Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world organization of national parliaments, set up a procedure in 1976 for the treatment of complaints regarding human rights violations of parliamentarians. It entrusted the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians with implementing that procedure.

Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians



Ms. Nominchimeg Odsuren
(President)
MONGOLIA



Mr. Harry Kamboni
(Vice-President)
ZAMBIA



Mr. M.A.M. Al-Kubaisy
IRAQ



Ms. Valentina Grippo
ITALY



Ms. Unzila Shapak
KAZAKHSTAN



Ms. Millie G. A. Odhiambo
KENYA



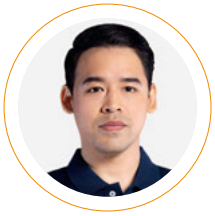
Mr. César Rendón
MEXICO



Mr. Hugo Carneiro
PORTUGAL



Ms. Laurence Fehlmann Rielle
SWITZERLAND



Mr. Chonlathan Supphaiboonlerd
THAILAND



Ms. Nancy A. Odonga
UGANDA



Mr. Daniel Caggiani
URUGUAY

Composition

The Committee is composed of 12 members of parliament, representing the major regions of the world. They are elected in their personal capacity for a mandate of five years.

Sessions

The Committee meets behind closed doors three times a year, once at IPU Headquarters in Geneva (usually in January) and twice in conjunction with the bi-annual IPU Assemblies (usually March/April and September/October). On those occasions, it examines and adopts decisions on the cases that have been referred to it.

The procedure

The Committee seeks to establish the facts of a given case by cross checking and verifying, with the authorities of the countries concerned, the complainants and other sources of information, the allegations and information forwarded to it. It examines cases and aims to find a satisfactory settlement of a complaint in the light of national and applicable international and regional human rights laws. Such settlements can take a variety of forms, such as the release of a detained parliamentarian, reinstatement of a previously relinquished parliamentary seat, the effective investigation of abuses and legal action against their perpetrators.

The Committee does everything it can to nurture a dialogue with the authorities of the countries concerned in its pursuit of a satisfactory settlement. It is in this spirit that, during the IPU Assemblies, the Committee regularly meets with the parliamentary delegations of such countries and may suggest sending an on-site mission to help move a case forward. The Committee also hears representatives of the complainant regularly and, if possible, the members of parliament concerned themselves.

The Committee's decisions are public, unless it considers that there are overriding reasons for keeping a decision confidential. The Committee can decide to bring a case to the attention of the IPU Governing Council, its plenary decision-making body, by presenting a draft decision for adoption by it. In adopting the decision, the Governing Council expresses the concern of the entire IPU membership and invites all Member Parliaments to act, on the basis of the principle of parliamentary solidarity, in support of it.

Competence

The Committee may only examine complaints concerning members of national parliaments (not regional or local assemblies). It may also examine the cases of former members of parliament if the alleged human rights violations occurred during their term of office, or exceptionally when the alleged violations refer directly to events that took place when they were still members of parliament. In the case of an unlawful dissolution of parliament, the Committee extends its protection to the remaining legal term of office of the member(s) of parliament concerned.

