



10 STEPS TO WRITING A SHADOW REPORT

SET THE STAGE

1 IDENTIFY YOUR EXPERTISE

- What issues do you work on?
- What are the outcomes you advocate for?
- Who can help do the work on this project? What can they do?
 - » Bring them on board as soon as you can.

2 IDENTIFY ALLIES

- What other organizations or experts might be interested in collaborating on the report (Steps 5-8) or “signing on” to your report once you’re done (Step 9)?¹
- Try to find allies in relevant networks or research institutions for up-to-date information.
- A single shadow report supported by a large alliance, or a collection of shadow reports submitted by a broader network, is more powerful than scattered submissions.

3 IDENTIFY THE RELEVANT RIGHTS

- Is the country scheduled for review by a human rights treaty body or for Universal Periodic Review? If so, which treaty or treaties are relevant?
- What is the connection between the work you do and the rights in the treaty under review?²
- Which articles of the treaty are most relevant?
- *Optional: Has a treaty body said anything to clarify these rights in General Comments?*

4 REVIEW THE PROCESS TO DATE

- What has happened so far in the review process about these rights?
 - » Read the outcome of the last review.
 - » Read government’s latest report.
 - » Read the Committee’s list of issues and the government’s response, if any.
 - » *Optional:*
 - *Read reports that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have submitted during the review process.*
 - *Read the documents from the last review by other human rights mechanisms.*
- *Optional: Are there national, state, or local laws on the issue? What have courts said?*



5 CLARIFY YOUR ROLE

- How can you shed more light on these rights and related issues?³ You might have:
 - » on-the-ground information from the work you do
 - » first-hand accounts about rights being denied, including voices of:
 - victims whose rights have been violated
 - advocates who work with victims
 - witnesses to rights violations
 - » reports your organization has written
 - » other specialized knowledge
 - » other information you think the treaty monitoring body should know about why your work is important or how rights can be better protected and promoted.

6 SET GOALS

- What are your goals for the upcoming review?⁴ Think about what you want the committee members or delegates to say on your behalf, about the issues you care about, in these contexts:
 - » Experts ask the government's delegation questions.
 - » Experts make recommendations to the government under review about how it should better protect and promote human rights, and how it should monitor and assess human rights conditions.

7 MAKE AND IMPLEMENT WORK PLAN

- How can you use your information (Step 5) to help achieve your goals (Step 6)?
 - » Gather the information.
 - » Keep track of the sources of information.
 - » Think about how you can ensure that the information you gather is credible, relevant, and up-to-date.
 - » Include steps to use the report as an organizing opportunity in your community after you submit it (Step 10), such as planning a local hearing.
- *Optional: Develop a communications plan for raising awareness about your issues and the opportunity offered by the UN review.*
- *Optional: Document additional information.⁵ Consider:*
 - » *interviews*
 - » *observations*
 - » *media monitoring*
 - » *submitting written questions to authorities and gathering responses.*



8 WRITE REPORT

- Set up a report-writing team to take the information from Steps 3, 4, and 7 and draft a brief report.⁶ Incorporate your questions and recommendations (Step 6), revising them in light of what you learned in Step 7. Do not use “abusive” language.

9 FINALIZE AND SUBMIT REPORT

- Submit your final report to the Committee by the deadline.
- If you have to submit hard copies, leave time for the international mail to arrive.
- *Optional: Before you finalize your report:*
 - Ask key stakeholders or other people to review and comment on the draft report.
 - Ask any allies (Step 2) to “sign on” to your report.

10 ADVOCATE FOR YOUR ISSUE

- You can use your report in the context of the upcoming review, and also as a valuable tool for promoting social justice in the longer term.⁷ There are many ways to get the word out:
 - » Engage in education and outreach within your organization, to the public, and to the media.
 - » Develop and implement additional strategies to use your report to promote justice for your community over the longer term.
 - » *Optional: Implement a communications plan (Step 7).*
 - » *Optional: Engage in additional advocacy:*
 - advocacy with the experts doing the review.
 - follow-up outreach when the in-person review happens and final documents from the review are released.
 - lobbying the government (federal, state, local) to implement any relevant recommendations.
 - Monitoring implementation for the next review.



