

Bridging anti-corruption and human rights efforts

A guide for anti-corruption advocates
to engage in the Universal Periodic
Review process

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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this guide. All information was believed to be correct as of 10 June 2025.

About us

UNCAC Coalition

Established in August 2006, the UNCAC Coalition is a global network of almost 400 civil society organizations (CSOs) in over 120 countries, committed to promoting the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The Coalition mobilizes civil society action for UNCAC at international, regional and national levels. Our office is registered and based in Vienna, Austria.

UPR Info

UPR Info is a non-governmental organization based in Geneva, founded in 2008, that promotes the protection of human rights through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. With over 15 years of experience in Geneva and in more than thirty countries, the organization has established itself as a centre of excellence on the UPR.

UPR Info raises awareness and strengthens the capacity of a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, national human rights institutions, states, journalists, and legal professionals, to engage meaningfully in the UPR process.

For questions or comments, please write us at: info@uncaccoalition.org or info@upr-info.org

Acronyms

Abbreviation	Full name
CSO	Civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
HRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IRM	Implementation Review Mechanism of the UNCAC
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NMIRF	National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up
NRTD	National Recommendations Tracking Database
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

Abbreviation	
SuR	State under Review
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



The United Nations' system is one family, fighting for the same cause of a more just and peaceful world. But it has become clear that stronger coordination and collaboration between all UN bodies is needed in order for the United Nations to be able to successfully fulfil its mandate. Only through regular and sincere dialogue and cooperation can we achieve this. Continuing with the status quo will only lead to further divisions amongst all of us, and the weakening of the UN as a whole.

President of the Human Rights Council, Vojislav Šuc, at the High-level Dialogue "Towards Sustaining Peace through Participation of All: Synergies of a cross-pillar approach to Peace and Security, Agenda 2030 and Human Rights." ([OHCHR](#))

Introduction

Corruption and human rights violations are two deeply interconnected challenges with far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and societies around the world. While corruption refers to the abuse of entrusted power for private gain,¹ manifesting in practices such as bribery, nepotism, and embezzlement,² human rights encompass the fundamental freedoms and entitlements guaranteed to every person, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or other status, grounded in national, regional and international instruments.

When public funds are misappropriated through corruption, the consequences extend far beyond financial loss. Corruption directly undermines the enjoyment of human rights, impacting the right to equality and non-discrimination, as well as access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and housing.³ It erodes the rule of law,⁴ weakens democratic institutions, and undermines the transparency and accountability mechanisms essential for protecting human rights.⁵

Traditionally, corruption and human rights violations have been addressed in separate silos: corruption mainly through criminal justice systems that emphasize individual liability, and human rights through frameworks focused on state responsibility. But in practice, these challenges often stem from the same root causes: concentrated power, weak or absent institutional checks and balances, limited access to information, and systemic inequality.

These conditions not only enable corrupt practices and human rights abuses to co-exist but they also create a vicious cycle in which they reinforce each other.

About the guide

This guide is a call to action for civil society organizations (CSOs). It offers practical, accessible steps for CSOs to engage in the UPR process. By leveraging this mechanism, CSOs can play a strategic role in pushing for systemic reforms that strengthen both governance and the protection of human rights.

Importantly, engaging with the UPR does not require starting from scratch. The recommendations emerging from the UPR offer an opportunity to strengthen and build upon existing anti-corruption initiatives. In many cases, UPR recommendations will align with ongoing priorities, such as promoting transparency, pushing for legal reforms, or protecting whistleblowers. Rather than viewing the UPR engagement as separate activity, it should be integrated into the regular advocacy, public awareness, and accountability initiatives of anti-corruption organizations.

Now more than ever, we need to connect the dots and bridge the anti-corruption and human rights efforts. We cannot fight corruption without defending human rights, and we cannot defend human rights without addressing the corruption that undermines them. With this guide, we hope to support your efforts to bridge silos, build alliances, and drive meaningful change where it matters most: in people's lives.

1. Transparency International, "What Is Corruption?", <https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption>.

2. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Module 1: What Is Corruption and Why Should We Care?" (Vienna: UNODC, 2019), https://grace.unodc.org/grace/uploads/documents/academics/Anti-Corruption_Module_1_What_Is_Corruption_and_Why_Should_We_Care.pdf.

3. UNCAC Coalition, "Recognizing Victims of Corruption: Submission by the UNCAC Coalition's Victims of Corruption Working Group to the 9th Session of the UNCAC Conference of States Parties," (December 1, 2021), <https://uncaccoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/UNCAC-Coalition-%E2%80%93-CoSP9-submission-%E2%80%93-Recognizing-Victims-of-Corruptions.pdf>.

4. Diego García-Sayán, "Corruption, Human Rights, and Judicial Independence," (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, April 2018), <https://www.unodc.org/dohadecaration/en/news/2018/04/corruption-human-rights-and-judicial-independence.html>.

5. Transparency International, "CPI 2021: Corruption, Human Rights and Democracy," (January 25, 2022), <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-corruption-human-rights-democracy>.

While not all human rights violations are caused by corruption, many are enabled or exacerbated by it. At its core, corruption undermines the very principles of good governance, which are needed for the realization of human rights and understanding this connection requires a nuanced, context-specific analysis.⁶

Whereas anti-corruption efforts typically target the wrongdoer, often a public official who has violated public trust, human rights approaches place the emphasis on the victims, seeking to restore dignity, ensure justice, and protect against future harm.⁷ Yet, both are grounded in the same core principles: transparency, participation, and accountability.⁸

Far from being mutually exclusive, efforts to tackle corruption and human rights violations should be seen as deeply complementary, two sides of the same coin that, when pursued together, can drive meaningful and lasting change.

In today's complex social and political landscape, siloed approaches are no longer enough. Fighting corruption and defending human rights requires an integrated and holistic strategy.⁹ We need to draw connections, build alliances, and use every available tool to achieve justice. Only by reinforcing both frameworks and bridging the gaps between them can we meaningfully advance equitable, rights-based governance.

To confront these systemic challenges, we need to foster synergies across the United Nations (UN) system. The [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) offers a powerful entry point to connect the anti-corruption and human rights agendas. As a State peer-review mechanism grounded in dialogue and cooperation, the UPR provides a space to raise corruption-related concerns, especially those also flagged in the [Implementation Review Mechanism \(IRM\)](#) of the [UN Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#).

6. Morten K. Andersen, "Keynote Presentation at OHCHR Regional Expert Consultations on the Nexus between Human Rights and Corruption," Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Lund University, Sweden: 2025).

7. Ibid.

8. Naomi Roht-Arriaza, *Fighting Grand Corruption: Transnational and Human Rights Approaches in Latin America and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025), 32, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009550574>.

9. Vasilka Sancin, "Corruption as a Serious Inhibitor to Human Rights Realisation: A Response from the UN Human Rights Committee," *Zbornik Pravnog Fakulteta u Zagrebu* 71, no. 1 (2021), 24.

Roadmap

The following provides a clear, strategic pathway for civil society to leverage the UPR process to advance anti-corruption efforts.

1 Navigating the UN system



The first section introduces both the UPR and the UNCAC IRM as complementary tools to promote anti-corruption and human rights. It explains how each mechanism functions within its respective UN framework, compares the two, and highlights why the UPR is a particularly important platform to advance anti-corruption efforts.



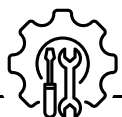
Sections can be accessed by clicking on the arrow



Jump directly back to this page by clicking on the home icon

2 Bridging anti-corruption and human rights efforts

The second section explores the value of using the UPR as a strategic platform to advocate for anti-corruption reforms. It reflects on the current status of anti-corruption recommendations within the UPR, offers practical tips for formulating more specific and action-oriented recommendations, and presents examples of synergies between recommendations from both mechanisms.



Annex

The Annex offers a curated list of relevant sources, references, and tools. These include links to human rights databases, and relevant networks and platforms, such as UPR Info, which provide further support and coordination.

Find also factsheet templates for download to help in awareness raising and driving action.



3 The UPR: A space for civil society engagement

In the third section, readers will find a practical guide to participating at every stage of the UPR cycle: before, during, and after the review. This includes preparing stakeholder submissions, engaging in national consultations, advocating with recommending States, and monitoring the implementation of recommendations.



1.

**Navigating the
UN system**





There is no doubt that, in practical terms, corruption is an enormous obstacle to the realization of all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural, as well as the right to development. Corruption violates the core human rights principles of transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and meaningful participation in every aspect of life of the community. Conversely, these principles, when upheld and implemented, are the most effective means to fight corruption.

Opening statement by Navi Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights at the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council thematic panel on “the negative impact of corruption on human rights”
([OHCHR](#))



The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

What is the UPR?

The **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** is a unique mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) that allows for a comprehensive review of the human rights situation in each UN Member State. Established by UN General Assembly **Resolution 60/251**, the UPR is intended as a cooperative, inclusive, and constructive process that supports States in fulfilling their international human rights obligations.

Conducted every 4.5 years, the UPR enables States to demonstrate progress, receive feedback, and engage in dialogue on a wide range of human rights issues such as:



freedom of
expression



access to
justice



right to
housing



right to
education



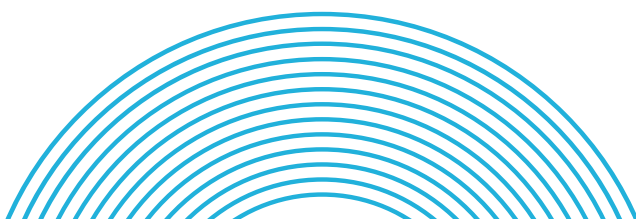
gender
equality

...amongst others.

Even issues linked to international standards that a State has not formally ratified may be raised, allowing the UPR to act as a mirror of the human rights challenges faced by people around the world.

Although the process involves a peer review among States, the UPR explicitly encourages broad national participation, including by parliaments, the judiciary, CSOs, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), and academia. This inclusive approach is vital to ensuring that UPR recommendations lead to a change at the national level. Far from being a one-time reporting mechanism, the UPR is an ongoing process that aims to advance the protection of human rights. The process has also encouraged States to make voluntary pledges, share best practices, and request technical assistance, fostering a spirit of mutual cooperation.

The UPR offers an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation across all levels of society and among countries. It stimulates new dialogue between governments and civil society, even in contexts where such engagement was previously minimal or nonexistent.





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 **2008**
UPR process began

 **4**
cycles of reviews, last cycle scheduled to finish in 2027

 **193**
UN Member States have participated, as of 2025

 **287%**
increase in the number of recommendations received by the State under Review (SuR)

According to OHCHR statistics,¹⁰ from the end of the 1st cycle to the 3rd

Making it the only global human rights mechanism in which all UN Member States participate

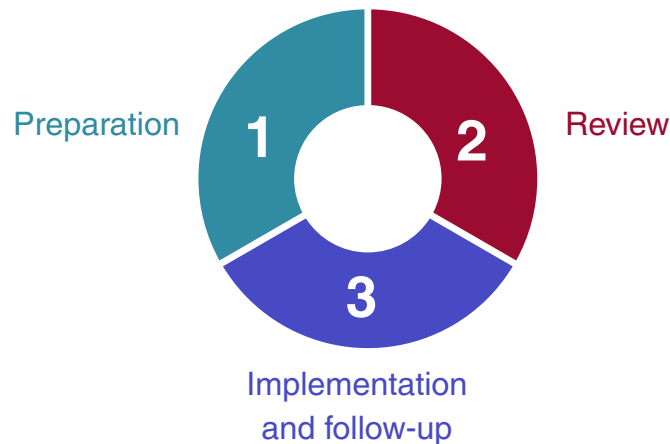
How does the UPR work?

