

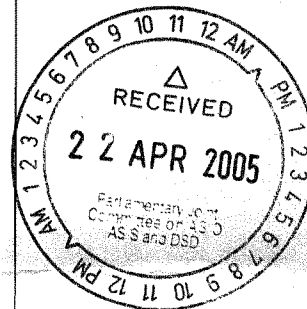
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Date Received: 22-4-05
Secretary:

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The Secretary
Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir or Madam Secretary,

Re: Review of Division 3 of Part III of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979.

I am the chairman of the Human Rights Coalition. It is a body in South Australia representing various community organisations and individuals who are dedicated to educating people about human rights and the need for legislation to protect them.

It is the view of the Coalition that when Parliament is reviewing the ASIO Act there should be in place human rights legislation against which changes to the ASIO Act should be balanced. As you are aware all other Western Countries whose legal systems are grounded in English common law have adopted a domestic Bill of Rights, eg Canada, New Zealand, the USA, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Without a Bill of Rights there is no domestic reference point or mechanism, judicial or otherwise, for determining whether rights have been unduly undermined by national security laws.

As a result there is no check upon the power of Parliament to abrogate human rights and it is left to the goodwill of politicians to do. This check is not effective and underlines the need for a Bill of Rights in Australia.

Yours sincerely

John Harley
Chairman
Human Rights Coalition