

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARTIN**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 5th APRIL 2005

Question

Following the tabling by Austin Mitchell M.P. of an Early Day Motion calling for an inquiry to determine the extent to which the Channel Islands are compliant with human rights obligations, would the President advise whether the Island authorities acknowledged the M.P.'s interest, whether the Committee supports this call and, if not, whether the Committee considers that an inquiry of this type for Jersey should be undertaken by the States?

Answer

The early day motion tabled by Mr. Mitchell M.P., proposed –

‘that the governments in the Channel Islands remain reluctant to achieve, still less enforce, even minimal standards of human rights compliance and that the inhabitants of these British territories are denied the protection of international treaty and convention obligations ...’

These statements are so obviously untrue that I have no hesitation in absolutely refuting them. To suggest that the residents of Jersey are denied access to even minimal standards of human rights is simply unbelievable. The facts are that Jersey has been signed up to and compliant with many international conventions and treaties on human rights for many years. Jersey has been included in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms since 1953; the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination since 1969; the European Convention against Torture since 1988; the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights since 1976, and I could go on.

Mr. Mitchell's misguided motion was opposed by the United Kingdom Government. The Committee's response to the Deputy of St. Martin is also an unequivocal 'no' – The Committee will not acknowledge that a member of the British Parliament has a legitimate interest in the supervision of Jersey's international obligations on human rights 'no' – The Committee does not support the call for an enquiry of any sort by the U.K. government into a matter that is within the competence of Jersey's authorities and 'no' – The Committee does not support a call for an inquiry by the States on this matter.