The UPR follows a continuous cycle that builds on the previous one. Each year, 42 States are reviewed over the course of three sessions—14 countries per session.

UPR Cycles:



The UPR process unfolds in three main phases:



10. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "UPR Facts and Figures 2024", (2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/upr/UPR-Fact-and-Figures-2024.pdf>.



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1 Preparation

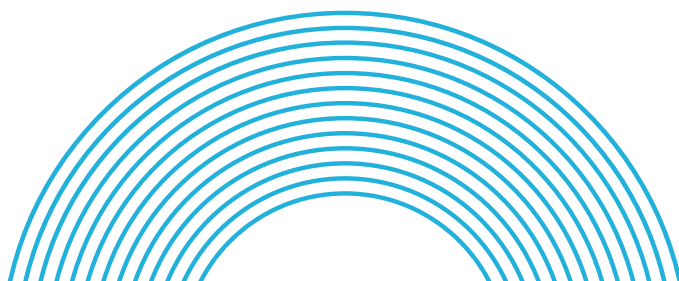
The first phase is the **preparation phase**. During this stage, national actors prepare and submit reports that form the foundation of the review. The State under review (SuR), UN agencies, and other stakeholders—including CSOs and NHRIs—submit assessments that highlight human rights developments, persistent challenges, and emerging issues. The SuR is encouraged to hold inclusive national consultations to ensure that its report reflects a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

2 Review

Next comes the **review itself**, which takes place during a session of the UPR Working Group. Here, the SuR engages in an interactive dialogue with other UN Member States and observers, responding to questions and receiving recommendations aimed at improving its human rights situation. The dialogue and all recommendations are compiled in an Outcome Report. Following the session, the SuR decides whether to support each recommendation—signaling its commitment to implementation—or to note it without committing to action. These responses are submitted in writing to the HRC as an addendum to the Outcome Report. During the plenary session of the HRC that follows, the SuR may elaborate on its positions, address any unresolved issues from the dialogue, and announce any additional supported recommendations or voluntary commitments.

3 Implementation and follow-up

Following the review, the process enters the **implementation and follow-up phase**. Over the next few years, the SuR is expected to act on the recommendations it has supported and report on its progress in the next cycle. States are encouraged to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up and develop a human rights plan to ensure coordinated monitoring and implementation of recommendations received. States are also invited to submit a voluntary mid-term report to track progress and identify challenges ahead of the next UPR cycle. During this period, CSOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders are encouraged to monitor the State's implementation efforts and contribute with their expertise.



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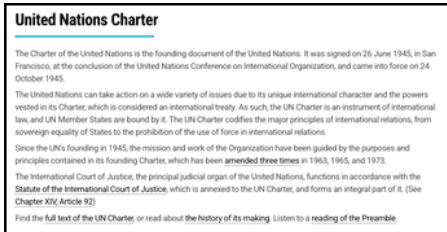
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What are the standards used in the review?

Each State is assessed according to key international human rights standards, including:¹¹

➤ the [UN Charter](#)



➤ the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)



➤ the [core human rights treaties](#) (ratified by SuR)



➤ [International humanitarian law](#)



➤ Voluntary commitments made by the country—such as pledges before the HRC¹² or policies announced at international forums

The UPR is not a stand-alone mechanism. It complements and reinforces the work of other human rights protection frameworks, including UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures. One of its distinctive strengths is its ability to reference and integrate standards from institutions not traditionally viewed as part of the human rights system—such as the International Labour Organization (ILO)—and to draw upon recommendations from instruments not typically classified as human rights treaties, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and initiatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

11. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "UPR Facts and Figures 2024", (2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/upr/UPR-Fact-and-Figures-2024.pdf>.

12. You can find pledges from Governments on specific topics using the Universal Human Rights Index tool: <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/pledges>.



States' obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights in the context of corruption

At the heart of international human rights law lies the threefold duty of the State: **to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights**. Corruption directly undermines each of these obligations:



Obligation to respect

Requires States to refrain from actions that interfere with the enjoyment of human rights. This means that public officials must not engage in corrupt practices that erode trust, divert resources, or restrict rights such as access to health, education, justice, or information.



Obligation to protect

Requires States to shield individuals and communities from human rights violations by third parties. This includes the duty to prevent, investigate, and sanction corruption not only by state actors but also by non-state actors such as businesses, international organizations, or organized criminal networks. States must also ensure victims of corruption-related harm have access to effective remedies.



Obligation to fulfill

Requires States to take proactive measures to ensure people can realize their rights. This includes creating mechanisms to claim rights violated by corruption, providing redress, and combating corruption as a systemic barrier to rights. It also demands that States mobilize and manage the maximum available resources and ensure that public funds are not lost to corruption.¹³

What are the sources of information for the review?

Ahead of each review, [three key reports](#) are published to inform UN Member States about the human rights situation in the SuR.¹⁴ These documents collectively shape the interactive dialogue and the recommendations made during the UPR Working Group sessions.

They are:

- 1 National Report – Prepared by the SuR, this report outlines the national human rights framework, key developments, and progress made since the previous review.
- 2 Compilation of UN Information – Assembled by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), this report draws on findings from UN mechanisms, including treaty bodies, Special Procedures, and other UN entities.

13. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Module 7: Corruption and Human Rights", (Vienna: UNODC, 2019), https://grace.unodc.org/grace/uploads/documents/academics/Anti-Corruption_Module_7_Corruption_and_Human_Rights.pdf, 21-23.
 14. United Nations Human Rights Council, Resolution 5/1, "Institution-Building of the United Nations Human Rights Council", (June 18, 2007), https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=a/hrc/res/5/1.



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- 3 Summary of Stakeholders' Information – Also compiled by OHCHR, this report reflects input from civil society actors, including CSOs and NHRIs.

Together, these three reports ensure that the UPR draws from a diversity of perspectives—official, institutional, and grassroots—enabling a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of human rights conditions in each SuR.

What role can civil society play in the UPR?

While civil society does not take the floor during the interactive dialogue between the SuR and UN Member States, its participation is essential throughout the UPR process. Civil society actors contribute to the UPR process by submitting information, advocating for strong recommendations, monitoring implementation, and holding governments accountable for their human rights commitments. They also play a crucial role in raising awareness and educating the public on human rights issues. Their close connection to affected populations enables them to highlight overlooked concerns and push for meaningful change.

By engaging in the UPR, CSOs gain an additional platform to inform both national and international human rights agendas. Their contributions feed the review's content and help track progress, ensuring that governments remain accountable for the commitments they make and that the UPR recommendations lead to concrete improvements on the ground.

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human rights
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The UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM)





What is the UNCAC IRM?

The Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM) is the official peer-review process established under the [UN Convention against Corruption](#) (UNCAC), the only legally binding global anti-corruption instrument, designed to assess how effectively States Parties are implementing the Convention. The IRM allows States Parties to identify gaps in implementation, share good practices, and receive technical assistance. Each State undergoes a review process conducted by two reviewing countries and supported by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

How Does the IRM Work?

The IRM is carried out in review cycles, each focusing on specific chapters of the UNCAC.

IRM Cycles:

- **1st**   Reviewed Chapter III (Criminalization and Law Enforcement) and Chapter IV (International Cooperation).
2010-2015
- **2nd**   Focuses on Chapter II (Preventive Measures) and Chapter V (Asset Recovery).
2015-ongoing

The process unfolds in three phases:

1 Self-assessment

The first phase involves **self-assessment**. The SuR completes a comprehensive questionnaire detailing its implementation of the relevant UNCAC provisions. This includes legislative, institutional, and practical measures taken, as well as challenges encountered.

2 Peer review process

Next comes the **peer review process**. Two reviewing States, selected by drawing lots, evaluate the self-assessment with support from UNODC. This phase may include desk reviews, requests for additional information, and country visits.



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These visits offer an opportunity for direct dialogue with government officials and, in some cases, civil society representatives.

3 Reporting

The final phase concludes in **reporting**. The reviewing States produce a Country Review Report outlining successes, challenges, and recommendations for improvement. In cases of disagreement, peer reviewers engage in constructive discussions with the SuR to clarify information and to arrive at a consensual final report and executive summary. Only the publication of the executive summary is mandatory, while publication of the full country review report and the self-assessment remains voluntary.¹⁵

What are the standards used in the review?

The IRM assesses how the State implements the specific provisions of the UNCAC. These include provisions related to:

- Preventing corruption in public and private sectors,
- Preventing conflict of interests,
- Criminalizing corrupt acts (such as bribery, embezzlement, and money laundering),
- Strengthening law enforcement and international cooperation,
- Recovering stolen assets.

What are the sources of information?

Unlike the UPR, the IRM is primarily state-driven, with most of the process based on government-provided information.

The implementation process can be tracked through the following:

[UNODC Country Profiles](#)

[UNCAC Review Status Tracker](#)

What role can civil society play in the IRM?

While civil society does not have a formal role in the official UNCAC country review process, informal channels for engagement have been steadily expanding thanks to persistent civil society advocacy. As a result, in a growing number of cases, CSOs have been invited to participate in country visits and to contribute to the process in other ways, provided the SuR agrees.¹⁶ Civil society plays a crucial role in advocating for the full publication of country review reports and self-assessments, and monitoring the implementation of recommendations, as well as the status of country reviews and follow-up activities. CSOs can prepare and disseminate parallel or shadow reports providing alternative perspectives on the country reviews and advocate for governments to endorse the Transparency Pledge, committing to uphold minimum standards of transparency and civil society participation in the IRM.¹⁷

15. UNCAC Coalition, "UNCAC Review Mechanism", <https://uncaccoalition.org/uncac-review/uncac-review-mechanism/>.

16. UNCAC Coalition, "20 Years of UNCAC - How Civil Society Participates in UNCAC Implementation Reviews", <https://uncaccoalition.org/20-years-of-uncac/>.

17. UNCAC Coalition, "Civil Society Parallel Reports", <https://uncaccoalition.org/uncac-review/cso-review-reports/>; and UNCAC Coalition, "Transparency Pledge & Guide," <https://uncaccoalition.org/uncac-review/transparency-pledge/>.



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2009

UNCAC IRM was established by the Conference of States Parties (CoSP)



191

Parties as of June 2025



It is the only global peer-review mechanism on anti-corruption with near-universal participation (191 Parties as of June 2025).



Country visits

are optional, but have become the norm



Civil society

engagement is not formally institutionalized

[See here an IRM and UPR comparative table](#)



UNCAC Country Review Reports

Country-specific recommendations from the IRM can provide authoritative guidance on anti-corruption priorities. These recommendations are accessible in the executive summaries and country reports available on the [country profiles](#) of the UNODC website. Note that some documents may not be publicly accessible.

