



Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

I. Background

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a new human rights mechanism, which allows the United Nations Human Rights Council to periodically review all the Member States (countries) of the United Nations on their fulfillment of human rights obligations and commitments. The Human Rights Council is made up of 47 seats distributed among the United Nation's regional groups, and recently elected the United States to serve a three-year term starting in June 2009.

Unlike the review process of the treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the UPR is a peer review conducted by delegates from other countries who comprise the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council. In other words, it is not conducted by independent experts (as in treaty reviews). The actual UPR review is a three-hour interactive dialogue between the country under review and the Member and Observer States of the Human Rights Council. The UPR is based on the [Charter of the United Nations](#), the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#), all [treaties and international humanitarian law](#).

The UPR takes place in three two-week sessions each year, with 16 countries reviewed per session. All 192 Member States are expected to be reviewed by the end of 2011. **The United States is scheduled for its first periodic review at the ninth session of the UPR Working Group on November 26, 2010. Stakeholders' submissions must be sent in by April 19, 2010 at 6:00am New York time (EST) - 12:00pm Geneva time (CET). The official United States Government report for the UPR is due by September 2010.** To find out when your country is up for a periodic review or to view the full cycle calendar, click [here](#).

II. Review Process

The UPR operates on a four-year cycle and is based on three main forms of written documentation:

1. **A state report by the country under review**, which cannot exceed 20 pages and should be submitted six weeks prior to the review;
2. **A report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** that compiles information from United Nations documents outlining the country under review's record of implementing human rights obligations, which cannot exceed 10 pages;
3. **A summary of stakeholders' submissions by the OHCHR**, which cannot exceed 10 pages. Stakeholders include NGOs, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), human rights defenders, academic institutions and research institutes, regional organizations, as well as other civil society representatives. **NGO submissions should be no more than 5 pages for individual organizations and no more than 10 pages for joint submissions.**

The review will be conducted by the UPR Working Group. Each country's review is facilitated by a group of three rapporteurs, the troika, which also assists in the preparation of an outcome document. After the UPR Working Group completes this document, the Human Rights Council as a whole considers and adopts the UPR outcome. The final step in the process is a follow-up on implementation of recommendations in each country's UPR outcome document. Each country may indicate which recommendations it supports and these, among other things, will serve as the basis for future review cycles.

III. NGO Participation

Participation of all relevant stakeholders including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is important. NGOs in consultative relationship with ECOSOC may attend sessions of the UPR Working Group. However, there is no provision for such NGOs to take the floor or submit written information at these sessions. NGOs in consultative relationship with ECOSOC may also participate in regular sessions of the Human Rights Council, at which UPR outcomes are considered and adopted, and may make brief general comments before the adoption of outcome documents by the Human Rights Council. *For notes on NGO accreditation to sessions of the UPR working group click [here](#).

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide written submissions that:

- Are specifically tailored for the UPR;
- Contain credible and reliable information on the country under review;
- Highlight the main issues of concern and identify possible recommendations and/or best practices;
- Cover a maximum four-year time period;
- Do not contain language manifestly abusive;
- Are no longer than 5 pages in the case of individual submissions, to which additional documentation can be annexed for reference. Submissions by large coalitions of stakeholders can be up to 10 pages.

Additional Tips:

- 1) Take into consideration all human rights obligations and commitments to which the country under review is a party, voluntary pledges and commitments made by that country, as well as applicable international humanitarian law.
- 2) Draw attention to specific conclusions and recommendations made by international and regional human rights mechanisms, and refer to the extent of implementation. Please avoid listing all conclusions and recommendations.
- 3) Highlight achievements and challenges of the country under review regarding human rights.
- 4) Stakeholders are encouraged to consult with one another at the national level for the preparation of the UPR submissions. Joint submissions by a large number of stakeholders are encouraged.
- 5) Please note that the UPR mechanism does not provide for confidentiality and is conducted on the basis of public documents.

Submissions:

- Stakeholders' submissions should be sent to uprsubmissions@ohchr.org.
- Deadlines for stakeholders' submissions can be found [here](#).

Helpful Links:

- Summary of stakeholder's information by OHCHR
 - [Germany](#)
 - [Canada](#)
 - [New Zealand](#)
- Examples of NGO reports
 - [Germany](#)
 - [Canada](#)
 - [New Zealand](#)

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For more information, please go to www.hrpujc.org