



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Parliaments and the United Nations Universal Periodic Review



What is the UPR?

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council under which States' human rights records are reviewed by other States at the Council every four and a half years.

Under the UPR peer review process, all countries are treated equally. All 193 UN Member States are reviewed by their peers for compliance with existing human rights obligations.

Reviews take place during an interactive discussion between the State under review and other States, which can submit questions and comments, or make recommendations to the State under review.

What is the role of parliaments?

Before the review, they can contribute to the State's report on the human rights situation in the country and encourage their government to host a broad consultation process.

During the review, they can participate in the interactive discussion, either as a member of the government delegation or as an observer. 27 MPs took part in the process in 2023.

Most importantly, after the review, they are instrumental in making sure that the recommendations from the UPR are translated into national legislation, policies and budgetary action, and implemented at the national level.

In their oversight function, parliaments play a crucial role in ensuring governments implement the recommendations.

At the end of the review, the State under review can declare what actions it has taken to improve the human rights situation in the country and can choose to either "support" or "note" the recommendations received from other States.

The State has the primary responsibility to implement the recommendations made by other States to improve the human rights situation in the country.

During the next review, the State should provide information on what it has been doing to implement the recommendations made during the previous review cycle.

The fourth cycle of reviews under the UPR started in 2022.

More information on the UPR

Parliaments and the UPR:

www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/parliaments

UPR documentation by country:

www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/documentation

IPU Handbook for Parliamentarians on Human Rights:

www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HandbookParliamentarians.pdf

What can MPs do?

- ✓ Provide a parliamentary contribution to the report.
- ✓ Encourage the government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice, to consider and reflect in the national report the inputs received from all stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).
- ✓ Take part in the session in Geneva, either as a government delegation member or as an observer. Take part in the deliberations of the executive branch to determine the country's position on the UPR recommendations (whether they will be supported or not).
- ✓ Influence the State budget to ensure it is in line with human rights obligations, include funds for fulfilling human rights (e.g. right to food) or provide training for key State actors such as law enforcement and judges.
- ✓ Organize regular parliamentary monitoring of progress made in the implementation of the UPR recommendations, including by requesting that the executive provide regular updates or a mid-term report to parliament and by inviting relevant officials to report on specific issues during a parliamentary hearing.
- ✓ Meet regularly with influential stakeholders such as line ministries, CSOs, NHRIs and experts.
- ✓ Hold public awareness-raising activities with various constituencies about the recommendations accepted by the country to inform them about the steps that have been taken by parliament.
- ✓ Take part in IPU capacity-building seminars and briefings.

Why should parliaments be involved?

"For us, the UPR is a compass that sets the course towards a better future." – Christelle Vuanga, parliamentarian, Democratic Republic of the Congo

"[The] UPR is an important and inclusive mechanism for advancing human rights. [We] must engage many stakeholders in the UPR Process meaningfully, including MPs, as people's representatives." - Luluk Nur Hamidah, parliamentarian, Indonesia

"This fourth cycle [of the UPR] provides a greater space for parliamentarians – recognized as the indispensable players in this process." – Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU

"In Uzbekistan, members of parliament engage in all four stages of the drafting, reporting and implementation process and participate each time to State delegations. Why? Because many recommendations fall under the competence of parliament." – Akmal Saidov, First Deputy Speaker of the Oliy Majlis, Uzbekistan



Akmal Saidov addresses the UN in Geneva.

Good practices:

In Togo, Parliament was included at all stages of the review process through the Human Rights Commission of the National Assembly. In follow-up to UPR recommendations, Parliament amended the organic law on the independent National Human Rights Institution and increased its budget to ensure its effectiveness.

Paraguay's delegation to the Human Rights Council included a senator and a parliamentary staff member acting as Parliament's representative for Paraguay's online platform on United Nations recommendations, "SIMORE". This publicly accessible database was co-developed by the United Nations and Paraguay. It is managed jointly by representatives from the three branches of government and allows all citizens to monitor the implementation of human rights and the SDGs by relevant institutions.

A parliamentarian headed Uzbekistan's delegation to the Human Rights Council and presented on a number of steps taken by Parliament to implement Council recommendations, including the adoption of a Plan of Action on cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms and the publication of the first parliamentary report on human rights in Uzbekistan.

In Italy, members of both chambers of Parliament took part in the country's delegation to the Council and reported that the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF) had held hearings with Parliament to draft the UPR report.

Tunisia established a NMIRF, which is tasked with drafting reports to United Nations bodies and reports directly to Parliament. The NMIRF reflected contributions from Parliament in its report.



An MP takes the floor during the interactive dialogue.

Additional links

Parliaments and human rights: www.ipu.org/our-impact/human-rights/parliaments-and-human-rights

IPU data on parliamentary human rights commissions: data.ipu.org/specialized-bodies/human-rights

Parliamentary self assessment toolkit on human rights: www.ipu.org/resources/publications/toolkits/2023-10/parliaments-and-human-rights-self-assessment-toolkit

For more information on parliaments and human rights, contact us at: hrteam@ipu.org