[Find additional ways CSOs can engage with the IRM](#)



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**Bridging anti-
corruption
and human
rights efforts**





Anti-corruption efforts and efforts to promote and protect human rights complement and reinforce each other. They should be pursued in a mutually reinforcing manner that leverages their comparative strengths and minimizes their respective limitations. Both should contribute to a broader strategy for the promotion of good governance. States are called upon to fight corruption and protect human rights at the same time by upholding core good governance principles, such as participation, inclusion, transparency, accountability, integrity, probity and the rule of law’

UNODC, Challenges Faced and Best Practices Applied by States in Integrating Human Rights into Their National Strategies and Policies to Fight against Corruption, Including Those Addressing Non-State Actors, Such as the Private Sector ([OHCHR](#))



Why engage with the UPR?

The UPR provides a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between human rights and anti-corruption efforts by addressing corruption as a cross-cutting human rights issue. As a peer-review mechanism grounded in international legal standards and state commitments, the UPR has the means to also advance the anti-corruption agenda. While the IRM is a critical tool in combating corruption, as presented above, there are certain gaps in its transparency, civil society participation, and accountability that can be covered by also leveraging the UPR.

The UPR does not replace the IRM but complements and enhances it. By engaging in both, CSOs can push for stronger reforms, deeper accountability, and more just governance systems. Below are ways the UPR strengthens the IRM.



Leverage UPR's civil society engagement

The UPR process actively includes CSOs, offering them a platform to submit information, raise concerns, and advocate for anti-corruption measures framed within human rights. In contrast, the IRM offers limited space for civil society input. Depending on the SuR, using the UPR enables anti-corruption CSOs to highlight issues and push for action.



Address transparency gaps

The UPR is known for its openness, including public sessions and accessible documentation. Meanwhile, the IRM has been criticized for having limited transparency.



Maximize the impact of findings

UPR findings on corruption-related issues can guide IRM scrutiny, and gaps in combating corruption identified by the IRM can be highlighted in the UPR to strengthen calls for implementation. This cross-referencing strengthens overall impact.



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Advocate for comprehensive anti-corruption strategies

By engaging in both the UPR and IRM, civil society can promote integrated strategies that link human rights with anti-corruption. This dual approach reinforces the idea that fighting corruption is essential for upholding human rights and good governance.



Foster international cooperation

Both mechanisms involve peer review and state dialogue. When the same recommendations appear in both reviews, states are more likely to act. Using both channels supports a unified international push for anti-corruption and human rights commitments.

Where does the UPR currently stand on anti-corruption recommendations?

The UPR already includes recommendations related to anti-corruption, presenting a valuable entry point for national advocacy. However, the full potential of the UPR to address corruption as a systemic barrier to the realization of human rights remains largely underutilized. According to data from the [Universal Human Rights Index](#), from the first UPR cycle in 2008 through to the 48th session of the fourth cycle held in January 2025, a total of 120,294 recommendations were issued across all thematic areas. Among these, below are some of the recommendations specifically addressing corruption-related issues.



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 Noted  Supported¹⁸

References to Anti-Corruption Terms in the UPR Recommendations¹⁹

UPR Cycle	Asset recovery/ non-repatriation of funds		Bribes/bribery		Corruption		Embezzlement/ embezzled		Money laundering		Whistleblower/ reporting persons	
												
1st 2008-2011	0	0	0	2	6	103	0	0	0	0	0	1
2nd 2012-2016	0	1	0	1	20	143	1	1	1	6	0	1
3rd 2017-2022	0	0	0	4	18	270	1	0	2	5	0	0
Ongoing 4th (until 48th Session) January 2025	0	1	0	1	17	138	0	0	0	4	0	0
Subtotal	0	2	1	8	61	654	2	1	3	15	0	2
TOTAL	2		9		715		3		18		2	

The recommendations referencing anti-corruption topics in the table constitute only 0.62% of the total recommendations of the UPR. However, analyzing the data, we observe a clear upward trend in the number of UPR recommendations referencing anti-corruption terms over the UPR cycles. The total number of references to “corruption” increased by 77% from the 2nd to the 3rd cycle. Although the data for the 4th cycle is incomplete as it is still ongoing, current figures suggest that references to “corruption” will continue to rise.

This increase can be explained by several factors, like a growing attention to corruption by the international community. In addition, according to OHCHR statistics, the total number of reports submitted by civil society organizations increased by 58% between the 2nd and 3rd cycle.

¹⁸ **Supported:** When a State supports a recommendation, it signifies a formal commitment to implement that recommendation before its next UPR. **Noted:** When a State notes a recommendation, it does not commit to its implementation; however, such recommendations may still be acted upon and monitored in practice. See UPR Info, “A Guide for Recommending States at the UPR”, (Geneva: UPR Info, 2015), https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015-09/upr_info_guide_for_recommending_states_2015.pdf.

¹⁹ Betina Pasteknik, “Exploring Synergies in the United Nations: A Focus on Anti-Corruption and Human Rights” (Updated version of thesis originally submitted to University of Vienna, LL.M., 2023), 46.













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This means that among more recent submissions, there have likely been more CSOs working on advancing anti-corruption efforts.²⁰ However, despite this growth, the overall number of recommendations referencing corruption-related issues remains very low.

References to Anti-Corruption International Initiatives²¹

UPR Cycle	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)		Financial Action Task Force (FATF)		Open Government Partnership (OGP)		UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)		United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)	
										
1st 2008-2011	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	8	3	10
2nd 2012-2016	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	6	4	11
3rd 2017-2022	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	20
Ongoing 4th (until 48th Session) January 2025	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	8
Subtotal	2	7	0	1	1	1	2	17	21	49
Total	9		1		2		19		70	

References to specific anti-corruption initiatives have so far been limited in the UPR context. However, the data summarized in the above table indicates that approximately 75% of these recommendations have been supported by States. Citing these initiatives within UPR submissions can be a strategic way to strengthen links between international frameworks and national commitments.

20. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "UPR Facts and Figures 2024", (2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/upr/UPR-Fact-and-Figures-2024.pdf>.

21. Betina Pasteknik, "Exploring Synergies in the United Nations: A Focus on Anti-Corruption and Human Rights" (Updated version of thesis originally submitted to University of Vienna, LL.M, 2023), 57.



Testimonial from [Transparency International Madagascar](#)



”

For us, the UPR is a bridge linking local realities with international accountability—offering hope for real change through combined activism and pressure.

Fighting corruption in Madagascar through the UPR

Madagascar [faces widespread, deeply rooted corruption](#) that seriously impacts people’s quality of life and access to basic rights. Despite some efforts, progress in fighting corruption has been limited. That’s why we decided to engage with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)—to bring stronger international pressure and hold the government accountable. National efforts alone were insufficient, so the UPR provided a vital platform to spotlight corruption, demand commitments, and push for reforms centered on human rights and public well-being.

One major success from our [engagement](#) was the inclusion of two crucial issues in Madagascar’s new National Anti-Corruption Strategy: legal protection for whistleblowers and human rights defenders, and the fight against impunity. Previously overlooked, these issues left key actors vulnerable and allowed many corruption cases to go unpunished, weakening public trust. Together with other civil society organizations, we strengthened advocacy efforts, submitted recommendations, and engaged decision-makers to ensure these points became national priorities.

Our experience taught us the power of collaboration and early, united preparation. Framing corruption as a human rights violation helped change the conversation and made our message harder to ignore. Combining national engagement with international pressure opened new dialogues with reluctant government actors. Crucially, we treated the UPR not as a one-time event but as a long-term tool to sustain pressure for implementation.

Challenges included limited access to decision-makers, political sensitivities, and resource constraints, which we addressed through strategic partnerships and evidence-based advocacy. Monitoring progress remains difficult, but we are building capacity for ongoing follow-up.

To other civil society groups: the UPR is a powerful tool. Use it boldly to amplify your voice, turn local issues into global commitments, and hold governments accountable. For us, the UPR is a bridge linking local realities with international accountability—offering hope for real change through combined activism and pressure.



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Examples of relevant anti-corruption frameworks, conventions and other multistakeholder initiatives



[African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption \(AUCPCC\)](#)



[Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network \(ACINET\)](#)



[Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation \(APEC\) Anti-Corruption and Transparency Working Group](#)



[Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption \(GRECO\)](#)



[Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(EITI\)](#)



[Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\)](#)



[Inter-American Convention against Corruption \(IACAC\)](#)



[Open Government Partnership](#)



[Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\) Anti-Bribery Convention](#)



[United Nations Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#)

[United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime \(UNTOC\)](#)

Many UPR recommendations remain vague, non-specific, and lack actionable content. As highlighted by the CCPR,²² anti-corruption recommendations are often less action-oriented than the average UPR recommendation, making them difficult to monitor or implement effectively.

22. Divya Prasad and Lázaree Eeckeloo, "Corruption and Human Rights: How to better integrate corruption issues in the UN human rights mechanism", (Centre for Civil and Political Rights, September 2019), https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/Corruption_and_HR.pdf, 29.



The table below presents examples of existing anti-corruption recommendations within the UPR. The general recommendations, showcasing the vagueness and lack of actionable content, represent the majority, whilst the specific recommendations that lead to more effective implementation, appear less frequently. It is challenging to objectively assess which UPR recommendations are more effectively implemented than others. One way to address this is through detailed analysis of the actions taken by States in response to accepted recommendations. In addition, UPR Info has adopted an Action Category methodology. This methodology classifies recommendations based on the strength of the action required. It reveals consistent patterns in how recommendations are phrased—ranging from vague or “soft” language to more specific, action-oriented demands—and helps assess the level of effort and accountability likely required for implementation.²³

UPR General Recommendations	UPR Specific Recommendations
120.109 Continue efforts to eliminate bribery and impunity. (Oman → Bosnia and Herzegovina)	110.34 Comply with the European Union’s anti-money-laundering and countering terrorism finance directive (United States of America → Malta)
38.117 Continue efforts to fight against corruption effectively (Iraq → Viet Nam)	104.59 Implement the recommendations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption peer review process conducted in April 2015 and in particular review its legal framework to criminalize the bribery of foreign officials and officials of international organizations and pass legislation that allows for the forfeiture of unexplained wealth by public officials (Fiji → Palau)
135.43 Continue and further strengthen measures to fight against acts of corruption and embezzlement of public funds (Côte d’Ivoire → Equatorial Guinea)	135.20 Continue to take the necessary measures to combat financial crimes, in particular money-laundering and tax evasion and apply the Security Council resolutions as well as the provisions of the Financial Action Task Force concerning the freezing of assets belonging to terrorist organizations (Türkiye → Luxembourg)

This points to a knowledge gap on how to craft technically sound and targeted recommendations.

23. Edward McMahon (2012). The Universal Periodic Review: A Work in Progress. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/09297.pdf> and https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/general-document/2022-05/Database_Action_Category.pdf and Framing the Picture: UPR Info Database Action Category, <https://upr-info.org/en/news/framing-picture-upr-info-database-action-category>.