ENDNOTES

1. See pp. 143-147 of The Advocates for Human Rights, *Discover Human Rights: A Human Rights Approach to Social Justice Work (July 2011)*, available at www.discoverhumanrights.org/download_dhr_training_manual.html.
2. For help with this step, see the “Where are the Rights?” on p. 47 of *Discover Human Rights*, available at www.discoverhumanrights.org/download_dhr_training_manual.html, and read pp. 124-132. Also see pp. 20-21 of The Advocates for Human Rights, *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy* (January 2011), available at www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/final_report_3.pdf.
3. For guidance, see pp. 21-24 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*, supra note 2.
4. The activities on pages 130-147 of *Discover Human Rights*, supra note 2, may help with this step.
5. Consult pp. 24-64 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*, supra note 2, for suggestions. Also see pp 79-91 of *Discover Human Rights*, supra note 2, on human rights strategies.
6. See pp. 65-81 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*, supra note 2, which cover report-writing.
7. For advice on advocacy, see pp. 83-111 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*, supra note 2.

USEFUL LINKS - UPR

Universal Periodic Review General Information and Links

Sessions

- The UPR Working group holds three two-week sessions per year. During each session 16 countries are reviewed (48 countries per year). Each review is facilitated by groups of three States, or “troikas”, who act as rapporteurs. NGOs can attend the UPR Working Group sessions and can make statements at the regular session of the Human Rights Council when the outcome of the State reviews are considered.

Submission Requirements:

- Stakeholders’ submissions should be sent through the a new online UPR submissions system (available as of 4 March 2013) and according to the deadlines here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>. All UPR submissions must be submitted and received (through the On-line system for registration of contributions) not later than the day of the given deadline (11:59 p.m.). Late submissions will not be considered.

Quick Links:

- UPR website: [/www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx)
- UPR sessions: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRSessions.aspx
- UPR and civil society engagement: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx
- UPR - Practical Guide for Civil Society: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/PracticalGuideCivilSociety.pdf
- UPR Road Map for Civil Society Engagement - http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/IHRS/UPR/Documents/RoadMap_en_16.09.09.pdf
- Guidelines for UPR submissions: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/TechnicalGuideEN.pdf
- Online UPR submission System: <https://uprdoc.ohchr.org/Account/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>
- Working with the UN Human Rights Programme - A Handbook for Civil Society - Chapter VII - UPR - <http://www.ohchr.org/en/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>
- UPR info - <http://www.upr-info.org/>. Geneva-based NGO that provides capacity-building tools to the different actors of the UPR process, including civil society.
- Sample UPR Submissions - www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/sample_submissions_2.htm



USEFUL LINKS - TREATY- BODY SPECIFIC

Human Rights Committee

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Complaint Mechanism

- Does not contain an individual complaints procedure within the text of the actual treaty. Complaints procedure is contained in the Optional Protocol to the Covenant. The complaints procedure under the Optional Protocol has been used much more extensively than the procedures under the other treaties.

Sessions

- The Committee meets three times a year for three-week sessions, normally in March (NY), and in July and October (Geneva). Civil society may attend the Committees meetings as observers.

Submission Requirements:

- Civil Society may submit written reports two weeks before the session. All information must be submitted in electronic form and in hard copy (at least 25 copies) to the Committee's secretariat.

Quick Links:

- HRC website: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/
- HRC sessions: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/sessions.htm
- HRC civil society engagement: tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&SymbolNo=CCPR/C/104/3
- Model Complaint Form: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/ComplaintFormOPICCPR_CAT_CERD.doc

The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)

Individual Complaints

- Does not contain an individual complaints procedure within the text of the actual treaty. Complaints procedure is contained in the Optional Protocol to the Covenant. As of August 2013, the Protocol has 10 parties and 33 more signatories. It entered into force in May 2013.

Inquiries

- May initiate inquiries if they have received reliable information containing well-founded indications of serious, grave or systematic violations by a State Party of the rights contained in CESR (Article 11, OP).

Sessions

- The Committee meets in Geneva and holds two sessions per year, consisting of a three-week plenary and a one-week pre-session working group. Civil society may attend sessions as observers and NGOs who have submitted reports are permitted to make oral presentations.

Submission Requirements:

- Civil Society may submit written reports a month and a half before the beginning of the session and two months before the beginning of the meeting of the pre-session working group. All information must be submitted in electronic form and at least 20 hard copies should be sent to the secretariat.

Quick Links:

- CESCR website: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr
- CESCR sessions: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/sessions.htm
- CESCR civil society engagement: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CESCR/Pages/NGOs.aspx



The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

Complaint Mechanism

- ➔ Contains an individual complaints procedure that enables individuals, or groups of individuals who believe they have had their human rights violated, the right to complain. Only about 1/3 of the parties have made the declaration recognizing the competence of the committee in receiving individual complaints. As a result, complaints have been registered against less than 10 States.

Sessions

- ➔ The Committee meets in Geneva in February and August for three-week sessions. Civil society can only attend the sessions as observers.

