



GUIDE: USING THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM TO ADDRESS GLOBAL RACIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended as a tool for civil society actors to learn about how to use different avenues within the United Nations (“UN”) human rights system to address global racial justice issues.

SECTION 1. Outlines the key UN standards that deal with global racial justice issues. These include both legally binding international instruments that impose obligations on States and non-legally binding framework documents.

Sections 2-4 outline the primary entities responsible for upholding these standards, namely:

- **SECTION 2. UN Treaty Bodies:** Committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties.
- **SECTION 3. UN Racial Justice Groups and Committees:** Mechanisms established to address global racial justice issues.
- **SECTION 4. UN Special Procedures:** Independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights issues.

SECTION 5. Recognizes that racial justice advocacy entails risks. It outlines where to seek recourse and protection if faced with harassment, intimidation, or backlash after engaging with a UN mechanism.

Although this guide focuses on standards established by the United Nations, other multilateral bodies are also crucial sources of racial justice standards and frameworks. A guide on the Inter-American Human Rights System can be found [here](#).

² Information in this guide was gathered through open-source materials from relevant international organizations, civil society organizations, and United Nations databases.

SECTION 1: KEY UNITED NATIONS STANDARDS ON GLOBAL RACIAL JUSTICE ISSUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

I. Background

Human rights standards are established through two types of instruments. Treaties—also known as Conventions, Covenants, and Protocols—are legally binding and enforceable on States that ratify them. This means that States are required to perform their treaty obligations in good faith, and failure to do so constitutes a breach of international law. Individuals or civil society organizations (“CSOs”) may then be able to invoke the obligations in national or international forums to demand compliance.

In contrast, non-binding instruments, such as Declarations, Guidelines, and Action Plans, are not legally enforceable. Nevertheless, they serve as authoritative guidance and, over time, may acquire the status of customary international law, meaning they become binding on States even in the absence of treaty ratification.³

II. Purpose of Engaging with the United Nations

Engaging with the UN allows CSOs to publicize rights violations and amplify the voices of marginalized or silenced groups at local, national, and international levels. It creates opportunities to hold governments accountable to their treaty obligations and bring issues onto national legislative or policy agendas.⁴ UN engagement also facilitates access to international experts, human rights mechanisms, and other CSOs, fostering knowledge exchange and coalition-building.

³ For more information on customary international law, see, e.g., James Crawford, *Brownlie’s Principles of Public International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 21-22.

⁴ Laurence R. Helfer and Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why States Create International Tribunals: A Response to Professors Posner and Yoo,” *California Law Review* 93, no. 3 (2005): 935-936, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3481479>; Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights International Law in Domestic Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 132-134.

Example of CSO Advocacy at the United Nations: Reparations for Haiti

After gaining independence from France in 1804, Haiti was coerced in 1825 into agreeing to pay an “Independence Debt” of 150 million gold francs.⁵ To meet these payments, Haiti became dependent on foreign loans. By 1914, approximately 80% of Haiti’s national budget was being used to repay France and French banks. The debt was only finally settled in 1947.⁶

A New York Times investigation estimated that these payments cost Haiti the modern equivalent of approximately USD 560 million—resources that could have added USD 21 billion to Haiti’s economy had they been invested domestically.⁷ Other models have found that the real cost was much higher, with estimates reaching as much as USD 115 billion.⁸

In response, CSOs have mobilized before the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent to seek reparations and restitution of this “Independence Debt.”⁹ Through generating significant attention and media coverage, they have put reparations for Haiti onto the UN agenda.

⁵ Reuters in Geneva, “France urged to repay billions of dollars to Haiti for independence ‘ransom,’” *The Guardian*, April 18, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/18/haiti-france-reparations>; “How Haiti paid for its freedom – twice over,” UN News, April 19, 2025, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162406>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Catherine Porter, Constant Méheut, Matt Apuzzo, and Selam Gebrekidan, “The Ransom: The Root of Haiti’s Misery: Reparations to Enslavers,” *The New York Times*, November 16, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/world/americas/haiti-history-colonized-france.html>; Catherine Porter, Constant Méheut, Selam Gebrekidan, and Matt Apuzzo, “The Ransom: A Look Under the Hood,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/world/americas/haiti-bibliography.html>; *How Haiti paid for its freedom – twice over*,” *supra* note 5.

⁸ *Id.*; Reuters in Geneva, *supra* note 5.

⁹ “IJDH Advocacy at the Fourth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent,” *Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti*, May 2, 2025, <https://www.ijdh.org/2025/05/projects/ijdh-advocacy-at-the-fourth-session-of-the-un-permanent-forum-on-people-of-african-descent/>; “Reparations for Haiti,” *Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti*, accessed September 15, 2025, <https://www.ijdh.org/our-work/accountability/reparations-for-haiti/>.

