this. It is centred on an External Accountability Group with 8 external experts on anti racism and eleven community representatives with lived experience.

Co-chaired by Professor Ogbonna and the Permanent Secretary Dr Andrew Goodall it signals the determination and commitment of the Welsh Government to an anti racist Wales. The ARWAP Implementation team drives this agenda led by Riaz Hassan with sub groups to ensure those with lived experiences influence the policy developments taking place across the Government.

One of the first recommendations of the socio economic report published during the pandemic was to set up a Race Disparity Unit in the Welsh Government. We set up this up as part of a new Equality Evidence and disability rights unit at the heart of our civil services. The teams are working closely to develop a framework to enable us and the outside world to measure meaningful, on the ground impact of anti racist goals and actions.

Our commitment to delivering the Plan includes engaging with local authorities and who are themselves responding with their own delivery of the Plan and I now regularly meet the equality leads of Welsh local authorities to discuss our progress together.

We know racism does not exist in isolation. We are developing an intersectional approach taking into account the many factors, gender, sexuality and socio economic statis that combine to affect outcomes.

We welcome rigorous monitoring of our delivery and implementation of the Anti Racist Wales Action Plan in every aspect of life, in every sector, in the everyday lives of every black and ethnic minority person, in the delivery of our public services, in employment, in representation in positions of power.

I now turn to our commitments as a Government to supporting sanctuary seekers and migrants in Wales and our ambitions to become a Nation of Sanctuary welcoming those sanctuary seekers fleeing conflict and persecution across the world but more recently from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Can I applaud Swansea for achieving City of Sanctuary status and the universities, college and schools who are playing their part in the Cities of Sanctuary movement. We have a long way to go and we are limited by our powers but we seek to support those who have faced the impact of the hostile environment created by the UK Government over the past 13 years. Last month I met Vicky Tennant the UNHCR UK Representative to update her on progress with refreshing the Nation of Sanctuary Plan endorsed by the UNHCR when it was launched in 2019.

Alongside these positive developments in the way we are seeking to embed human rights in our policy making approach and delivery we have been on a twin track of defending the human rights of our sanctuary seekers and migrants. human rights.

The Nationality and Borders and Illegal Migration Acts passed through Westminster trod again on the human rights of sanctuary seekers, but also on the devolution settlement without any care for the consequences.

We opposed this legislation in the Senedd. The Nationality and Borders Act fundamentally undermines our nation of sanctuary vision and in our response to the Act’s provisions debated in the Senedd, the Counsel General and I stated we believed it breached international conventions, violated basic principles of Justice and I quote . ‘will place ultimately extreme and insurmountable conditions on people who seek our protection.’

Specifically the Act now enacted does not recognise the devolved context of Wales and confers powers of the Secretary of State to make regulations imposing functions on our local authorities in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. In Wales we treat all unaccompanied asylum seeking children as looked after children and this is set out in Welsh law in the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014.

Our policy position arises from our commitment to the UNCRC to act in the best interests of children. So the UK Government has sought to override our non invasive method of assessing the age of our unaccompanied asylum seeking children, usurping Welsh law and practice.

The Illegal Migration Act, which swiftly followed for debate was challenged in Westminster with the Joint Committee on Human Rights setting out that the Bill provisions were not compatible with European Convention on Human Rights or numerous other binding legal obligations in relation to modern slavery and the refugee convention.

Again provisions in the Act would override the powers of Welsh local authorities giving the Home Secretary the power to remove children from the care of Welsh social services with possible detention and deportation as well as removing the right of appeal over age assessment decisions and treating young people as adults if they refuse to participate in potentially harmful and unproven ‘so called’ scientific methods of age assessment.

The Act included provisions to amend Senedd Cymru legislation as a result of UK Government decisions taken to exempt particular cohorts of people from the new duty to remove them from the UK. This could mean cohorts being exempted from a duty to be removed from the UK but Welsh Government being prevented from providing the services we think are needed.