Complaints

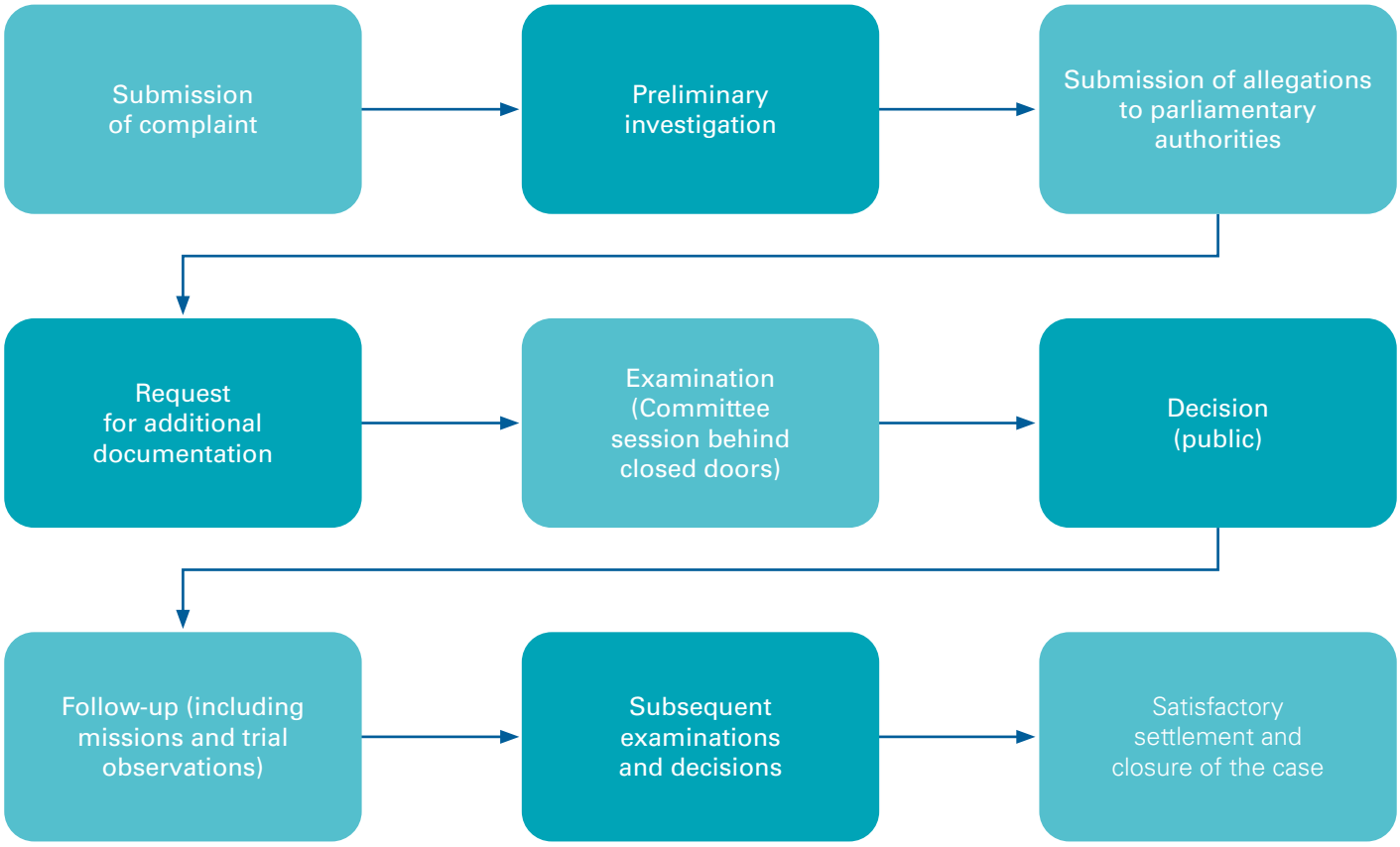
Who can submit a complaint to the Committee?

- the parliamentarian or former parliamentarian whose fundamental rights have been violated (or a member of his/her family, or his/her legal representative);
- another parliamentarian;
- a political party;
- a national or international human rights organization (the United Nations and its specialized agencies, intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, etc.).

If you would like to report an MP in danger, use this form.

Admissibility

If a complaint appears to be prima facie admissible, the Secretary General institutes a preliminary investigation by informing the Speaker of the parliament of the country concerned that a complaint has been submitted to the Committee, and inviting him/her to provide observations and information on the situation of the member of parliament concerned. The substance of any reply is communicated to the complainant for comments. The Secretariat draws up a report on the basis of the information thus gathered, which the Committee examines at its subsequent session. If a case is admissible, it adopts a decision on the substance, which is forwarded to the authorities and the complainants. The Committee will continue to examine and adopt decisions on a case during its subsequent sessions, until a satisfactory settlement has been reached that is achievable in its view.



More information

More information about the work of the Committee is available on the IPU website:
https://www.ipu.org/about-us/structure/governing-council/committee-human-rights-parliamentarians

- Video on the work of the Committee
- Rules and practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
- Decisions of the Committee and the IPU Governing Council