In 2024, the Permanent Forum recognized that Haiti’s ongoing social and humanitarian crisis “is deeply intertwined with the profound impact and legacy of colonization, foreign domination, the institution of enslavement, unjust foreign debt and wealth extraction.”¹⁰ Among other measures, it has called for a United Nations Human Rights Council debate on the linkages between the past and present human rights challenges in Haiti with a view to establishing an International Independent Commission of Inquiry into Reparatory Justice for Haiti and commissioning an independent expert study on reparations and restitution.¹¹ It has also called for a truth and reconciliation commission and Haitian-led development aid and sustainable development programs.¹²

In April 2025, French President Emmanuel Macron announced the creation of a joint commission of Haitian and French historians to examine the impact of the “Independence Debt.”¹³

This case study illustrates how sustained CSO activity can leverage United Nations mechanisms to drive global engagement on racial justice issues.

¹⁰ United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, *Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations: Third session, 16-19 April 2024, Geneva, Switzerland*, August 26, 2024, para. 47, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/forums/forum-african-descent/sessions/session3/2024-08-26-pfpad-conclusions-and-recommendations-3rd-session-en.pdf>; United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, *Position Paper on the human rights situation in Haiti and its historical roots*, January 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/pfpad-position-paper-haiti-publication.pdf>, 4-5; “How Haiti paid for its freedom – twice over,” *supra* note 5.

¹¹ *Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations: Third session*, *supra* note 10, para. 49; *Position Paper on the human rights situation in Haiti and its historical roots*, *supra* note 10, pg. 5.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ “IJDH Advocacy at the Fourth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent,” *supra* note 9; “How Haiti paid for its freedom – twice over,” *supra* note 5.

III. Drawbacks and Limitations of Engagement with the United Nations

While UN engagement can be a powerful tool for advocacy and norm-setting, it is not without limitations. Decisions published by international human rights treaty bodies (known as “views”) and “communications” issued by UN Special Rapporteurs lack enforcement mechanisms, and States frequently fail to implement recommendations. For example, a 2010 report found that the Views of the Human Rights Committee (the “CCPR”) had a compliance rate of only 12 percent.¹⁴

Moreover, many States do not allow individuals to bring complaints about their conduct before international bodies and not all treaties are directly enforceable in national courts, meaning violations may not result in legal or policy change. The process can also be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Individuals and CSOs should therefore utilize UN mechanisms with realistic expectations and clear strategic objectives.

IV. International Bill of Human Rights

Three international human rights instruments together make up what is known as the “International Bill of Human Rights”:¹⁵ These include: (1) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (2) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and (3) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.¹⁶

¹⁴ Open Society Justice Initiative, *From Judgment to Justice: Implementing International and Regional Human Rights Decisions* (New York, OSJI, 2010), <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publications/judgment-justice-implementing-international-and-regional-human-rights-decisions>, 118.

¹⁵ “FAQ: The Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (ICCPR),” ACLU, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.aclu.org/documents/faq-covenant-civil-political-rights-iccpr>.

¹⁶ *Id.*

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (“UDHR”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The non-legally binding UDHR is a declaration that defined “for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.”¹⁷ ● Although couched in broad language and lacking precise definitions, these rights are some of the most accepted and least contested in this field, and many subsequent treaties have used this framework to further define or expand human rights. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These include the rights to life; freedom from slavery and torture; equality before the law; an effective remedy; freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile; a fair trial; and to seek asylum. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 2 and Article 7 for general provisions on non-discrimination.
<p>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The legally-binding ICCPR is a treaty that sets out the foundational definitions of civil and political rights in international human rights law. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These include the rights to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention; vote; fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law; and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. ○ These rights are frequently at the core of global racial justice struggles, including efforts to combat racially discriminatory policing and detention practices, ensure equal access to voting, and address systemic bias in judicial proceedings. ● The full text of the ICCPR can be accessed here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 2(1) and Article 26 for general provisions on non-discrimination.¹⁸

¹⁷ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

¹⁸ See also relevant General Comments: GC No. 18 - Non-discrimination (1989); GC No. 32 - Article 14: Right to Equality before Courts and Tribunals and to Fair Trial (CCPR/C/GC/32); GC No. 25 - The right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to public service (Art. 25) (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.7); GC No. 11 - Prohibition of propaganda for war and inciting national, racial or religious hatred (Art. 20) (1983).

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (“ICESCR”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The legally-binding ICESCR is a treaty that sets out the foundational definitions of economic, social, and cultural rights in international human rights law. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These include the rights to work; social security; adequate standard of living; physical and mental health; education; and cultural life. ○ These rights are frequently at the core of global racial justice struggles, including efforts to combat racially discriminatory health, housing, and employment practices. ● The full text of the ICESCR can be accessed here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 2(2) for a general provision on non-discrimination.¹⁹

V. Other United Nations Human Rights Treaties

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (“ICERD”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The legally-binding ICERD is a treaty which is “among the oldest conventions in the UN Human Rights Office arsenal to target oppression and discrimination.”²⁰ ● This treaty is one of the strongest human rights framework tools for global racial justice advocates. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 2(1) for a general provision on non-discrimination.²¹

¹⁹ See also General Comment No. 20 - Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights (E/C.12/GC/20).

