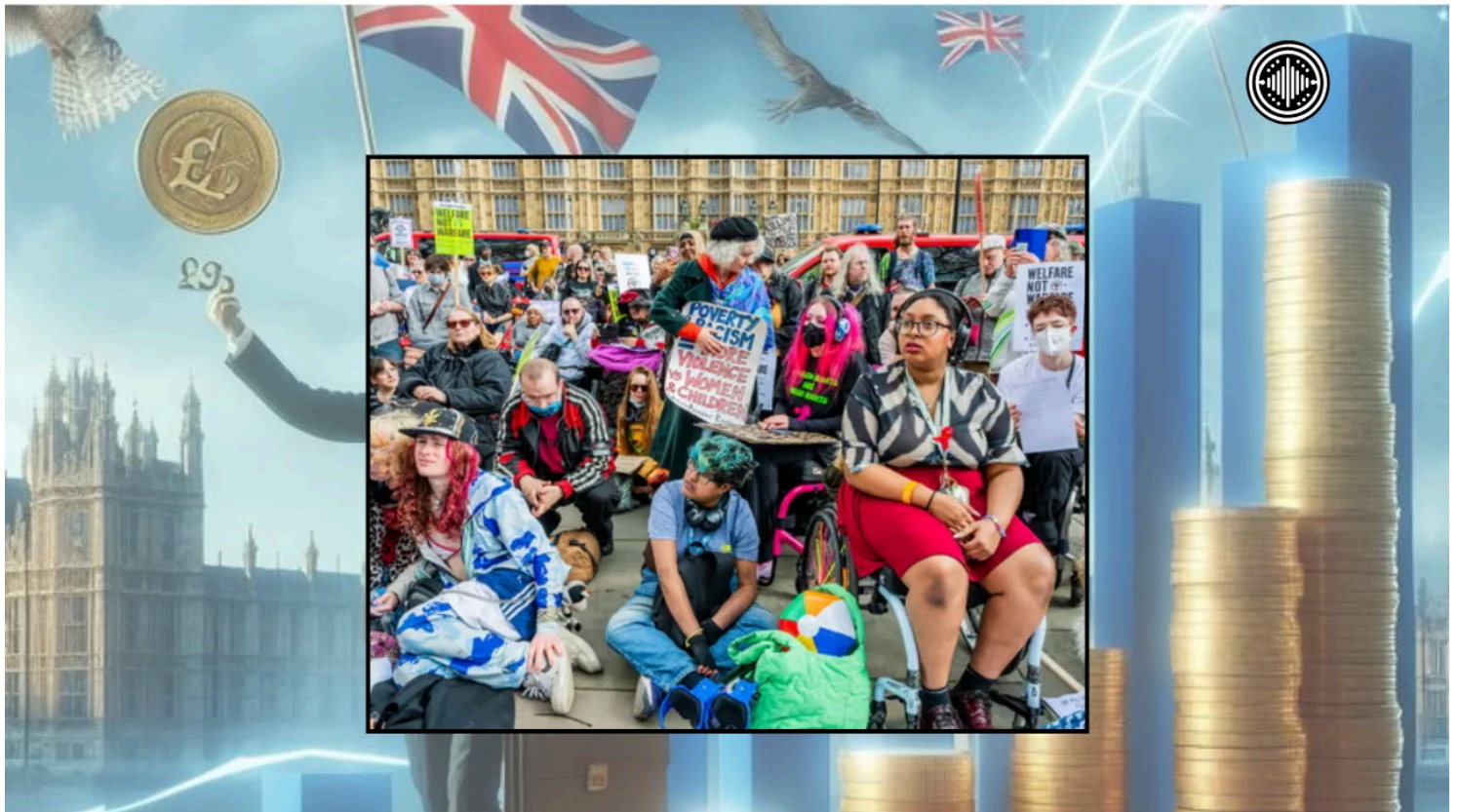


UN Raises Alarm Over Labour's Welfare Reforms

July 9, 2025

— Categories: Human Rights



A United Nations (UN) committee has warned that the UK's proposed welfare reforms could deepen poverty and reduce protections for disabled people. The warning comes as Labour's welfare bill faces criticism both at home and abroad for potentially undermining hard-won disability rights.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has formally raised concerns with the UK government, warning that proposed changes to welfare policy risk pushing vulnerable individuals further into poverty. In a detailed letter, the UN panel requested urgent clarification on the potential impact of the Welfare Reform Bill, which is being spearheaded by the Labour government. The committee has asked for a full government response by 11 August ahead of its September session.

This intervention comes just weeks after Labour was forced into a partial retreat over controversial plans to cut Personal Independence Payment (PIP), a benefit aimed at helping disabled people with extra living costs. Although those cuts were withdrawn following a significant backbench rebellion, concerns remain over the broader reform package, including its implications for Universal Credit and parliamentary scrutiny.

The UN committee described the reforms as potentially “retrogressive” and questioned whether adequate consultation with disabled people had taken place before drafting the bill. It also condemned inflammatory political rhetoric that paints benefit claimants, particularly disabled people, as burdens, warning such language contributes to a toxic environment and erodes public empathy.

The Department for Work and Pensions has insisted that the bill is designed to modernise a system that has become inefficient and

unsustainable. A spokesperson stated that the ongoing review into PIP aims to ensure the system continues to provide support where it is genuinely needed, while preventing misuse of taxpayer resources.

However, critics argue that the Labour government has failed to produce sufficient evidence that its reforms will improve outcomes. While ministers claim the measures will eventually lift 50,000 people out of poverty by 2030, independent analysis has warned that hundreds of thousands could be left worse off, especially as eligibility criteria tighten and access becomes more conditional.

One of the more troubling aspects, according to legal observers, is the potential use of a 'money bill' designation for the legislation, which would prevent the House of Lords from meaningfully challenging or amending the reforms. Campaigners say this tactic undermines democratic accountability.

Disability rights groups have welcomed the UN's intervention, viewing it as a timely reminder that international obligations must not be cast aside for short-term political gain. As the bill heads back to Parliament, pressure is mounting on Labour ministers to address these failings or risk a formal breach of the United Kingdom's commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.