

Writing a Stakeholder Submission to the UPR

What is the UPR?

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is an intergovernmental process of the Human Rights Council where each of the 193 UN Member States are reviewed on their entire human rights record every four and a half years. During the peer-review process, UN Member States give recommendations on how the state under review could improve human rights in their own country.

What is a Stakeholder Submission?

Civil society can contribute to the UPR through a Stakeholder Submission. These reports detail evidence, advances, and challenges in the human rights record of each country since their last review. They can be used to inform the recommendations made to the country under review so that the process reflects the experiences of people affected. It takes just one recommendation to get your issues on your state's formal agenda.

Each member State's review is based on three documents:

- ◆ A national report prepared by the country under review
- ◆ A compilation of United Nations information prepared by the OHCHR (Special Procedures, Treaty Monitoring Bodies)
- ◆ A summary of information submitted by civil society (Stakeholder Submissions) prepared by the OHCHR

Why submit a report?

Writing a Stakeholder Submission is an accessible way to ensure your issues are reflected in the UPR process and hold your government accountable to their human rights commitments. While, ideally, content from the reports will be reflected in the OHCHR summary report and recommendations from reviewing states, your participation in the process is beneficial in many other ways. By participating in the process you can...



Bring attention to human rights issues in your country



Provide evidence and testimony about these issues



Propose policy solutions



Help to monitor implementation



Participate in an important accountability process



Work in solidarity with other organizations and contribute to strengthened social movements

Who is a stakeholder?

For the purpose of the UPR, stakeholders can include NGOs, national human rights institutions, human rights defenders and advocates, academic and research institutions, and other civil society representatives. You do not need special status (ECOSOC) or previous experience with UN mechanisms to submit a report.

Joint submissions

Joint submissions are a way to pool resources, align issues, and strengthen advocacy capacities. Organizations can only submit one submission on their own, but can contribute to as many joint submissions as they wish. Joint submissions can be an opportunity to unite around a specific theme as well as to recognize the interconnectedness of different human rights issues.

The maximum word count is 2815 for submissions from one organization and 5630 for joint submissions

General guidelines and tips:

- ◆ You are the expert on the human rights issues affecting you and your communities
- ◆ Focus on two to three key issues
- ◆ Consider that the main audience for your submission will be staff at the OHCHR and diplomats from other countries. They will not have an in-depth understanding of your specific legal and policy context or the details of your human rights concerns.
- ◆ When referring to previous UPR recommendations, identify the HRC report, cycle, paragraph number, recommendation number and recommending country
- ◆ Reports should not include maps, pictures or include the full text of concluding observations and recommendations of human rights treaty bodies or special procedures of the Human Rights Council. The OHCHR will include this information in the UN Compilation Report.
- ◆ Limit recommendations to a maximum of ten
- ◆ Recommendations should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented and time-bound), within the time frame of the UPR cycle.
- ◆ Direct recommendations to the agency, ministry, or office that can implement them
- ◆ The OHCHR increasingly places importance on first hand information that civil society organizations have themselves collected and their own analysis of laws and policies. In some cases, reports are deemed to violate the guidelines for reliance on secondary sources.
- ◆ Be sure to familiarize yourself with the [technical guidelines](#) and consider that some elements have changed from previous cycles
- ◆ Keep an eye on the OHCHR website for updates and possible changes to timelines.



Submissions should aim to include:

- ◆ An overview of the relevant legal and policy context
- ◆ Information on the particular human rights concerns including who is affected, and what is the impact
- ◆ Credible data and evidence to support your claims
- ◆ If recommendations have been made on this issue in previous human rights reviews, include this information and note any progress or challenges in implementation
- ◆ Specific recommendations for how to improve the situation

After you've submitted...

- ◆ Make sure member states know about your report and make time for direct advocacy
- ◆ Create a concise fact sheet highlighting content from your report
- ◆ Share with allies to amplify one another's issues
- ◆ Post on your website and share key messages on social media
- ◆ Prepare for the review
- ◆ Coordinate with other organizations
- ◆ Engage in national consultations

How to submit

Reports are submitted in Word format through the [OHCHR online system](#). You'll need to make an account.

Tools and resources

- ◆ [Sexual Rights Initiative UPR Toolkit for Advocates](#)
- ◆ [Sexual Rights Initiative UPR Database](#)
- ◆ [About the UPR \(OHCHR\)](#)
- ◆ [OHCHR Information on stakeholder participation](#)
- ◆ [OHCHR Technical guidelines](#)