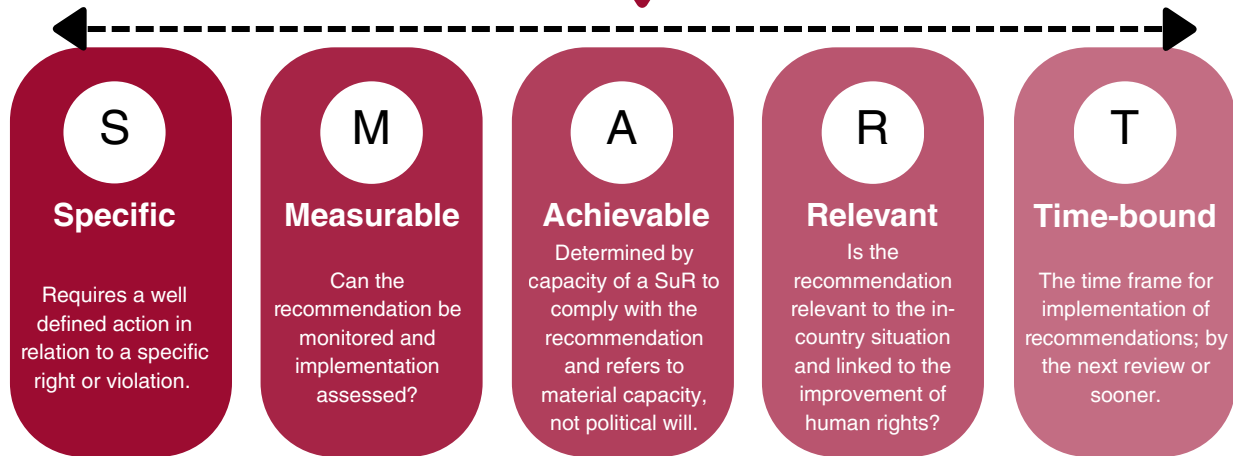


It also reflects missed opportunities to reference and leverage existing anti-corruption frameworks, such as the UNCAC and [UNCAC CoSP resolutions](#), the UNTOC, or review mechanisms like the IRM.

Tips for making UPR recommendations on corruption more effective



Suggest action-oriented recommendations that directly address corruption-related harms and promote measurable change. Use the **SMART** methodology.



SMART recommendations provide the SuR with clear actions to undertake in order to respond to concerns of the rights-holders. Furthermore, this methodology helps to monitor the implementation of the recommendations throughout the UPR cycle.

SMART recommendations also provide concrete and actionable measures that serve as guidance for effective implementation. Thus, when formulating recommendations, ensure that they meet the following criteria: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.



Keep in mind: SMART is not a rigid math formula. Some issues are complex, and it may not always be feasible to apply each criterion strictly. Instead, consider the SMART as a guiding tool, like a helpful lens that can support making the recommendations more focused and practical.

The example below shows how you can apply SMART principles in your writing:



“persons with top executive functions should be required to publicly declare their assets, income, liabilities and financial interests publicly on a regular basis.”²⁴

24. Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), “Fifth Evaluation Round: Evaluation Report on Liechtenstein – Preventing Corruption and Promoting Integrity in Central Governments (Top Executive Functions) and Law Enforcement Agencies”, GRECOEval5Rep(2024)1, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2024), <https://rm.coe.int/grecoeval5rep-2024-1-final-eng-evaluation-report-liechtenstein-conf/1680b5ed09>, 58.



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“Persons with top executive functions should be required to publicly declare their assets, income, liabilities and financial interests publicly on a regular basis.”

It is **SPECIFIC** because the recommendation clearly targets “persons with top executive functions” and outlines exactly what is expected of them: “publicly declaring assets, income, liabilities, and financial interests”.

It is **MEASURABLE** because compliance can be measured by whether or not declarations are made.

It is **ACHIEVABLE** because it may require legislation or policy reform, but it is a realistic/common step that is already used in some countries.

It is **RELEVANT** because it directly addresses the corruption risks tied to high-level public officials.

It is **TIME-BOUND** because “on a regular basis” suggests a recurring timeframe, though this element could be made more specific.

Although CSOs cannot take the floor during the UPR Working Groups, there are [different ways they can suggest SMART recommendations in the preparation phase of the UPR](#). UN member States participating in the review of their peers are the ones formulating the recommendations, but often they are not experts in anti-corruption. This makes it especially important for CSOs to suggest specific and action-oriented recommendations. When preparing recommendations, CSOs should aim to:

- ➔ **Use consistent and technically sound language**, ensuring recommendations are well-informed and aligned with international anti-corruption standards.
- ➔ **Reference existing anti-corruption frameworks**, such as findings from the IRM, UNTOC, GRECO, OGP, FATF, EITI, UNCAC and CoSP resolutions, or other relevant initiatives.
- ➔ **Advocate for stronger coordination** between the UPR and anti-corruption mechanisms to build coherence across UN processes and enhance accountability.



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The following examples illustrate synergies that can be identified between the UNCAC IRM and the UPR recommendations.²⁵

Country	UNCAC IRM Recommendation	UPR Recommendation
Mongolia	Consider adopting codes of conduct for members of the judiciary. ²⁶	116.80 Strengthen the independence of the judiciary , in particular by withdrawing the amendments to the laws on the legal status of judges adopted in March 2019, on prosecutors and on the fight against corruption. ²⁷ 💡 <i>This is a well formulated recommendation, increasing its chance of implementation and monitoring</i>
Romania	Continue to take steps to implement the specific objectives and concrete measures aimed at preventing corruption in public procurement identified in national anti-corruption strategies covering previous years and in the public procurement policy. ²⁸	109.50 Continue its efforts to combat corruption in the health sector by strengthening measures on the violation of legal provisions on public procurement. ²⁹
Honduras	Adopt the legislation necessary for establishing the Council of the Judiciary and securing the independence of the judiciary. ³⁰	104.59 Promote efforts to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and to promote the separation of powers. ³¹

25. Please note that these examples are not intended to illustrate the SMART methodology but to illustrate the synergies between UNCAC IRM and UPR recommendations.

26. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Implementation Review Group, Twelfth Session, "Executive Summary: Mongolia," CAC/COSP/IRG/II/4/1/Add.3, (Vienna: UNODC, 26 January 2023), <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/ImplementationReviewGroup/12-16.June2023/CAC-COSP-IRG-II-4-1-Add.3/2301357E.pdf>, 9.

27. United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Forty-sixth Session, 22 February-19 March 2021, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Mongolia," A/HRC/46/9, (28 December 2020), <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/document/23f767eb-93b1-480b-ab5c-d70b743715b3>, 16.

28. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Implementation Review Group, Fifteenth Session, "Executive Summary: Romania," CAC/COSP/IRG/II/4/1/Add.10, (Vienna: UNODC, 21 September 2023), <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/ImplementationReviewGroup/10-14.June2024/CAC-COSP-IRG-II-4-1-Add.10/2318149E.pdf>, 10.

29. United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Fifty-fourth Session, 11 September-6 October 2023, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Romania," A/HRC/54/7, (Geneva: United Nations, 2023), <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/document/7e6d33f3-e918-4c4f-a5db-7fc8ad95934a>, 11.

30. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Implementation Review Group, Twelfth Session "Executive Summary: Honduras," CAC/COSP/IRG/II/4/1/Add.3, (Vienna: UNODC 27 July 2023), <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/ImplementationReviewGroup/12-16.June2023/CAC-COSP-IRG-II-4-1-Add.3/2301357E.pdf>, 10.

31. United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Forty-sixth Session, 22 February-19 March 2021, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Honduras," A/HRC/46/12, (Geneva: United Nations, 2021), <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/document/912b15d7-1bbe-4172-a751-718a06d1dba1>, 13.



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<p>Islamic Republic of Iran</p>	<p>Strengthen the guarantees of judicial independence and corruption prevention, in particular by excluding the role of politically appointed powers in the appointment, dismissal, transfer and reassignment of judges; ensuring that decisions on removal, transfer and reassignment in the public interest are taken on the basis of clearly stipulated grounds and procedures to allow for greater objectivity; and ensuring the merit-based appointment of judges in law and in practice.³²</p>	<p>26.178 Ensure the independence of the judicial system, the rules of fair trial, the right to defence and access to a freely chosen lawyer.³³</p>
<p>Botswana</p>	<p>Take concrete measures towards the adoption and implementation of the draft national anti-corruption policy, including through the development of implementation action plans and clarification of responsibilities, time frames and resources required, in consultation with all relevant public and non-public stakeholders; attention should be given to ensuring adequate coordination, oversight, as well as awareness-raising and the allocation of sufficient resources; and to specifying the monitoring and evaluation framework, including the proposed establishment of a new national anti-corruption commission.³⁴</p>	<p>137.218 Continue efforts to combat corruption through awareness-raising campaigns among public officials and finalizing the draft national anti-corruption policy.³⁵</p>

32. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Implementation Review Group, Sixteenth Session, "Executive Summary: Iran (Islamic Republic of)," CAC/COSP/IRG/2025/CRP.2, (Vienna, 19 February 2025), <https://track.unodc.org/uploads/documents/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/ImplementationReviewGroup/17-21February2025/CAC-COSP-IRG-2025-CRP.2.pdf>, 14.

33. United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Forty-third Session, 24 February–20 March 2020, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Iran," A/HRC/43/12, (27 December 2019), <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/document/3a7da2f0-d6d4-4ac0-ba3b-002d804f6dd0>, 15.

34. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Implementation Review Group, Tenth Session, "Executive Summary: Botswana," CAC/COSP/IRG/II/1/1/Add.13, (Vienna, 22 January 2019), <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/ImplementationReviewGroup/ExecutiveSummaries2/V1900383e.pdf>, 7.

35. United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Fifty-fourth Session, 11 September–6 October 2023, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Botswana," A/HRC/54/9, (23 June 2023), <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/document/c06914a2-0ccc-4079-a9a2-67be69b04e39>, 21.



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**The UPR: a
space for civil
society
engagement**





The UPR is more than a reporting mechanism; it is a powerful platform for civil society to expose how corruption undermines human rights and democratic institutions. Through active engagement in the UPR process, CSOs can contribute to shaping national solutions by proposing relevant recommendations to UN Member States, advocating for accountability, and promoting the transparency needed to restore public trust and safeguard human rights.

Mona M'Bikay, Executive Director of UPR Info



The UPR as a platform for anti-corruption engagement

Civil society has an important role to play in the UPR process, as it is clearly stated by UNHRC Resolution 5/1, which underlines the importance of ensuring the participation of “all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions.”³⁶ As trusted actors on the ground, CSOs offer unique insights on the human rights violations, including the impact of corruption on marginalised groups or living in vulnerable situations. They help fill in the information gaps of national reports, ensuring that the voices and experiences of rights holders in the SuR are taken into account

Engaging in the UPR allows CSOs to:

- **Broaden anti-corruption advocacy** beyond legal compliance by emphasizing the human impact of corruption on rights such as education, health, and equality.
- **Highlight corruption as a human rights issue** that undermines the State’s duty to respect, protect, and fulfill rights.
- **Bring local realities to the global stage**, ensuring that the lived experiences of communities affected by corruption are reflected in an international forum.
- **Advocate for rights-based reforms** in a mechanism where States are more likely to publicly commit to specific improvements, and where progress is tracked.

Beyond submitting “Other Stakeholders” reports, CSOs have used the UPR as a platform for coordinated advocacy, strategic dialogue with government ministries, and engagement with UN country teams.³⁷ This has helped shape more inclusive national consultations and supported the integration of UPR recommendations into broader development frameworks, such as the SDGs.³⁸

The UPR has served as a catalyst for stronger collaboration among civil society actors. Experiences from the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [Côte d’Ivoire](#), [Peru](#), [India](#), [Kenya](#), and [Malaysia](#) show how coalitions can amplify the advocacy efforts.³⁹ By pooling expertise and resources, these networks increase the likelihood of real change on the ground. This collective action helps sustain engagement through all phases of the UPR and strengthens civil society as a whole.

