

# Basic facts about the UPR

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## **What is the Universal Periodic Review?**

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. The UPR is a significant innovation of the Human Rights Council which is based on equal treatment for all countries. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. The UPR also includes a sharing of best human rights practices around the globe. Currently, no other mechanism of this kind exists.

## **How was the UPR established?**

The UPR was established when the Human Rights Council was created on 15 March 2006 by the UN General Assembly in resolution [60/251](#). This mandated the Council to "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfilment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments in a manner which ensures universality of coverage and equal treatment with respect to all States". On 18 June 2007, one year after its first meeting, members of the new Council agreed to its institution-building package ([A/HRC/RES/5/1](#)) providing a road map guiding the future work of the Council. One of the key elements of this package was the new Universal Periodic Review. The mechanism was further refined during the review process through resolution 16/21 and decision 17/119. These two documents provided the necessary modifications of modalities for the review in the second and subsequent cycles.

## **What is the goal of the UPR?**

The ultimate goal of UPR is the improvement of the human rights situation in every country with significant consequences for people around the globe. The UPR is designed to prompt, support, and expand the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground. To achieve this, the UPR involves assessing States' human rights records and addressing human rights violations wherever they occur. The UPR also aims to provide technical assistance to States and enhance their capacity to deal effectively with human rights challenges and to share best practices in the field of human rights among States and other stakeholders.

## **When will States have their human rights records reviewed by the UPR?**

During the first cycle, all UN Member States have been reviewed, – with 48 States reviewed each year. The second cycle, which officially started in May 2012 with the 13th session of the UPR Working Group, will see 42 States reviewed each year. The reviews take place during the sessions of the UPR Working Group (see below) which meets three times a year. The order of review remains the same as in the first cycle and the number of States reviewed at each session is now 14 instead of 16.

## **Who conducts the review?**

The reviews are conducted by the UPR Working Group which consists of the 47 members of the Council; however any UN Member State can take part in the discussion/dialogue with the reviewed States. Each State review is assisted by groups of three States, known as “troikas”, who serve as rapporteurs. The selection of the troikas for each State is done through a drawing of lots following elections for the Council membership in the General Assembly.

## **What are the reviews based on?**

The documents on which the reviews are based are: 1) information provided by the State under review, which can take the form of a “national report”; 2) information contained in the reports of independent human rights experts and groups, known as the [Special Procedures](#), human rights [treaty bodies](#), and other UN entities; 3) information from other stakeholders including national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations.

## **How are the reviews conducted?**

Reviews take place through an interactive discussion between the State under review and other UN Member States. This takes place during a meeting of the UPR Working Group. During this discussion any UN Member State can pose questions, comments and/or make recommendations to the States under review. The troikas may group issues or questions to be shared with the State under review to ensure that the interactive dialogue takes place in a smooth and orderly manner. The duration of the review was three hours for each country in the Working Group during the first cycle. From the second cycle onwards the time has been extended to three hours and thirty minutes.

## **Can non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participate in the UPR process?**

Yes. NGOs can submit information which can be added to the “other stakeholders” report which is considered during the review. Information they provide can be referred to by any of the States taking part in the interactive discussion during the review at the Working Group meeting. NGOs can attend the UPR Working Group sessions and can make statements at the regular session of the Human Rights Council when the outcome of the State reviews are considered. OHCHR has released "[Technical guidelines for the submission of stakeholders](#)"

## **What human rights obligations are addressed?**

The UPR will assess the extent to which States respect their human rights obligations set out in: (1) the [UN Charter](#); (2) the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#); (3) human rights instruments to which the State is party (human rights treaties ratified by the State concerned); (4) voluntary pledges and commitments made by the State (e.g. national human rights policies and/or programmes implemented); and, (5) applicable international humanitarian law.

## **What is the outcome of the review?**

Following the review by the Working Group, a report is prepared by the troika with the involvement of the State under review and assistance from the OHCHR. This report, referred to as the “outcome report”, provides a summary of the actual discussion. It therefore consists of the

questions, comments and recommendations made by States to the country under review, as well as the responses by the reviewed State.

### **How is the review adopted?**

During the Working Group session half an hour is allocated to adopt each of the “outcome reports” for the States reviewed that session. These take place no sooner than 48 hours after the country review. The reviewed State has the opportunity to make preliminary comments on the recommendations choosing to either accept or note them. Both accepted and noted recommendations are included in the report. After the report has been adopted, editorial modifications can be made to the report by States on their own statements within the following two weeks. The report then has to be adopted at a plenary session of the Human Rights Council. During the plenary session, the State under review can reply to questions and issues that were not sufficiently addressed during the Working Group and respond to recommendations that were raised by States during the review. Time is also allotted to member and observer States who may wish to express their opinion on the outcome of the review and for NHRIs, NGOs and other stakeholders to make general comments.

### **What steps are taken as follow up to the review?**

The State has the primary responsibility to implement the recommendations contained in the final outcome. The UPR ensures that all countries are accountable for progress or failure in implementing these recommendations. During the second review the State is expected to provide information on what they have been doing to implement the recommendations made during the first review as well as on any developments in the field of human rights. The international community will assist in implementing the recommendations and conclusions regarding capacity-building and technical assistance, in consultation with the country concerned. If necessary, the Council will address cases where States are not co-operating.

### **What happens if a State is not cooperating with the UPR?**

The Human Rights Council will decide on the measures it would need to take in case of [persistent non-co-operation](#) by a State with the UPR.

### **Background documents**

- Letter from President of the Human Rights Council on rules and practices of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, 18 September 2013  
[English](#)
- Human Rights Council decision OM/7/101: Non-cooperation of a State under review with the universal periodic review mechanism 29 January 2013  
[العربية](#) [中文](#) [English](#) [Français](#) [русский](#) [Español](#)
- Human Rights Council decision 17/119: Follow-up to the Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 with regard to the universal periodic review 19 July 2011  
[English](#)

- Human Rights Council resolution 16/21: Review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council 12 April 2011  
[العربية](#) [中文](#) [English](#) [Français](#) [русский](#) [Español](#)
- General Assembly resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council – 15 March 2006  
[العربية](#) [中文](#) [English](#) [Français](#) [русский](#) [Español](#)  
Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 – 18 June 2007 [العربية](#) [中文](#) [English](#) [Français](#) [русский](#) [Español](#)
- Universal Periodic Review Decision 6/102 – 27 September 2007  
[العربية](#) [中文](#) [English](#) [Français](#) [русский](#) [Español](#)
- Establishment of funds for the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council Resolution 6/17 – 28 September 2007  
[العربية](#) [中文](#) [English](#) [Français](#) [русский](#) [Español](#)
- Modalities and practices for the universal periodic review process PRST/8/1 – 9 April 2008  
[English](#)
- Follow-up to President's statement 8/1 PRST/9/2 – 24 September 2008  
[English](#)