²⁰ “International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: 50 years of fighting racism,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cerd/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial-discrimination-50-years-fighting-racism#:~:text=On%2021%20December%201965%2C%20the,to%20target%20oppression%20and%20discrimination>.

²¹ See also selected General Recommendations: GR No. 37 - Racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to health (CERD/C/GC/37); GR No. 36 - Preventing and Combating Racial Profiling by Law Enforcement Officials (CERD/C/GC/36); GR No. 35 - Combatting racist hate speech (CERD/C/GC/35); GR No. 34 - Racial discrimination against people of African descent (CERD/C/GC/34); GR No. 31 - Prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system (2005); GR No. 30 - Discrimination against

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (“ICMW”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The legally-binding ICMW is a “comprehensive international treaty focusing on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families” which “emphasizes the link between migration and human rights.”²² ● As discrimination on the basis of race and related groups can coexist with migrant status, this treaty may provide helpful guidance to advocates when framing claims that address the intersection of racial and migrant-status discrimination. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 1(1) and Article 7 for general provisions on non-discrimination.
<p>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (“CEDAW”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The legally-binding CEDAW is a treaty which is the “central and most comprehensive document” on “all the areas in which women are denied equality with men.”²³ ● Due to the intersecting nature of gender-based discrimination with discrimination on the basis of race, this treaty is vitally important to ensuring the full and effective human rights of all persons. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 2 for a general provision on non-discrimination.²⁴

non-citizens (2005); GR No. 28 - Follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2002); GR No. 27 - Discrimination against Roma (2000); GR No. 25 - Gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination (2000); GR No. 20 - Article 5 of the Convention (1996).

²² “Background to the Convention,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cmw/background-convention>.

²³ “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.

²⁴ See also selected General Recommendations: GR No. 39 - Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls (CEDAW/C/GC/39); GR No. 38 Trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration (CEDAW/C/GC/38) GR No. 32 - Gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women (CEDAW/C/GC/32); GR No. 26 - Women migrant workers (CEDAW/C/2009/WP.1/R).

VI. United Nations Declarations

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (“Durban Declaration”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The non-legally binding Durban Declaration was a result of leaders coming together in Durban, South Africa to “address the pernicious effects of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.”²⁵ • The Declaration officially categorized slavery and the slave trade as Crimes Against Humanity and stated that they “should always have been so,” and the Declaration stated that slavery and the slave trade are “among the major sources and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.”²⁶ • More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 10 for a general provision on non-discrimination.
<p>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The non-legally binding UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the “most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous Peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous Peoples.”²⁷ • More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 2, Article 9, and Article 15(2) for general provisions on non-discrimination.

²⁵ “Fighting Racism, 20 Years on from the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, accessed March 5, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/racism/fighting-racism-20-years-adoption-durban-declaration-and-programme-action#:~:text=Twenty%20years%20ago%2C%20leaders%20from.%2C%20xenophobia%2C%20and%20related%20intolerance.>

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, accessed April 2, 2025, <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.>

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (“UNDM”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The non-legally binding UNDM is a declaration that provides recommendations for State actions regarding national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. It is the only UN soft law (non-binding but authoritative) instrument “that is entirely devoted to minority rights, and its key provisions have influenced subsequent legal developments.”²⁸ ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 3 and Article 4 for general provisions on non-discrimination.
<p>UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The non-legally binding UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice is the “most comprehensive international instrument dealing with the protection of group identity.”²⁹ ● The Declaration explores the overlap between race and cultural identity and, although it is not legally binding, it has obtained “wide support”, having been adopted unanimously and by acclamation, and passed simultaneously with a resolution for implementation.³⁰ ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 1(2), Article 3, and Article 9(1) for general provisions on non-discrimination.

²⁸ “Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities General Assembly resolution 47/135,” *Audiovisual Library of International Law*, accessed February 1, 2025, https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga_47-135/ga_47-135.html.

²⁹ Natan Lerner, “Identity of the Group: The UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice,” in *Group Rights and Discrimination in International Law*, Natan Lerner (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2003), 177.

³⁰ *Id.*

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION
<p>UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The non-legally binding UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas “is a unique and unprecedented opportunity to redress various forms of discrimination, systematic violations and historical disadvantage that have affected peasants and rural workers for many decades.”³¹ ● The Declaration notes that peasants and rural workers are subject to “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”. ● The full text of the Declaration can be found here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See Article 3, Article 8(4), Article 12, Article 26, and Article 28(2) for general provisions on non-discrimination.