36. United Nations Human Rights Council, Resolution 5/1, “Institution-Building of the United Nations Human Rights Council”, (June 18, 2007), https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=a/hrc/res/5/1.

37. UPR Info, “Beyond Reporting: Transformational Changes on the Ground”, (UPR Info, June 2022), <https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/general-document/2022-07/Beyond%20Reporting-EN-Web.pdf>.

38. Miloon Kothari, “Study on Emerging Good Practices from the Universal Periodic Review”, (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021), https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Emerging_UPR_GoodPractices.pdf, 96, who observed the benefit in the formation of national civil society coalitions bringing “perceptible change”.

39. Ibid 37, 38; Alice Storey, with the support of Melisa Oleschuk, “Empowering Civil Society organizations at the UPR: Strengthening the Implementation of Recommendations”, (Birmingham City University, 2024), <https://www.open-access.bcu.ac.uk/15802/>; and Fernanda Brandão Lapa, “Universal Periodic Review: A Practical Guide for Civil Society to Build National Coalitions”, (Institute for Development and Human Rights (IDDH) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2024), https://geneva.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/2024/2024_03_UPR-Guide_ENGL.pdf.



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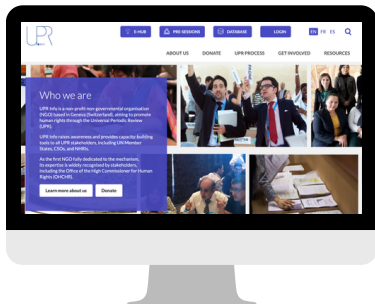


Which are the civil society entry points?

Civil society can engage at every point in the UPR process. Whether your country is in the early stages of preparing its national report for the upcoming interactive dialogue, undergoing the review, or already in the follow-up phase, each stage offers meaningful opportunities to contribute.

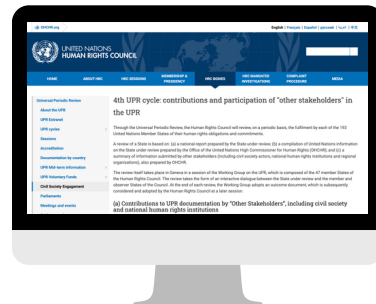
Want to know where your country is in the UPR timeline?

[UPR Info's country pages](#)



See an up-to-date timeline and find out which phase your country is currently in.

[OHCHR page](#)



Explore civil society engagement.

Timeline: Civil society engagement in the UPR Process

Here is a timeline-based overview of entry points for your engagement.

PHASE 1

Preparing for the review

12–8 months before UPR session

- Drafting and submitting reports to OHCHR
- Participate in national consultations
- Advocacy initiatives

Click to navigate to a phase or an entry points

Click the icon to return to the timeline



3.



PHASE 2**From the review to the adoption**

0–6 months after the UPR session

- During the UPR Working Group session
- Between the review and the adoption
- During the final adoption

PHASE 3**Implementation and follow-up**

6 months to 4 years after the review

- After the adoption
- Mid-term reporting (2 to 2.5 years after review)

PHASE 1 **Preparing for the review**● **Drafting and submitting reports to the OHCHR**

Starting at the country level, one of the most effective ways CSOs can engage in the UPR process is by submitting written “stakeholders’ reports” to the OHCHR, usually 6 to 8 months before the review takes place.

➔ Report must be submitted via the [OHCHR platform](#).

➔ If any issues are encountered whilst submitting, please get in contact via

ohchr-uprsubmissions@un.org



Deadlines are strict—late submissions will not be accepted. Check deadlines [on this page](#).

This is a key opportunity to bring attention to priority human rights issues, including the impact of corruption, and to ensure that the representatives of the UN Member States have access to credible, reliable, and up-to-date information as they prepare to attend the UPR of your country.



These submissions are compiled by OHCHR into a 10-page summary report, which forms part of the official review material.⁴⁰

→ All the reports used for the summary will also be public on the [country pages of OHCHR's website](#) and on [UPR Info's website](#).

Before starting to draft the report, it's important to **gather strong evidence and consult with affected communities**, including marginalized groups and those living in vulnerable situations. Holding consultations with other NGOs or national actors, collecting disaggregated data, and documenting case studies can help ensure your report reflects realities on the ground and strengthens the legitimacy of your analysis.

A well-prepared report allows CSOs to contribute meaningfully by:

- providing first-hand information on how corruption affects human rights in their country;
- highlighting progress or gaps in anti-corruption efforts since the last review;
- proposing clear, actionable anti-corruption recommendations that States can raise during the review.

Any CSO can participate by registering on the [OHCHR platform](#) and submitting a report in line with the [OHCHR's guidelines](#).



Tip: Pay special attention to *noted* recommendations in your reporting. These often highlight risk areas and can be key to guiding prevention efforts.

Types of submission

- CSOs can submit one individual report⁴¹ and one joint submission as a lead organization per UPR cycle.
- CSOs can participate in multiple joint submissions, but they cannot lead more than one submission.
- In the case of joint submissions, all contributing organizations must be clearly listed, and one lead organization must be identified.

What to include in the report

- Focus on the key anti-corruption issues your organization works on, highlighting both challenges and good practices in the State's implementation efforts.



40. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Universal Periodic Review: information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders' written submissions (Geneva: OHCHR), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/TechnicalGuideEN.pdf>.

41. Individual report refers to a report submitted by a single organization, not by an individual person.



What to include in the report

- ✓ Where possible, clearly identify the recommendations your country received in the previous cycle (e.g., cycle, paragraph number, recommending country) to strengthen the traceability of your analysis.
- ✓ Provide an update on the consequences of corruption and its impact on human rights since the last review. Where possible, include a gender-sensitive and intersectional analysis to show how corruption affects different groups differently based on overlapping factors such as race, class, disability, or migration status.
- ✓ Use firsthand information and data, supported by concrete examples of corruption-related human rights violations. The report should refrain from including personal or individual cases. Instead, it should highlight structural human rights concerns—such as corruption-related violations—and use representative examples only to illustrate broader trends or systemic issues.
- ✓ [Include SMART recommendations](#)—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound—that are action-oriented and practical. Where possible, ensure that the solutions suggested address the needs of those most marginalized by applying an intersectional lens.
- ✓ Reference in your analysis recommendations from other human rights mechanisms as well as from relevant anti-corruption frameworks, conventions, and initiatives when applicable.

[See here UNCAC provisions that are linked to human rights obligations*](#)

**A non-exhaustive list of examples*



The UPR and the SDGs

This guide aims to bridge the silos between human rights and anti-corruption efforts, and the UPR offers a unique entry point to do so. Importantly, it is essential to recall that the UPR is also closely linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) are grounded in the promotion and protection of human rights. Over 90% of the SDG targets align directly with international human rights and labor standards. The SDGs' core commitment to "leave no one behind" echoes key human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination, reinforcing the shared vision of inclusive, just, and sustainable development.⁴² Institutions like the [Danish Institute for Human Rights](#) and [OHCHR](#) have helped make these connections visible by developing tools that map UPR recommendations to specific SDG targets—such as the [SDG-Human Rights Data Explorer](#) and the [Universal Human Rights Index \(UHRI\)](#).

There is an increasing number of references in UPR recommendations to the SDGs. For example, recommendations that are required to achieve the target of quality education (SDG 4) and health (SDG 3), or no poverty (SDG 1), or on measures linked to SDG 16. Recommendations that refer to the SDGs are often accepted by States as they tend to align with existing development plans and priorities.

PHASE 1

Goal 16—Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

SDG 16 addresses fundamental freedoms, civil and political rights, and calls for access to justice and the development of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. Among the [SDG 16 targets](#), the following are especially relevant to anti-corruption efforts:

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



- ✈ **16.3** - Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all;
- ✈ **16.4** - By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime;
- ✈ **16.5** - Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms;
- ✈ **16.6** - Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels;
- ✈ **16.7** - Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels;

42. Danish Institute for Human Rights, "Linking the Universal Periodic Review to the SDGs", https://www.humanrights.dk/files/media/migrated/old_upr_folder_final.pdf.



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16.10 - Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

Tips for reporting on previous UPR recommendations



Assess the implementation status

Indicate the status of each recommendation based on your own analysis. You can categorize them as:

- Fully implemented
- Partially implemented
- In progress
- Not implemented - *if not fully implemented, briefly explain the challenges or barriers and suggest areas where technical assistance or cooperation could support progress.*

How to find previous UPR recommendations?

To identify recommendations from previous UPR cycles:



- [UPR Info Database](#) - User-friendly platform focused exclusively on UPR recommendations, with filters by country, theme, recommending State, and more.
- [Universal Human Rights Index \(UHRI\)](#) - Managed by OHCHR, this tool includes recommendations from all human rights mechanisms and shows links to relevant SDGs.

What are OHCHR's formal requirements for UPR submissions?

- Reports must be [uploaded](#) as Word documents. Annexes may be submitted in other formats, such as PDF.
- Word limit:
 - Individual report: max 2,815 words
 - Joint report: max 5,630 words
 (*cover page, endnotes, and annexes are not included in the word limit*)



What are OHCHR's formal requirements for UPR submissions?

- ✓ Written in a UN language (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian or Chinese).
- ✓ Use formal, objective, and factual language.
- ✓ Do not include visuals (e.g., maps, photos).
- ✓ Number all paragraphs and pages.
- ✓ Ensure your submission is identifiable (not anonymous).



UPR submissions are public and will appear on the OHCHR website, including the name of the submitting organization.

When drafting your report, be mindful of certain content that **should not be included**.

- ✗ **Do not include confidential or unverified information** that could compromise the safety or privacy of individuals.
 - ➔ Only include individual cases if:
 - The person has given consent (or family, if applicable),
 - Their safety will not be put at risk,
 - The case is already public,
 - It illustrates a broader issue or common practice.
- ✗ **Do not include names or details** that could identify children or victims of sexual violence.
- ✗ **Steer clear of politically partisan or abusive language** that detracts from a human rights-based approach.
- ✗ Do not focus solely on **personal cases or petitions**.

Submissions that contain inadmissible elements will not meet the acceptability criteria and may be excluded from consideration. You should consider directing individual cases to other UN or regional human rights mechanisms.



● Participate in National Consultations

States are strongly encouraged to hold national consultations in preparation for their report and review, engaging all relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, the judiciary, ministries, and civil society. By participating in these consultations, CSOs and the NHRIs can ensure that their concerns regarding corruption and its impact on human rights are heard and included in the State's report. However, it is essential to assess potential risks and reprisals when engaging with the SuR, particularly on sensitive issues like corruption.



Safety and Reprisals Warning

Civil society must approach this process with caution, ensuring they protect their safety and the safety of their sources by employing secure communication methods and working through trusted networks to counter potential threats and retaliation.