Our partners in local government joined us in opposition his legislation reporting that it would mean that local authorities would have the challenge of navigating two statutory but conflicting approaches to age assessment as they seek to fulfil their duties.

We stand by our view which is also the view of the UK Refugee Agency that the 2023 Illegal Migration Act and the latest Rwanda Bill amount to a ban on claiming asylum in the UK. We also made the point as we have done repeatedly that sufficient safe and legal routes to protection in the UK must now be progressed and implemented for a humane and workable migration policy.

I want to use the opportunity tonight to reflect on our progress and history in upholding children’s rights in Wales. Swansea University is at the forefront of the Children’s Rights agenda with the Observatory for Childrens Rights co-founded by Professors Jane Williams and Simon Hoffman.

The 20th November was Children’s Rights Day marking the thirty first anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

My colleague Julie Morgan MS a pioneer and champion of children’s rights in Wales made a Senedd statement about this important anniversary reminding us of the Rights of the Child Measure we passed in 2011 which has underpinned our policy and legislative programmes over the past 2 decades.

In the early days of the National Assembly I was the Health and Social Services Minister responsible for children’s services in Wales when the Waterhouse report was published in response to the scandal of abuse in children’s homes.

The appointment of an independent Childrens Commissioner for Wales was the first recommendation of the Waterhouse report. Can I take the opportunity to praise the longstanding work and commitment of Voices from Care Cymru who worked alongside us with care experienced young people to appoint the first Childrens Commissioner in Wales involving care experienced young people in the appointment.

Can I thank each one of the Children’s Commissioners in Wales for the role they have played in upholding Childrens Rights in Wales.

Arguably one of the most important pieces of human rights legislation we have passed in the Senedd has been the Removal of the Defence of Reasonable Chastisement Act (2020) giving children the same protection as adults again led by Julie Morgan who campaigned and worked for this prior to taking this successfully through the Senedd.

As she said in her statement to the Senedd,

‘Listening to, hearing and acting on the views of children and young people is at the heart of our approach.’

Adhering to the UNCRC must be monitored and the recent publication of ‘The Children’s Rights Compliance Report reflects how the Welsh Government is meeting its duties to have due regard to the Convention.

Six young Wales UN Researchers who gave evidence to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva. The UN Committee welcomed our extension of voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds and our progress in delivering on the child’s right to play.

We are impatient to make progress across a range of human rights obligations and needs. Held back by ever deepening UK Government austerity measures; increasing centralisation to Westminster and refusal to contemplate extension of powers in the field of justice by this Government, we are constrained by these restrictions in our journey to make Wales a fairer nation.

The Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023 was published last month Is Wales Fairer?

The EHRC reports a mixed picture with some areas of progress including a greater diversity in public appointments, a narrowing of the gender pay gap and a narrowing of employment gap between disabled and non disabled people.

There is also a welcome for ‘the commitments made by the Welsh Government to address the persistent inequalities in their Anti Racist Wales Action Plan, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan and the forthcoming Disability Equality Action Plan’.

We are only too aware of the challenges highlighted in the Monitor. It provides a helpful overview for the people of Wales to help us assess our priorities and ambitions through the EHRC lens.

In our journey towards the consolidation a of human rights in policy and practice in Wales we have been working on a number of equality Action Plans including the LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

In April the United Nations and its independent Expert Panel on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity recognised the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales as ‘an example of good practice in human rights policy making.’

Our Disability Rights Taskforce is working across a number of policy areas with disabled people and organisations to respond to the in collaboration with Ministers, local government and the NHS with the overall objective of embedding the social model of disability across Wales and engaging with people with lived experience to co-produce recommendations for an updated Disability Action Plan.

Last week I made a statement in the Senedd to mark the International Day of Disabled People updating Senedd Members on the progress of our Disability Rights Taskforce.

The theme for this year is ‘united in action to rescue and achieve the sustainable development goals for, with and by disabled people. It is worth remembering that we are the only nation – so far – to have translated the UN Sustainable Development Goals into law.

