

## **U.S. Human Rights Presentations in 2014-15**

The U.S. government is making four presentations in 2014 and 2015 to United Nations committees in Geneva showcasing the United States' human rights record and addressing a wide range of questions about our laws and practices. These presentations provide vital opportunities to demonstrate to the world our country's commitment to protecting human rights domestically through the operation of our comprehensive system of laws, policies, and programs at all levels of government – federal, state, local, insular, and tribal.

The State Department has made available to the public a wealth of materials relevant to U.S. human rights treaty reports and presentations – including links to treaty texts, U.S. treaty reports, prior letters to state, local, insular, and tribal governments, and more – at [www.state.gov/j/drl/reports/treaties/index.htm](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/reports/treaties/index.htm) (“*U.S. Treaty Reports* website”). The four presentations are as follows:

1. **March 13-14, 2014: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

The ICCPR, one of the seminal human rights treaties negotiated following World War II, covers a broad range of international human rights obligations. The ICCPR requires each State Party to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the ICCPR, which include: civil rights, equal protection and equality before the law; rights of persons deprived of life, liberty or security; right to fair trial; prohibitions on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and on slavery or forced or compulsory labor; freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence; freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, expression, association, peaceful assembly, and movement; protection of the family and children; access to the political system; and the rights of members of minorities with regard to culture, religion, and language. The United States ratified the ICCPR in 1992.

In December 2011, the United States submitted its Fourth Periodic Report on the implementation of its obligations under the ICCPR to the UN Human Rights Committee, an entity created by the ICCPR in order to receive and review such reports by States Parties, among other functions. This report was accompanied by the U.S. Common Core Document (CCD), which contained background information on the United States' demographics, laws, and institutions relevant to all human rights treaties to which the United States is a party, and Annex A to the CCD, which contained information on state, local, insular and tribal government activities and programs that advance implementation of U.S. obligations under these treaties. These reports are available on the *U.S. Treaty Reports* website, under the ICCPR heading.

On March 13-14, 2014, the United States sent a high-level delegation to present the Fourth Periodic Report to the UN Human Rights Committee and answer questions from the committee. The delegation featured representatives from the U.S. Departments of State, Justice,

Homeland Security, Interior, Defense, and Health & Human Services, as well as government representatives from Mississippi and Salt Lake City, Utah.

On March 27, 2014, the Committee issued its Concluding Observations on the U.S. report with recommendations for future action, which have been posted on the *U.S. Treaty Reports* website. An archived webcast of this presentation is available on [www.treatybodywebcast.org](http://www.treatybodywebcast.org) (under the Webcast Archives tab) a service sponsored by a group of non-governmental organizations. The United States will submit a one-year follow-up report on four recommendations specified by the Committee in the Concluding Observations.

2. August 13-14, 2014: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

The CERD, which the United States ratified in 1994, requires each State Party to “pursue by all appropriate means ... a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms,” including by ensuring that all public authorities do not engage in racial discrimination and by reviewing and amending laws and policies that have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination. States Parties are also required to prohibit racial discrimination in the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, in areas such as equal treatment before courts, voting rights, employment, housing, medical care, and education.

In June 2013, the United States submitted its Combined Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Periodic Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination detailing the implementation of U.S. obligations under the CERD. This report is also available on the *U.S. Treaty Reports* website, under the CERD heading. On August 13-14, 2014, the United States sent a high-level delegation to present this report to the Committee. The delegation featured representatives from the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, Education, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Health & Human Services, and Labor, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency and government representatives from Arkansas and Birmingham, Alabama.

On August 26, 2014, the Committee issued its Concluding Observations on the U.S. report with recommendations for future action, which have been posted on the *U.S. Treaty Reports* website. An archived webcast of this presentation is available on [www.treatybodywebcast.org](http://www.treatybodywebcast.org) (under the Webcast Archives tab) a service sponsored by a group of non-governmental organizations. The United States will submit a one-year follow-up report on four recommendations specified by the Committee in the Concluding Observations.

3. November 12-13, 2014: Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

The CAT, which the United States ratified in 1994, requires each State Party to take measures to prevent acts of torture and other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or

punishment (CIDTP) in any territory under its jurisdiction, as well as to fulfill a number of other obligations, including those pertaining to the investigation of acts of torture and CIDTP, accountability for torture perpetrators, the non-use of statements made as a result of torture as evidence in any proceedings, redress for victims of torture, and education and training regarding the prohibitions against torture and CIDTP.

In July 2013, the United States submitted its most recent periodic report to the Committee Against Torture detailing the implementation of U.S. obligations under the CAT. This report is also available on the *U.S. Treaty Reports* website, under the CAT heading. On November 12-13, 2014, the United States sent a high-level delegation to present this report to the Committee. The delegation featured representatives from the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, Homeland Security, and Defense, as well as government representatives from Mississippi and Rhode Island.

On November 28, 2014, the Committee issued its Concluding Observations” on the U.S. report with recommendations for future action, which have been posted on the *U.S. Treaty Reports* website. An archived webcast of this presentation is available on [www.treatybodywebcast.org](http://www.treatybodywebcast.org) (under the Webcast Archives tab) a service sponsored by a group of non-governmental organizations. The United States will submit a one-year follow-up report on four recommendations specified by the Committee in the Concluding Observations.

#### 4. May 11, 2015: Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was established by the UN General Assembly in 2006 as a process through which the human rights record of every UN Member State could be reviewed and assessed. This review, conducted through the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), is based upon human rights obligations and commitments expressed in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights instruments to which the State is party, and other sources. The United States is a strong supporter of the UPR process, which provides a unique avenue for the global community to discuss human rights around the world.

The United States submitted its first UPR report in 2010, which is available on the State Department’s UPR website: [www.state.gov/j/drl/upr/](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/upr/). The United States will submit our second UPR report in February 2015, with the U.S. presentation slated for May 11, 2015. The focus of our second UPR report and presentation will be on our progress on those recommendations the United States supported in whole or in part during the first UPR process, as well as any other relevant updates on issues related to domestic implementation of our human rights obligations and commitments. At the May presentation, other U.N. member states will have the opportunity to pose questions and make new recommendations to the U.S. delegation. The content of our presentation, and the recommendations that we receive and ultimately support, will be available online at [www.humanrights.gov](http://www.humanrights.gov).