



Fact Sheet:

Human Rights Council – Universal Periodic Review

“By your first anniversary in June, the wheels of the Council should be in full motion, including the Universal Periodic Review. This mechanism has great potential to promote and protect human rights in the darkest corners of the world.” – Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations. As one of the main features of the Council, the UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed.

The UPR was created through the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by resolution [60/251](#), which established the Human Rights Council itself. It is a cooperative process which, by 2011, will have reviewed the human rights records of every country. Currently, no other universal mechanism of this kind exists. The UPR is one of the key elements of the new Council which reminds States of their responsibility to fully respect and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The ultimate aim of this new mechanism is to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.

Objectives...

- To address human rights violations all over the world
- To improve the human rights situation everywhere
- To encourage States to fulfill their human rights obligations and commitments
- To assess positive developments and challenges faced by States
- To enhance the State's capacity to ensure the enjoyment of human rights by all
- To provide technical assistance to States, when requested
- To share best practices between States and other stakeholders

How it works...

- All UN Member States will be reviewed every four years
- 48 States will be reviewed each year
- All Council members will be reviewed during their term of membership
- The reviews are carried out by the UPR Working Group composed of the 47 Council members
- The UPR Working Group will hold three two-week sessions per year
- The Working Group sessions take place at the UN Office at Geneva at the Palais des Nations
- Each review is facilitated by groups of three States, or “troikas”, -drawn by lot - who act as rapporteurs

Schedule of review...

- On 21 September 2007, the Human Rights Council adopted a [calendar](#) detailing the order in which the 192 Member States of the United Nations will be considered during the first four-year cycle of the UPR
- The 1st and 2nd sessions of the UPR Working Group took place in April and May 2008, respectively. The 3rd session will take place from 1 to 15 December 2008

Basis of review...

- Three reports serve as a basis for each State review and provide the following information:
 - Information from the State under review (“national report”) including information on achievements and best practices, and challenges and constraints, as well as key national priorities in addressing shortcomings
 - Information contained in the reports of the independent human rights experts and groups, known as the [Special Procedures](#), human rights treaty bodies and other UN entities
 - Information from non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and “other stakeholders”

- The review should assess to what extent States respect their human rights obligations contained in:
 - The United Nations Charter
 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - Human rights instruments (covenants, conventions and other treaties) to which the State is a party
 - Voluntary pledges and commitments made by the State
 - Applicable international humanitarian law

How the review will be conducted...

- An interactive dialogue between the State under review and the Council takes place in the Working Group
- The “troikas” may compile questions submitted in advance by other States to be shared with the State under review to ensure an effective interactive dialogue
- Any of the 192 UN Member States may participate in the reviews, including in the interactive dialogue. Other relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs or national human rights institutions, may attend the reviews in the Working Group
- The duration of the review is three hours for each country in the Working Group. An additional half hour is allocated for the adoption of the report of each country under review in the Working Group
- After the troika presents the report to the UPR Working Group the Working Group adopts the report

The adoption of the outcome...

- Time is allocated during the next regular session of the Human Rights Council following the State review in order to consider the outcome of each review (up to one hour per State)
- Member and observer States, as well as NGOs and other stakeholders, may participate in these plenary meetings to consider the UPR reviews
- The final outcome of the review is adopted by the entire membership of the Human Rights Council at this plenary session

Follow-up to the review...

- The outcome of the UPR should be implemented primarily by the State concerned and, as appropriate, by other stakeholders
- The follow-up review to take place during the 2nd cycle (2012-2015) should focus on the implementation of the recommendations of the previous review
- The international community will assist in implementing the recommendations and conclusions regarding capacity-building and technical assistance in consultation with, and with the consent of, the country concerned
- In considering the outcomes of the UPR, the Council will decide if and when any specific follow-up is necessary

Cooperation with the universal periodic review...

- The Council will address, as appropriate, any cases of persistent non-cooperation with the UPR mechanism after exhausting all efforts to encourage a State to cooperate

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