Report reprisals:

Any intimidation or reprisals related to UPR participation, as well as any other engagement with all UN organs, entities or agencies, anywhere in the world should be reported to

→ ohchr-reprisals@un.org



Learn more:

[OHCHR – Guide on submitting information about reprisals](#)
[OHCHR – Reprisals Reports](#)
[UNESCO Safety Guidance](#)

● Advocacy initiatives

Advocacy before the UPR (from 6 to 2 months before the review)

UN Member States can potentially attend the UPR Working Group sessions of all countries under review—14 per session—each of which includes three official reports (the State's national report, the OHCHR compilation, and the Stakeholders' summary). With so much material to read, advocacy efforts following the submission of reports are critical to ensure that your organization's human rights priorities stand out and gain the attention they deserve.

To help ensure that issues like corruption-related human rights violations are reflected in the UPR, it is essential to engage in strategic advocacy with UN Member States. This can



lead to the inclusion of your priority issues in the statements that UN Member States will deliver during your country's UPR.

You can conduct advocacy in two main ways:



At the national level



At the international level

Whenever possible and in both cases, coordinate with other CSOs involved in the UPR process. Joint advocacy, whether through group meetings or a shared division of tasks, can strengthen your message and improve the chances that your priority issues are raised by UN Member States.



Tip: Questions in advance

In addition to proposing recommendations in your report and during advocacy efforts, CSOs can also suggest questions in advance for UN Member States to ask the SuR. This growing practice helps diplomats save time during their oral intervention and allows the SuR to prepare more informed responses for the interactive dialogue.



National advocacy

- Map relevant national stakeholders (e.g. government officials, parliamentarians, NHRI) and engage with them to raise awareness about your priority human rights issues. Building these connections can help you gain influence and support for the implementation of UPR recommendations.
- Map and connect with the foreign resident embassies in your country. Request meetings to share the key findings and priorities outlined in your UPR submission.
- Prepare advocacy material (factsheets) where the findings of your report and suggested recommendations are presented in a clear and concise manner.

- Consider organizing group in-country briefings. Modeled on [UPR Info's Pre-sessions](#), these briefings—led by CSOs or NHRIs—are an opportunity to inform resident embassies about key human rights concerns, including corruption-related violations. Aim to present information in a clear, credible, and compelling way, giving diplomats the tools they need to raise these issues during the UPR and promote strong, actionable recommendations.



International advocacy

- Develop factsheets or other advocacy material to share key findings and recommendations with UN Member States.
- Map and connect with Permanent Missions in Geneva. Request meetings or send them concise advocacy material with key findings and recommendations.
- Organize a side event at the HRC to raise awareness on the impact and consequences of corruption in your country.
- Apply to the call to participate in UPR Info's [Pre-sessions in Geneva](#).

UPR Info's Pre-sessions

They offer a valuable platform for CSOs and NHRIs to engage directly in the UPR process. Sessions are held in Geneva about two months before the review of each country, and provide an opportunity to present timely, firsthand information and propose concrete recommendations to diplomats who will speak during the UPR Working Group. Being in Geneva also enables CSOs to hold bilateral meetings with representatives of Permanent Missions, further strengthening advocacy efforts on anti-corruption and human rights issues.

Even if not selected for the Pre-sessions, CSOs can still engage internationally by requesting online or in-person meetings with Permanent Missions and organizing side events during the HRC to amplify their messages on accountability and transparency.

Call for applications is published on [UPR Info's website](#).





Tip: UPR-focused parallel events to the HRC

CSOs with ECOSOC status can organize side events during any phase of the UPR process—not just before review. These events may offer an opportunity to bring international attention to anti-corruption issues. Room requests must be submitted through the online registration platform “**EVENTS**”—at least two weeks before the session—via the OHCHR website. Space is limited and granted on a first-come, first-served basis.



Tip: Who to prioritize in your advocacy?

Effective advocacy starts with identifying the most relevant UN Member States to engage. Focus on those that:

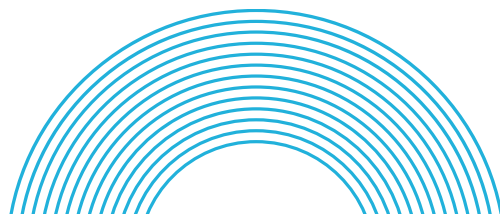
- have previously made recommendation(s) to the country on corruption-related issues;
- have addressed corruption and related human rights issues in recommendations to other countries, even if not your country yet.

Use the [UPR Info Database](#) to identify them, and then reach out to their embassies and Geneva missions with your advocacy materials.

How can you create an effective factsheet?

A well-crafted factsheet can be a useful tool to support your advocacy initiatives. Keep it concise, no more than 2 pages, and focused, clearly highlighting why anti-corruption should be a priority for your country’s review. Use visuals—such as infographics, charts, or images—to make key data and messages stand out and ensure your factsheet is easy to read and impactful.

[See factsheet templates](#)





Checklist

- Summarize key developments since the last review, noting changes or ongoing patterns.
- Refer to the national anti-corruption frameworks (laws, policies, and institutional developments) and highlight progress or gaps.
- Link corruption to human rights impacts.
- When possible, use a gender-sensitive and intersectional approach and show how corruption disproportionately affects marginalized or at-risk groups.
- Include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) recommendations.
- Cite all sources (reports, case studies, and expert opinions) and provide your contact information.



Using an intersectional approach

“Intersectionality” refers to how different aspects of a person's identity—such as gender, race, class, disability, or sexual orientation—intersect and interact to shape their experiences, often resulting in overlapping forms of discrimination.⁴³



43. Kathy Davis, “Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful,” *Feminist Theory* 9, no. 1 (2008): <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700108086364>.

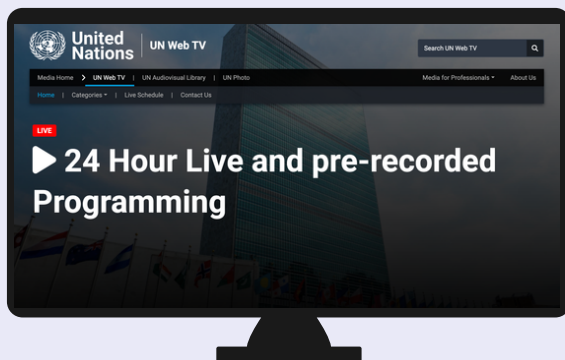


PHASE 2

From the review to the adoption

After most of the preparation phase takes place at the country level, the process moves to Geneva for the actual review. While CSOs don't have a speaking role during the UPR Working Group session—since the interactive dialogue is exclusively among UN Member States—there are still meaningful ways to stay involved.

● During the Working Group Session



CSOs can watch the UPR Working Group live via [UN Web TV](#).

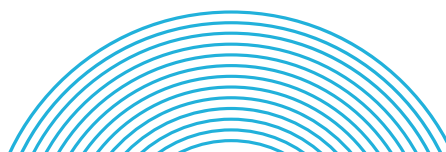
This enables CSOs to:

- **Track corruption-related recommendations** made by Member States;
- **Evaluate whether your advocacy efforts had an impact** and were addressed during the dialogue;
- **Raise awareness among the general public** by organizing live screenings, webinars, or panel discussions with journalists, legal experts, policymakers, and other stakeholders;
- **Engage local media and actors** to highlight the importance of anti-corruption efforts discussed during the session.



Tip: Use social media to maximise visibility

Social media is a powerful tool throughout all phases of the UPR—before, during, and after the review—to raise awareness, build support, and promote accountability. CSOs often launch campaigns using hashtags like #AdoptMyRecommendation, while NGO coalitions may coordinate efforts through joint messaging or dedicated UPR-focused channels.



You can use social media platforms to:



Advocate for specific recommendations in advance.



Share real-time updates and reactions during the review.



Inform the public and stakeholders about the outcome and follow-up commitments.



For live updates and monitoring of the UPR Working Group sessions, follow:

Human Rights Council



@UN_HRC

UPR Info



@UPRinfo



Bluesky:

@uprinfo.bsky.social

● Between the review and the adoption

After the review, the SuR may share its preliminary responses to the recommendations received. However, there is a growing practice among States of leaving them “pending” to allow for consultations at the national level before sharing the final decision at the HRC. The period between the review and the adoption of the UPR report is a valuable window for advocacy. CSOs can use this window to advocate for the acceptance of relevant UPR recommendations.



Coordinate with other CSOs to analyze the recommendations received and develop advocacy strategies aimed at encouraging the government to accept pending or noted recommendations.

This may include:

- Identifying corruption-related recommendations and prioritizing those most crucial for systemic reforms.
- Developing joint advocacy initiatives, such as petitions or public statements, to increase pressure on the government.
- Aligning efforts with international anti-corruption bodies and institutions to reinforce credibility and impact.





Meet with government officials, including inter-ministerial committees and parliamentarians, to advocate for the acceptance of key anti-corruption recommendations.

These meetings should:

- Present evidence-based arguments on why adopting these recommendations is crucial;
- Provide suggestions on how CSOs can contribute to implementing anti-corruption measures, such as monitoring reforms, providing technical expertise, or facilitating capacity-building initiatives;
- Highlight international best practices and peer-reviewed data to reinforce the necessity of implementing recommended anti-corruption policies.



Use press briefings and outreach initiatives to raise public awareness about corruption-related recommendations can increase pressure on the government to accept and implement them.

To maximise impact, CSOs can consider to:

- Issue press releases summarizing key anti-corruption recommendations and why they matter, using simple and accessible language;
- Translate recommendations into local languages to ensure broader understanding and public engagement;
- Organize press conferences featuring experts, whistleblowers, and victims of corruption to illustrate the impact of government inaction;
- Collaborate with journalists, including through radio and TV shows, to uncover corruption cases that highlight the urgency of adopting and implementing the UPR recommendations.

● During the Final Adoption

The adoption of the UPR Working Group marks the last stage of the UPR in Geneva before it returns to the national level for follow-up and implementation.

Oral statements at the HRC

CSOs with ECOSOC status and 'A status' NHRIs have the opportunity to make oral statements under Item 6 of the HRC's agenda. The statements can be delivered in person or via video. Video statements are available only for CSOs that do not have an office or representative in Geneva, and that do not have individuals accredited to the relevant session of the HRC.

Consult the guidelines to deliver a [video statement here](#).

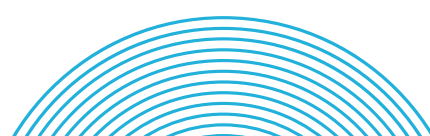


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Note that for UPR adoptions, only the first 10 CSOs to request the floor typically get to deliver statements.

These statements provide an opportunity to:

- Highlight gaps and discrepancies in the UPR process, such as the government's failure to hold national consultations on corruption issues.
- Emphasize priority anti-corruption concerns and outline strategies for monitoring the government's implementation of recommendations.
- Advocate for stronger international support and oversight mechanisms to ensure that anti-corruption measures are enforced.
- Set accountability benchmarks and expectations for the next UPR cycle, keeping corruption at the forefront of the agenda.



Checklist

- Visit this [OHCHR's page](#) to find the exact registration window, usually 1-2 weeks before the HRC session at 2 p.m.
- Use the [official platform](#) to register your oral statement.
- Craft your statement to fit within the strict 1 minute 30 seconds limit —focus on key points and be clear.

**If your NGO does not have ECOSOC status, you may still engage in these activities by working with an accredited organization.*



ECOSOC Status

ECOSOC status, granted by the UN Economic and Social Council, enables CSOs to actively participate in UN processes. This includes attending sessions, submitting written and oral statements, and organizing side events at key UN forums such as the HRC and major UN conferences.

