

Briefing Document for Members of Parliament

Subject: Comprehensive Analysis of Proposed Amendments to International Health Regulations (IHR)

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Author:

[Save Our Rights UK](#) are a UK based Human Rights Organisation that engages members of the public about all Human Rights Issues in current and upcoming legislation.

Background:

The World Health Organization (WHO) is in the process of negotiating amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR). These proposed changes have sparked significant concerns regarding their potential impact on national sovereignty, individual rights, and the established framework of human rights.

These are due to be voted upon at the next World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2024. Under the rules and regulations of the Working Group for Amendments to the International Health Regulations (WGIHR) these proposals must be finalised and communicated to all State Parties at least four months before they are presented to the WHA. Thus enabling the State Parties to give them full consideration. However the WGIHR has stated that they will not be published in Jan but they will continue working on them until the WHA in May, giving no prior oversight of the finalised draft amendments.

However we believe that it is worth noting some aspects of previous drafts:

Director General's Statement on Sovereignty:

- The WHO Director General has asserted that no country would cede sovereignty to WHO, a claim that appears inconsistent with the proposed amendments' potential to transfer decision-making power to WHO.

Transfer of Decision-Making Power:

- The amendments could grant the WHO Director General sole authority to decide when and where to apply certain powers, particularly during significant disease outbreaks or health emergencies.

Binding Nature under International Law:

- Proposed amendments aim to be binding under international law, challenging the notion that national sovereignty will remain intact.

Impact on Rights and Sovereignty:

- There is a potential for external control over societal functions and basic rights, posing a threat to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Specific Articles of Concern:

- **Article 18:** Recommends measures that infringe on basic human rights.
- **Article 42:** Requires States Parties to enact WHO recommendations, affecting non-State entities within their jurisdiction.
- **New Article 13A and Amendment to Article 1:** Could make IHR recommendations binding, thereby transferring sovereignty to WHO
- **Article 3:** Removes the phrase “full respect for the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons.”

All of these amendments and more can be found in this document published by the WGIHR - [WGIHR Compilation-en.pdf \(who.int\)](#)

Furthermore:

Potential WHO Pandemic Agreement:

- A new WHO governance structure for managing pandemics may enforce new funding requirements and operational control, limiting free speech and opposition to WHO measures.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The proposed amendments, particularly the troubling change to Article 3, raise serious concerns about the erosion of sovereignty and human rights protections. It is essential for MPs to:

- Rigorously scrutinise the implications of these amendments, especially the removal of human rights language from Article 3.
- Advocate for the retention of explicit human rights protections within the IHR framework.
- Ensure that any international health agreement reaffirms the commitment to human rights and democratic principles.
- Question the motivations behind the amendments and consider their broader impact on governance, the rule of law, and citizens' rights.
- To not agree to adopt any amendments which would have negative implications for citizens of the UK.

MPs must engage in informed decision-making and debate to ensure that public health measures bolster, rather than undermine, human rights protections and national sovereignty.

Vote in Favour of the Petition:

While we cannot know in full what amendments will be brought to the WHA 2024 now, it is clear from previous drafts that they will be significant in number and consequence.

Therefore please vote in favour of the petition to ensure that after the amendments are brought to the WHA 2024 that all politicians are enabled to have their say, and to represent their constituents, by having a debate and vote on whether to adopt or reject any of the finalised amendments.