
MEDIA RELEASE! MEDIA RELEASE!

UN Human Rights Office calls for withdrawal of anti-protest bill

Wednesday 10th September 2014

Three United Nations human rights experts have called on the Tasmanian Government to withdraw its proposed anti-protest laws. In a statement released late yesterday the Special Rapporteurs expressed their concern at the Bill, including the likelihood that it would have the “chilling effect of silencing dissenters and outlawing speech protected by international human rights law”.

According to Benedict Bartl, Policy Officer with Community Legal Centres Tasmania:

We call on the Government to withdraw this Bill. Not only have a number of law experts expressed their concern at the constitutional validity of this Bill but now the United Nations has also drawn attention to the likely violations of international human rights law.

Last month a coalition of diverse community groups wrote to the United Nations Human Rights Office outlining their concerns at the proposed introduction of the *Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Bill 2014*. The groups called on three Special Rapporteurs to investigate the incompatibility of the Bill with obligations under international human rights law. Late yesterday the Special Rapporteurs responded.

Benedict Bartl said:

In the opinion of three United Nations human rights experts the proposed anti-protest Bill is disproportionate and unnecessary and could have the effect of silencing legitimate and lawful protest. With existing legislation already in place providing protection to businesses from potentially invasive protest activity we urge the Government to acknowledge community concern and withdraw the Bill.

A copy of the UN Press Release is available here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/newssearch.aspx?NTID=PRS>

A copy of the urgent appeal sent to the three special rapporteurs is available here:

<http://www.clctas.org.au/2014/08/un-human-rights-office-asked-to-investigate-protesting-laws/>

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Benedict Bartl is available for media comment before 11:00a.m. and after 2:00p.m.