- ➔ To find partners for coordinating UPR advocacy initiatives, consult the list of NGOs with ECOSOC status [here](#).
- ➔ To request ECOSOC status, [visit this page](#).

Written statements at the HRC

CSOs and NHRIs can also submit written statements under any item of the HRC agenda, including Item 6. As written statements are not subject to time constraints, they allow for elaborating more on the issues raised. However, written statements have less impact than



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oral statements. CSOs should use both options to maximise their impact.



Checklist

- Visit [OHCHR's page](#) to check the registration window, usually 2-3 weeks before the HRC session.
- Use the online platform "[EVENTS](#)" to submit the statements.
- Keep within the word limit: 2,000 words for general consultative status; 1,500 words for special consultative status.
- Submit the statement in a UN language.
- Ensure the content respects UN standards and avoid abusive language.



Useful resources

You may download on the following pages:

- ▶ [Guidelines for NGO written statements](#)
- ▶ [Step-by-step guide for submitting statements via EVENTS](#)

For questions, contact OHCHR's Civil Society Team at:

ohchr-hrcngo@un.org

PHASE 3

Implementation and follow-up

After the report's adoption, the UPR process primarily shifts back to the national level, where implementation and follow-up take place. The implementation phase is the most important part of the UPR process—this is when recommendations are meant to turn into real action on the ground. While the States hold the primary responsibility to implement the UPR recommendations, CSOs play a vital role in supporting and monitoring the government's efforts.



● After the adoption

While significant effort often goes into preparing submissions and engaging during the review in Geneva, the period that follows is equally important. This implementation phase requires sustained advocacy, strategic follow-up, and coordinated action to ensure the government follows through on its commitments.

CSOs may face challenges such as limited time, resources, and technical capacity. The following pages offer practical suggestions to support engagement during this phase. Working in coordination with other NGOs and national stakeholders can significantly strengthen the impact and visibility of follow-up efforts.

Raise awareness of UPR recommendations

Informing and mobilising the general public and decision makers related to anti-corruption is essential.

CSOs can:

- Organize press briefings, media campaigns, and community dialogues to highlight key commitments and their importance.
- Host targeted workshops and training sessions for government officials, parliamentarians, law enforcement, and judicial bodies to explain their roles in implementing anti-corruption-related recommendations.
- Develop and distribute clear, accessible materials that explain the link between corruption and human rights violations, making the issues relatable to broader audiences.

Cooperate with other stakeholders

Combating corruption effectively requires building strong, coordinated alliances.

CSOs can:

- Partner with NHRIs, UN agencies, donor organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to amplify efforts and share resources;
- Advocate for the development of a national human rights monitoring plan that outlines specific anti-corruption actions applicable across all sectors of government and public services;
- Engage actively with parliamentarians and legislators to advocate for necessary legal and policy reforms that reflect the UPR recommendations;
- Advocate for the adoption and effective implementation of access to information laws.
- Encourage public institutions to proactively publish key data—such as budgets, procurement contracts, and audit reports—to improve transparency and reduce opportunities for corruption;
- Engage with the judicial system to promote independent oversight mechanisms and concrete anti-corruption measures, and ensure that victims of corruption have access



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- to effective remedies, including legal redress and compensation;
- Engage the private sector and advocate for the adoption of human rights due diligence processes by private companies, encouraging transparency, anti-corruption policies, and accountability mechanisms aligned with international standards such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Push for public reporting requirements on anti-corruption efforts;
- Maintain dialogue with UN Member States through their embassies to encourage diplomatic support and sustained pressure for government action.



The role of donor states in advancing UPR implementation

For UN Member States that are part of the OECD [Development Assistance Committee](#) (DAC), UPR recommendations can serve as a useful tool to guide and prioritize development assistance, particularly by supporting the implementation of the recommendations they have made to partner countries.⁴⁴

The DAC's mandate is to promote development cooperation and policies that contribute to sustainable development, including poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, and improving living standards. Supporting the implementation of UPR recommendations is fully aligned with these goals. To maximize the effectiveness of development cooperation, it is therefore essential that UPR recommendations are formulated according to the [SMART methodology](#).

Provide expertise and support implementation

Leveraging your organization's knowledge and skills to help translate recommendations into concrete results.

CSOs can:

- Identify priority anti-corruption recommendations and focus your resources on supporting their implementation;
- Offer technical advice, capacity-building, or tools to government agencies and partners involved in the reform process;
- Collaborate with investigative journalists, whistleblower protection groups, and other watchdog organizations to expose corruption and support transparency;
- Develop public awareness campaigns on transparency laws, [access to information](#), and whistleblower protections.

44. Gianni Magazzeni, "The Future of the United Nations", (Conversation with Experts, Birmingham City University, 27 January 2025), <https://bcuassets.blob.core.windows.net/docs/gm-statement-birmingham-133879742353852642.pdf>.

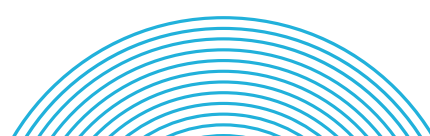


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Monitor and report progress

Your organization can play a critical watchdog role to hold the government accountable.

CSOs can:

- Monitor government actions and document progress or shortcomings in implementing anti-corruption recommendations;
- Prepare and submit a mid-term report to the HRC to keep international attention focused on implementation. Inform recommending States on progress related to recommendations they have formulated;
- Use international forums and public platforms to maintain pressure on governments and promote transparency.



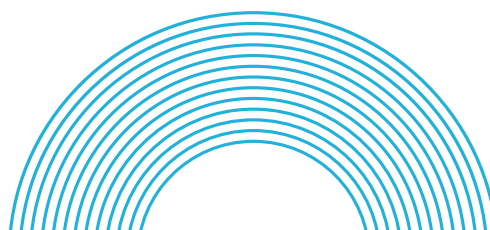
Tip: Regular updates to the HRC

CSOs and NHRIs can also deliver an oral statement during the Item 6 General Debate in March or September sessions and, for example, present updates and encourage the SuR to implement the recommendations.



Tip: Support National Implementation Tools

Advocate for and support national follow-up mechanisms such as a National Human Rights Action Plan (with clear baselines and gender equality indicators), a National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF), or a national recommendations tracking database (NRTD). Where needed, States can also request seed funding through the **UPR Voluntary Fund** to build institutional capacity, align UPR implementation with the SDGs, and strengthen national follow-up systems. While CSOs cannot apply directly, they can advocate for their government to do so.



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Useful resources

During the 3rd UPR cycle, the OHCHR's UPR Branch developed two key tools to support CSOs in monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

- 1 **Letter by the High Commissioner for Human Rights** sent to the SuR, highlighting implementation priorities based on accepted UPR recommendations.

How to use it:

- Disseminate it widely to government ministries, national institutions, other civil society partners, including the NHRI, and UN agencies in-country.
- Use it as an entry point to open dialogue with national stakeholders and push for action on priority issues.

- 2 **Thematic Matrix of UPR Recommendations** annexed to the High Commissioner's Letter, clustering recommendations by theme (e.g., corruption, justice, education).

How to use it:

- Identify and track recommendations related to anti-corruption that were accepted by the SuR.
- Use the matrix to advocate for implementation, mobilize technical support, and guide donor or UN engagement.

● Mid-term reporting

At the midpoint of the UPR cycle (2-2.5 years after the review), all national actors, including States, CSOs and NHRIs, can [submit a mid-term report](#) assessing the level of implementation of UPR recommendations. This voluntary good practice has been increasingly used to draw attention to gaps in implementation and keep national commitments high on the agenda.

A mid-term report allows CSOs to:

- ➔ Monitor and assess the implementation of UPR recommendations—whether they've been fully, partially, or not implemented at all.
- ➔ Identify and highlight gaps or setbacks in all human rights fields, including in anti-corruption efforts.
- ➔ Propose legislative or institutional reforms to strengthen compliance.
- ➔ Keep up the pressure for change at both national and international levels.



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There's no official format or deadline for submitting a mid-term report. However, there is a [suggested template by OHCHR](#) and some common practices can help make your report more effective and impactful:



Checklist

- ✓ Begin collecting data and conducting your research at least six months before you plan to submit the report. This allows enough time to gather quality information and consult with relevant stakeholders.
- ✓ Conduct consultations with diverse stakeholders, including anti-corruption agencies, law enforcement, the judiciary, government officials, parliamentarians, whistleblowers, private sector representatives, CSOs, NHRIs, and UN agencies to gather a broad perspective on progress and challenges.
- ✓ Structure your report around key anti-corruption areas that emerged in the UPR Working Group to give it clarity and focus.
- ✓ Present findings in a clear and accessible manner using tables and case studies highlighting corruption trends and best practices.

Publishing and promoting the report

To maximize their impact, it is crucial to share the final report with all stakeholders involved in the preparation phase, including government officials, NHRIs, media, parliamentarians, academics, and UN agencies. To enhance visibility and advocacy, consider the following actions:

- ➔ Send the mid-term reports to the OHCHR via email to: ohchr-uprsubmissions@un.org
- ➔ Present your findings during the [Item 6 General Debate at the HRC](#) by delivering [an oral statement](#) that highlights key anti-corruption challenges, progress made, and areas needing further action;
- ➔ Engage with resident embassies of UN Member States and UN Agencies, including UNODC, to discuss the report's findings and seek diplomatic or concrete support to advocate for stronger anti-corruption measures, share insights, and share good practices.
- ➔ Organize a press conference to present the report to journalists, emphasizing the implementation gaps, and government commitments to anti-corruption reforms.



→ Share the mid-term report with UPR Info via email at: info@upr-info.org.



Tip: Use traffic-light color coding

To clearly show the implementation status of the relevant recommendations in your mid-term report use the traffic color coding:

- Green – Fully implemented
- Yellow – Partially implemented
- Red – Not implemented

Check out UPR Info's publication "[UPR Mid-term Reporting: Optimising Sustainable Implementation](#)" for more examples, and good practices for your mid-term reporting process.



Tip: Mid-term Factsheets

Create and share factsheets summarizing key data and case studies to share with the public, advocacy groups, and UPR stakeholders to raise awareness and drive action.

[See factsheet template](#)



Tip: Side events at the HRC

Depending on the financial and human resources available, CSOs can amplify the impact of your mid-term report on anti-corruption at the international level by **organizing a side event** during a HRC session. This event can be used to present key findings, discuss implementation challenges, and advocate for stronger anti-corruption measures, bringing together diplomats, UN experts, and civil society representatives.



