

Your Guide to the Universal Periodic Review and the UPR Working Groups

What is the Universal Periodic Review?

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was established by the UN General Assembly in 2006 as a process through which the human rights record of every UN Member State (i.e. country) is peer-reviewed.

This review, conducted through the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), is based upon each country's human rights obligations and commitments expressed in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights instruments to which the country is party, and other sources. During the process, the country under review receives recommendations to improve its human rights record from other UN Member States. The country under review is able to accept or note these recommendations, and those accepted form the basis for future reporting.

The United States is a strong supporter of the UPR process, which provides a unique mechanism for the global community to discuss human rights issues around the world.

How has the United States participated in the UPR?

Having completed its first UPR cycle in 2010, the United States submitted its second UPR report in February 2015 and made a presentation on that report to the HRC in May 2015. The focus of our second UPR report and presentation was progress on those recommendations accepted by the United States during its first UPR, as well as updates on issues related to domestic implementation of our human rights obligations and commitments.

The United States received a total of 343 recommendations from other UN Member States during its second UPR cycle, the most in UPR history. In September 2015, the United States announced that it had accepted, in whole or in part, 260 of those recommendations, or approximately 75 percent.

Documentation for the United States' second UPR cycle – including the U.S. report, the “Report of the Working Group” listing other Member States' recommendations, and “Addendum 1” providing the U.S. response to those recommendations – is available at:

www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/USSession22.aspx.

What are the UPR Working Groups?

Each country is responsible for implementing appropriate mechanisms for follow-up on the UPR recommendations it accepts.

To this end, the U.S. government organized six interagency *UPR Working Groups* based on the topics covered by the UPR recommendations that the United States accepted. Each Working Group is made up of representatives from relevant federal agencies with authorities related to the group's mandate. The Working Groups are:

Working Group 1: Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination

Working Group 2: Criminal Justice

Working Group 3: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Indigenous Issues, and the Environment

Working Group 4: National Security

Working Group 5: Immigration, Labor, Trafficking, Migrants, and Children

Working Group 6: Domestic Implementation and International Treaties and Mechanisms

What are the functions of the UPR Working Groups?

The UPR Working Groups have both an *internal coordination* and a *public outreach* mandate. Each Working Group meets internally to identify and discuss proposals to address accepted UPR recommendations, identify opportunities for interagency collaboration, share best practices on cross-cutting issues, and discuss public engagement.

In addition to the UPR recommendations, the Working Groups also consider recommendations received from the UN committees of experts created by the international human rights treaties to which the United States is a party. More information about these treaties, the U.S. reports under these treaties, and recommendations received from these committees of experts, is available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/reports/treaties/index.htm>

The Working Groups also holds periodic civil society consultations to receive input and provide updates on progress made toward implementation of accepted UPR and treaty committee recommendations. Each Working Group is expected to hold at least two such consultations before the next UPR cycle. Individual agencies that are members of the Working Groups can also hold other consultations related to those recommendations within their mandates.

How can I get involved?

A calendar of upcoming Working Group consultations and a list of points of contact for each Working Group are available at www.humanrights.gov. Members of civil society, state and local government officials, and members of the public are welcome to attend these consultations and provide input on U.S. implementation of the UPR and treaty committee recommendations it has accepted. You can also submit comments to the Working Groups online by emailing UPR2015@state.gov.

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