This aligns with the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015. Through the Act we have a framework for Wales future: a Wales that is economically, socially and environmentally just, and a Wales we would want our children and grandchildren to inherit from us.

But there are challenges to deliver on these goals. In the development of our equality plans we have been addressing the ‘implementation gap’ between policy and delivery. An understanding of how we address this is fundamental to the delivery of a government committed to strengthening and advancing human rights.

Cross government action and the engagement of people with lived experience at the heart of policy making is vital but this has to be embedded in a new civil service/public service culture and learning. So our senior civil servants now have to have a performance objective on anti racism and the social model of disability.

A recent witness to the Equality and Social Justice Committee commented that the delivery of the anti racist action plan would come first and foremost through cultural change. I think there is a real question here for consideration - how can we sustain and embed human rights in Wales by getting that cultural change to permeate all our institutions and systems and our society through legislative and non legislative actions?

I want to finish by reflecting on one of the most important human rights challenges that we face in Wales and globally and that is the ongoing and deepening scourge of violence against women and girls in the home, the workplace and the street.

I came into politics from my involvement in the women’s movement of the 1970’s and helped set up the first women’s aid refuge in Wales in Cardiff, going on to coordinate the development of refuges across Wales.

Yet, the statistics show how violence against women and girls continues seemingly unabated. In the year ending March 2020 police recorded crime data showed that almost half (46%) of adult female homicide victims in England and Wales (81 women) were killed in a domestic homicide.

I am now the Social Justice minister responsible for our VAWDASV strategy based on the groundbreaking legislation of 2015 the Violence against Women domestic abuse and sexual violence act. Still in the first decade of implementation we have joined with criminal justice partners with a blueprint for change led by survivors and independent advisers to break this cycle of violence.

In 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government recognised that Violence against Women and Girls is ‘ one of the most pervasive human rights violations and has damaging consequences for the welfare of women and girls preventing them from full participation in society.’

Human Rights Day marks the end of the 16 days of activism and I am glad to acknowledge here tonight that we have much more we need to do with laws, policies and funding in place, to address this violation of human rights.

I have sought tonight to highlight our progress in sustaining and embedding human rights at the centre of our work in Welsh Government. We reported in October on What the Welsh Government has done to support and improve human rights in Wales over the past 5 years and I have covered many but not all of the accounts of our achievements and challenges. Devolution has given us the opportunity in Wales to shape the sort of Wales we want – fairer, more sustainable upholding human rights and we embrace that responsibility.

The people of Wales will judge us on our merits and delivery of our ambitions.

I think we have moved forward in the past 5 years to expand the sphere of influence engaging with our citizens in our policy making to the people of Wales.

We continue to work with our academic and policy communities in developing and upholding human rights as we seek to explore the scope for a Human Rights law for Wales and the incorporation of UN Conventions into Welsh Law.

I have spoken of the challenges and assaults on human rights tonight but I have also spoken of the new ways of working, new ways to gather evidence and learning. I hope I have reflected the voices, experiences as well as needs of people with whom we seek to consolidate and sustain human rights.

I would like to leave us with a positive message of support for human rights. After an attack on the UN Refugee Convention by former Home Secretary Suella Braverman in September this year, Amnesty International commissioned a Poll which revealed that a clear majority of people in the UK don’t want to leave the European human rights convention.

This was backed up in Wales in the Amnesty poll carried out last week, already mentioned, showing that withdrawal from the ECHR would not be supported by 60% of Welsh adults. Let us have faith in the people of Wales for upholding human rights.

There is an old Welsh saying which I think sums up our approach to human rights in Wales:

‘Mewn undod mae nerth’ Simply it means ‘in unity there is strength’.

We must speak up, stand up, shoulder responsibilities and take action to sustain and uphold human rights here and globally. Let’s re commit ourselves to this goal today.

Diolch yn fawr