

Summary of substantive policy discussions
at Liberty Council meeting
October 2011

The Human Rights debate since the August riots

Since the riots in England in August, attacks on the Human Rights Act by senior Government figures have become more frequent, more aggressive and more dishonest. In the wake of the Prime Minister's public statements attacking the post-war human rights framework, the meeting discussed the need to decouple criminal actions during the disorder and the protection of fundamental rights.

With regard to the immediate trigger for the unrest, concern was raised about the fact that the IPCC made a serious error in releasing inaccurate information indicating that there had been an exchange of fire before Mark Duggan was shot by police.

With regard to the fall-out, concern was also raised about proposals to evict whole families from social housing where one family member was involved in the riots. It was noted that this constitutes a double punishment for some people and an entirely unjustified punishment of often vulnerable family members.

The meeting noted that the police response to the riots was largely proportionate. The difference in the reactions of the police and the reaction of senior politicians demonstrates the importance of maintaining police independence.