Submission Requirements:

- ➔ Written information must be submitted two months before the Committee's session. An electronic version of the written information as well as 37 hard copies should be submitted to the secretariat.

Quick Links:

- CERD website: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/>
- CERD sessions: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/sessions.htm>
- CERD civil society engagement: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ICERDManual.pdf>
- Model Complaint Form: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/ComplaintFormOPICCCR_CAT_CERD.doc

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Complaint Mechanism

- ➔ Does not contain an individual complaints procedure within the text of the actual treaty. Complaints procedure is contained in the Optional Protocol to the Covenant. By becoming a State Party to the Optional Protocol, the State is eligible to receive communications from individuals who claim to be victims of human rights abuses. One-quarter of the State Parties to the Convention have ratified the Optional Protocol.

Inquiries

- ➔ May initiate inquiries if they have received reliable information containing well-founded indications of serious, grave or systematic violations by a State Party of the rights contained in CEDAW (Article 8, OP).

Sessions

- ➔ Committee meets three times a year in both Geneva and New York for two – week sessions. Civil society may attend sessions as observers and are permitted to make oral presentations.

Submission Requirements:

- ➔ Written information must be submitted two weeks before the Committee's session. An electronic copy and at least 35 hard copies should be submitted.

Quick Links:

- CEDAW website: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/CEDAWIndex.aspx>
- CEDAW sessions: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW
- CEDAW civil society engagement: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/CEDAW_NGO_Participation_en.pdf



The Committee Against Torture

The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

Individual Complaints

- Contains an individual complaints procedure. Individuals may only submit a complaint if the State Party they are testifying against has ratified the competence of the Committee in receiving complaints (Article 22).

Inquiries

- May initiate inquiries if they have received reliable information containing well-founded indications of serious, grave or systematic violations by a State Party of the rights contained in CAT. (Article 20)

Sessions

- The Committee meets in Geneva and holds two sessions a year. Civil Society can attend as observers. Civil Society actors may brief the Committee orally during the sessions.

Submission Requirements:

- Reports should be submitted six weeks before the Committee's session. All information must be submitted in electronic form and at least 15 hard copies should be sent to the secretariat.

Quick Links:

- CAT website: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/
- CAT sessions: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/sessions.htm>
- CAT civil society engagement: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/follow_up_ngo.htm
- Model Complaint Form: www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/ComplaintFormOPICCCR_CAT_CERD.doc

The Committee on The Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Individual Complaints

- Contains an individual complaints procedure in the optional protocol to the convention that will enter into force in April 2014.

Inquiries

- May initiate inquiries if they have received reliable information containing well-founded indications of serious, grave or systematic violations by a State Party of the rights contained in CRC. Article 13, OP - has not yet entered into force.

Sessions

- The Committee meets three times a year in Geneva for sessions of three weeks, normally in January, May and September. Selected NGOs will be allowed to attend the committee meetings as observers and make oral presentations.

Submission Requirements:

- Reports should be no more than 30 pages. Reports should be submitted six months after the government report has been submitted. The information should be submitted electronically in both PDF and Word formats and 25 copies should be sent to the secretariat.

Quick Links:

- CRC website: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/
- CRC sessions: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/sessions.htm>
- CRC civil society engagement: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/guidelines-E.pdf>
- CRC Shadow Report Guidance: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/Guide-NGO-E.pdf>



The Committee on Migrant Workers

Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)

Individual Complaints

- ➔ Contains an individual complaints procedure that has not yet entered into force. The procedure will become operative once 10 State Parties have accepted this procedure in accordance with article 77 of the Convention.

Sessions

- ➔ The Committee meets twice a year in Geneva for sessions of one to two weeks, normally in September and April. Civil Society can attend as observers. NGOs can make oral presentations during special meetings the Committee may hold during each session.

Submission Requirements:

- ➔ Reports should be no more than 20 pages. Reports should be submitted as soon as possible after the government report has been submitted. The information should be submitted electronically in both PDF and Word formats and 25 copies should be sent to the secretariat.

Quick Links:

- CMW website: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/>
- CMW sessions: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/sessions.htm>
- CMW civil society engagement: http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/NGOguide_IPMWC_eng.pdf

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Individual Complaints

- ➔ Does not contain an individual complaints procedure within the text of the actual treaty. Complaints procedure is contained in the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

Inquiries

- ➔ May initiate inquiries if they have received reliable information containing well-founded indications of serious, grave or systematic violations by a State Party of the rights contained in CRPD (Article 6,OP).