Annex: Further relevant information and resources

I. Tables

IRM and UPR comparative table

Aspect	UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM)	Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
Mandating Body	Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) to the UNCAC	UN General Assembly
Legal Basis for Review	UNCAC articles	UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ratified human rights treaties, voluntary pledges and commitments made by the State, applicable international humanitarian law.
Focus	Prevention, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation and asset recovery.	Comprehensive human rights (civil, political, economic, social, cultural, collective rights and thematic/group-specific human rights protection)
Start year	2010	2008
Participation	191 Parties	All 193 UN Member States
Review Frequency	In its first phase: once per cycle (1st: 2010–2015; 2nd: ongoing since 2015). States Parties are currently deliberating on the scope and modalities for the second phase.	Every 4.5 years



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Aspect	UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM)	Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
Reviewers	Each State party undergoes peer reviewing by two countries, one of which belongs to the same regional group. The selection of these peers is determined through a drawing of lots at the commencement of each year within the review cycle.	<p>Chaired by the HRC President and conducted by its 47 member States. Other Member and Observer States can also participate in the review.</p> <p>A troika of three rapporteur States, selected by lot among the members of the HRC, assists each review.</p>
Documents for review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country self-assessment questionnaire • Additional information from the dialogue with the SuR, including insights gathered during country visits, as well as potential input from other non-governmental stakeholders, if approved by the SuR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A National report • A compilation of UN information • Summary of other stakeholders' information
Civil Society Participation	<p>Limited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to participate in country visits and to contribute in other stages of the process, including on follow-up actions, if invited • Observer status at CoSP; non-governmental stakeholders are not allowed to participate as observers in UNCAC subsidiary bodies, including the Implementation Review Group (which oversees the IRM) • Monitor implementation of UNCAC articles and of CoSP resolutions, on a voluntary basis/outside the official review process 	<p>Comprehensive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting reports before the review • Conducting advocacy related to UPR recommendations throughout the process • Delivering oral and written statements during the HRC sessions dedicated to the Adoption of the Reports and General debates on the UPR (Item 6) • Monitoring the implementation efforts by the States • Contributing to the implementation of UPR recommendations



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Aspect	UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM)	Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
Civil Society Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society-led initiative to track and monitor UNCAC country views and follow-up through outreach to governments, to help identify entry points for civil society participation in country review visits and at other stages of the review process and follow-up. 	
Transparency and Access to Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self Assessment Checklist (optional) 2. Country Report (optional) 3. Executive Summary (obligatory) 4. Limited transparency on the review process status, including a lack of updated timetables on the status of an often-delayed review process, on the timing of upcoming country visits, and contact information for UNCAC focal points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPR Working Groups are public and live-streamed on UN Web-TV • The three reports are online approximately 6-8 weeks before review • Universal Human Rights Index provides open access to UPR recommendations
Follow-up Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mandatory follow-up at UNCAC fora, despite provisions in the IRM TOR for follow-up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal international follow-up mechanism



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Aspect	UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM)	Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
Follow-up Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discussion of reviews and discussion of progress, challenges at the IRG meetings (but not on findings of specific country reviews) • The absence of a formal follow-up process and reporting creates significant obstacles to assessing whether States have implemented country review recommendations • There is no system in place to monitor progress across cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next cycle assesses implementation of supported recommendations; • States are encouraged to establish a national reporting, implementation and follow-up mechanism; • Midterm voluntary reporting by States is recommended.
Outcome Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Review Report (publication optional) • Executive Summary (publication mandatory) 	Outcome Report and addendum with the responses to the recommendations (publicly available).

UNCAC provisions and human rights obligations

UNCAC Provisions	HR instruments/articles
Art 9. Public procurement and management of public finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICESCR Article 2(1) • Maximum use of available resources to realize rights • ICESCR Article 11
Article 10. Public reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR Art. 19(2); UDHR Art. 19 • Freedom to seek, receive and impart information
Article 11. Measures relating to the judiciary and prosecution services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR Art. 14; UDHR Art. 10



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UNCAC Provisions	HR instruments/articles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal • ICCPR Art. 26; UDHR Art. 7 • All are equal before the law
<p>Article 13. Promoting the active participation of society in preventing and combating corruption, including in decision making processes</p> <p>Ensuring effective access to information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR Art. 25 • Participation in public affairs • UDHR Art. 21 • Participation in government
<p>Article 32. Protection of witnesses, experts, and victims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR Art. 9 • Right to liberty and security of person • UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders Art. 12.2 • Protection of individuals from violence, threats, and retaliation
<p>Article 33. Protection of reporting persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR Art. 19 • Freedom of expression • UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders Art. 9.3 • The right to complain about the policies and actions with regard to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
<p>Article 35. Compensation for damage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR Art. 2(3); UDHR Art. 8 • Right to an effective remedy



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II. Factsheets

Review report factsheet

ADVOCACY FACTSHEET TEMPLATE

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF "COUNTRY" + UPR CYCLE
YOUR LOGO(S)

HUMAN RIGHTS THEME

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM PREVIOUS CYCLES

What recommendations have been previously made on your issue(s)? On what particular sub-topic(s)? Which States made those recommendations? Were the recommendations supported or noted? If there were many recommendations on your topic, try to summarise the content of recommendations. Tell what was the acceptancy rate of recommendations on that topic. Briefly mention if recommendations on these issues have been implemented, partially implemented or not implemented. Mention if similar recommendations has been made by Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures or by other regional or national human rights mechanisms. Mention also the links with the SDGs. Use our database of recommendations.
(Approximately 100 words)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Briefly mention the relevant national legislation, policies, projects and initiatives existing to deal with the issue (both governmental and from civil society organisations, NHRIs etc). What is being done at the national level to address your issue of concern? Are there laws, policies, activities being done?
(Approximately 120 words)

CHALLENGES

Note only the key rights challenges and their corresponding impact(s), justifying the needs for CSO suggested recommendations.
Approx. 120 words on critical human rights challenges (3 to 10 bullet points directly related to the recommendations)

1. Challenge a)
2. Challenge b)
3. Challenge c)

IMPACTS

When describing the impact of the challenge identified, focus on the main risks or main consequences of the current situation. To demonstrate the scope of the impact, try to add relevant data such as statistics, numbers, main trends.
Approx. 800 words on the corresponding impact of each challenge

1. Impact a)
2. Impact b)
3. Impact c)

Page 1

[Download factsheet](#)



Mid-term review report factsheet

Mid-term Report Factsheet – 3rd cycle
Universal Periodic Review of Country
Midterm assessment of COUNTRY's implementation of recommendations received during the YEAR Universal Periodic Review

Your logo

Human rights theme

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM THE REVIEW

What recommendations were made on your issue(s)? On what particular sub-topic(s)? Which States made those recommendations? Were the recommendations supported or noted? If there were many recommendations on your topic, try to summarize the content of recommendations. Tell what was the acceptancy rate of recommendations on that topic. Briefly mention if recommendations on these issues have been implemented, partially implemented or not implemented. Mention if similar recommendations has been made by [Treaty Bodies](#), [Special Procedures](#) or by other regional or national human rights mechanisms. Mention also the links with the [SDGs](#). [Use our database of recommendations](#)
Approximately 100 words. You can use graphs and statistics to make this section more visual.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Briefly mention the relevant national legislation, policies, projects and initiatives existing to deal with the issue (both governmental and from civil society organisations, NHRIS etc), as well as projects to improve the human rights issue situation as per the recommendations received.

What is being done at the national level to address your issue of concern? Are there laws, policies, activities being done? How does the National Human Rights Action Plan address these issues? And the Agenda 2030 for the country?
Approximately 120 words

UPR BREAKDOWN

Recommending State	Rec Number	Text of the recommendation	Status (supported /noted)	Implementation assessment
				Not implemented
				Partially implemented
				Fully implemented

Download factsheet



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III. Relevant organizations involved in the UPR

Below is a non-exhaustive list of international and non-governmental organizations involved in the UPR process.

International organizations:⁴⁵

- [United Nations](#)
- [UNESCO](#)
- [OHCHR](#)
- [UNDP](#)
- [UNFPA](#)
- [UNICEF](#)
- [UNWomen](#)
- [UNHCR](#)
- [GANHRI](#)

Non-governmental organizations:

- [UPR Info](#)
- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [International Service for Human Rights](#)
- [CIVICUS](#)
- [International Federation for Human Rights](#)
- [Center for Civil and Political Rights](#)

IV. Relevant HRs database

UPR Info Database

This is an online platform developed and maintained by UPR Info. This database provides comprehensive access to all recommendations and voluntary pledges made during the UPR process since its inception in 2008. It includes:

- The full text of UPR recommendations made to each country
- States' responses (noted or supported)
- Thematic categorization of recommendations (e.g., corruption, rule of law, freedom of expression)
- The ability to search by country, session, recommending state, and theme
- Data visualizations and statistical analysis tools

Universal Human Rights Index

This is a tool developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It provides access to human rights recommendations issued by all UN human rights mechanisms, including:

- The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
- Treaty Bodies
- Special Procedures



45. UNESCO, "The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Its Potential to Foster Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Safety of Journalists: A Guide for Journalists," (Paris: UNESCO, 2021), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386164>.



The index allows users to search for recommendations by country, right, UN mechanism, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) linkages, and other filters.

V. Relevant organizations involved in anti-corruption

Multistakeholder Initiatives

- [Basel Institute on Governance](#)
- [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#)
- [OECD Anti-corruption and Integrity portal](#)
- [Open Government Partnership](#)
- [U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre](#)
- [World Bank Anti-Corruption portal](#)

Non-governmental organizations:

- [UNCAC Coalition](#) and its members
- [Transparency International](#) and its chapters

VI. UNCAC Coalition resources

[UNCAC Civil Society Parallel Reports](#)

[UNCAC Review Status Tracker](#)

[Access to Information Campaign](#)

[Transparency Pledge](#)

VII. Additional resources

ARTICLE 19: Using Access to Information to Combat Corruption — Guide on the Enforcement of Articles 10 and 13 of the UNCAC by Governments and Civil Society
<https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/UNCAC-Guide-FInal.pdf>

ARTICLE 19: Using Access to Information to Combat Corruption — Short Guide on Enforcement of Articles 10 and 13 of the UNCAC by Governments and Civil Society
<https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Article19-Guide-v020823.pdf>

Danish Institute for Human Rights: SDG Human Rights Data Explorer
<https://www.humanrights.dk/sdg-human-rights-data-explorer>



Institute for Development and Human Rights: UPR Guide 2024

https://geneva.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/2024/2024_03_UPR-Guide_ENGL.pdf

International Bar Association: Tips for Enhancing Judicial Engagement with the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review

<https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=Tips-for-judicial-review-report>

OHCHR: Civil Society Guide for 4th UPR Cycle

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/upr/sessions/2022-10-24/UPR-4th-cycle-civil-society-guide.pdf>

OHCHR: UPR Good Practices (2022)

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UPR_good_practices_2022.pdf

UNESCO: The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Its Potential to Foster Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Safety of Journalists: A Guide for Journalists

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386164>

UNESCO: The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Its Potential to Foster Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Safety of Journalists: Guidelines for Civil Society Organizations

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382049>

U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre: Human Rights / Basic Guide to Corruption and Human Rights

<https://www.u4.no/topics/human-rights/basics>

UNDP: The Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Programming: HRBA Toolkit (2025)

<https://www.undp.org/publications/human-rights-based-approach-development-programming-hrba-toolkit>

UPR Info: Beyond Reporting: Transformational Changes on the Ground

<https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/general-document/2022-07/Beyond%20Reporting-EN-Web.pdf>

UPR Info: Civil Society Documentation and Resources

[https://upr-info.org/en/get-involved/csos/documentation?](https://upr-info.org/en/get-involved/csos/documentation?_gl=1*fig006*_ga_XQ4GJTY3MT*MTcyODU1NjUyNi4xLjAuMTcyODU1NjUzMS4wLjAuM)

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UPR Info: Glossary of Key Terms used in the UPR

<https://upr-info.org/en/resources/glossary>

UPR Info: Video Library

<https://upr-info.org/en/resources/video-library>



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