



Irish Council for  
**Civil Liberties**

## Monitoring human rights during the pandemic

Update 1: 13-20 March

### Covid-19-related advocacy work

#### Call for a human rights-based response

We called for a [human rights-based response](#) to the pandemic as the most effective way to protect everyone in society, particularly the most at-risk. We underlined the need for consideration to be given to residents or detainees in congregated settings such as hostels, halting sites, direct provision and emergency accommodation centres, and prisons.

While we agreed that rights can be restricted for public health reasons, these restrictions should be time-limited, and must meet certain necessity, legality and proportionality requirements.

#### ICCL Submission on the Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Bill 2020

We released a media statement [emphasising](#) the need for a sunset clause in any emergency legislation introduced that limits human rights. We made a [comprehensive submission](#) to all TDs and Senators ahead of parliamentary debates of this Bill setting out five main sets of recommendations.

ICCL supports the need for extraordinary governmental measures in these extraordinary times. However, we all need to be assured that when the emergency has passed this legislation, which foresees a significant interference with our rights, will also pass out of existence. And we need to know that there are safeguards to prevent abuse of the extraordinary powers which will be introduced by this legislation.

As a result of this work, a sunset clause of 9 November was included in the legislation.

#### Call for an end to the Public Services Card requirement

We appealed to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) for a **Public Services Card** [to suspend the unnecessary requirement](#) for the thousands of applicants seeking social welfare support in the face of the COVID-

19 pandemic. We urged the Minister to set aside the unnecessary and unsafe PSC requirement for all applicants during Covid-19 and ensure that workers can urgently access the supports they need in this time of crisis.

### **Other Media Engagement and Coverage**

Executive Director Liam Herrick spoke to Morning Ireland on 18 March, and [Newstalk](#). [local radio](#) stations also covered the call for a sunset clause. Read sample print coverage in [The Journal](#), the [Examiner](#), The [Irish Times](#), and [local print](#).

Our Senior Research and Policy Officer Doireann Ansbro provided an expert legal analysis of the emergency COVID19 legislation on the [Echo Chamber](#) podcast.