Sessions

- ➔ The Committee meets twice a year in Geneva for sessions of one week, normally in February and October. Civil society may attend the Committees meetings as observers.

Submission Requirements:

- ➔ Reports should be submitted two months before the Committees session. The information should be submitted electronically in both PDF and Word 97/2003 formats and 25 copies should be sent.

Quick Links:

- CRPD website: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/pages/crpdindex.aspx>
- CRPD sessions: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/Sessions.aspx>
- CRPD civil society engagement: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/NoteonCivilSocietyParticipation.aspx>
- CRPD shadow report guidance: <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/en/guidance-document-parallel-reports>



The Committee on Enforced Disappearances

Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED)

Individual Complaints

- Contains an individual complaints procedure. Individuals may only submit a complaint if the State Party they are testifying against has ratified the competence of the Committee in receiving complaints (Article 31).

Inquiries

- May initiate inquiries if they have received reliable information containing well-founded indications of serious, grave or systematic violations by a State Party of the rights contained in CED (Article 33).

Sessions

- The Committee meets twice a year in Geneva. Civil society may attend sessions as observers and are permitted to make oral presentations.

Submission Requirements:

- Reports should be submitted two weeks before the Committees session. The information should be submitted electronically in both PDF and Word formats and 20 copies should be sent to the secretariat.

Quick Links:

- CED website: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/pages/crpdindex.aspx>
- CED sessions: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/sessions.aspx>
- CED civil society engagement: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>
- CED Model Request for Urgent Action: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CED/ModelUrgentRequest_en.doc

The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)

Mandate

- The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (“SPT”) is different from other treaty bodies in that it has a purely preventive mandate focused on an innovative, sustained and proactive approach to the prevention of torture and ill treatment. The SPT was established pursuant to the provisions of the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture (OPCAT)

Functions

- Operational function - This includes visiting all places of detention in State Parties. Under the OPCAT, the SPT has unrestricted access to all places of detention, their installations and facilities and to all relevant information.
- Advisory function - This includes providing assistance and advice to both State Parties and National Preventive Mechanisms (“NPM”). Pursuant to article 17 of the OPCAT, State Parties have an obligation to establish NPMs, which are independent national bodies for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment at the domestic level. The OPCAT provides guidance concerning the establishment of those bodies, including their mandate and powers.

Sessions

- The Committee meets in Geneva three times a year for sessions of one week.

Quick Links:

- SPT website: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/opcat/>
- SPT sessions: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/opcat/sessions.htm>
- SPT civil society engagement: <http://www.apt.ch/en/resources/the-optional-protocol-implementation-manual/>



USEFUL LINKS - REGIONAL MECHANISMS

AFRICA

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights: www.achpr.org/

- Sessions: www.achpr.org/sessions/
- Legal Instruments: www.achpr.org/instruments/
- State Reports and Concluding Observations: www.achpr.org/states/reports-and-concluding-observations/
- NGO Statements: www.achpr.org/search/?t=839

AMERICAS

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: www.oas.org/en/iachr/ (no periodic reporting)

American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man: www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/English/Basic2.American%20Declaration.htm

American Convention on Human Rights: www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/English/Basic3.American%20Convention.htm

Other Inter-American Human Rights Instruments: www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/Basics/intro.asp

- Questionnaires: www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/questionnaires.asp
- Hearings: www.oas.org/es/cidh/audiencias/advanced.aspx?lang=en
- Rapporteurship Distribution (by country and theme): www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/composition.asp#tab3

EUROPE

Council of Europe Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law: www.coe.int/t/dgi/default_en.asp (no periodic reporting)

- Monitoring Mechanisms: www.coe.int/t/dgi/monitoringbodies_en.asp
- Commissioner for Human Rights: www.coe.int/t/commissioner/About/welcome_en.asp

USEFUL LINKS - GENERAL

A Practitioner's Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy (Jan. 2011)

www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/a_practitioner_s_guide_to_human_rights_monitoring_documentation_and_advocacy.html

A Guide to International Human Rights Mechanisms

http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/international_human_rights_mechanisms_2.html

Discover Human Rights: A Human Rights Approach to Social Justice Work (July 2011)

www.discoverhumanrights.org/download_dhr_training_manual.html

Simple Guide to UN Treaty Bodies

<http://www.ishr.ch/guides-to-the-un-system/simple-guide-to-treaty-bodies>

Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme - A Handbook for Civil Society

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>

OHCHR Country Pages

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/HumanRightsintheWorld.aspx>

OHCHR Treaty Bodies Database

<http://tb.ohchr.org/default.aspx>

OHCHR Treaty Bodies Homepage

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>