VII. United Nations General Assembly Resolutions

RESOLUTION	DESCRIPTION
<p>International Decade for People of African Descent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The UN General Assembly (the “UNGA”) adopted a resolution proclaiming 2015 to 2024 to be the International Decade for People of African Descent. ● Key goals were to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (1) Strengthen action and cooperation to the full enjoyment of rights by people of African descent; ○ (2) Promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies; and ○ (3) Adopt and strengthen legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and the ICERD, and to ensure their full implementation.”³² ● The Permanent Forum on People of African Descent plays a key role in implementing the International Decade for People of African Descent. ● More information can be found on its webpage, accessible here.

³¹ “UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants: UN experts call for action ahead of anniversary,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, December 16, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/12/un-declaration-rights-peasants-un-experts-call-action-ahead>.

³² “UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants: UN experts call for action ahead of anniversary,” *United Nations Office*

RESOLUTION	DESCRIPTION
<p>Second International Decade for People of African Descent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The UNGA adopted a subsequent resolution proclaiming 2025 to 2034 to be the Second International Decade for People of African Descent.³³ ● Extending the programme of activities from the First International Decade, the theme of the Second International Decade is “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development.”³⁴ ● The Permanent Forum on People of African Descent plays a key role in implementing the Second International Decade for People of African Descent. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here.

of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, December 16, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/12/un-declaration-rights-peasants-un-experts-call-action-ahead>.

³³ “The Second International Decade for People of African Descent renews the call for recognition, justice, and development,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2024/12/second-international-decade-people-african-descent-renews-call-recognition-justice>.

³⁴ “OHCHR and the Second International Decade for People of African Descent 2025-2034,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed April 2, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/racism/second-international-decade-african-descent#:~:text=OHCHR%20and%20the%20Second%20International%20Decade%20for%20People%20of%20African%20Descent,-Overview&text=On%2017%20December%202024%2C%20the,recognition%2C%20justice%20and%20development%E2%80%9D>.

SECTION 2: UNITED NATIONS TREATY BODIES

I. Background

UN treaty bodies are made up of independent experts that are elected by UN member States to monitor the implementation of treaties. The experts are “persons of high moral character and recognized competence in the field of human rights, who serve in their personal capacity.”³⁵ Each State Party may nominate one of its nationals to stand for election by States Parties, and members are elected for a term of four years.³⁶ Treaty bodies generally hold three sessions per year.³⁷

II. Treaty Bodies’ Core Functions

FUNCTION	INFORMATION
Publish Annual Reports on Their Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These reports summarize the treaty bodies’ activities over the reporting period, including: (i) statements issued; (ii) decisions adopted; (iii) letters sent to governments; (iv) reports, comments and information submitted by States Parties and considered by the treaty body; and (v) individual communications considered.• For example, the previous annual reports of CERD are accessible here.

³⁵ See, e.g., “Membership: Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cerd/membership>; “Membership: Human Rights Committee,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/ccpr/membership>.

³⁶ “Meetings of States parties & elections: Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cerd/meetings-states-parties-elections>; “Meetings of States parties & elections,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/ccpr/meetings-states-parties-elections>.

³⁷ “Introduction to the Committee: Human Rights Committee,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/ccpr/introduction-committee>; “Introduction: Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cerd/introduction>.

FUNCTION	INFORMATION
Adopt Decisions, Issue Statements, and Send Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These decisions, statements, and letters are issued to States Parties in order to address both specific situations and broader human rights concerns. • For example, CERD’s decisions, statements and letters are accessible here.
Hold Thematic Discussions on Issues Related to Their Mandates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States Parties, intergovernmental organizations (“IGOs”) and non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) can participate in these discussions. • For example, a list of CERD’s past discussions can be found here and include topics such as “Racial Discrimination and the right to health”.
Make General Recommendations and Adopt General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These recommendations and comments are issued on matters within their mandates that, in their view, warrant increased attention from States Parties with a view to assisting them in fulfilling their obligations. • For example, CERD’s latest general recommendations are accessible here and include topics such as “Preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials”.
Receive and Review Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These communications consist of complaints from individuals alleging human rights violations committed by a State Party.³⁸ • For example, a sample list of pending CERD complaints can be found here.

³⁸ “Individual Communications,” United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/human-rights-bodies-complaints-procedures/individual-communications>.

III. Treaty Bodies Which Receive Complaints On Matters Concerning Racial Justice

TREATY BODY	MONITORED TREATY	COMPLAINT MECHANISM
CERD	ICERD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complaints can only be made about States which are parties to the ICERD and who have made the necessary declaration under article 14 of the ICERD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The list of State Parties can be accessed here; select “CERD” and scroll to the section entitled: “Acceptance of individual complaints procedures for CERD, Art.14.” ● More information can be found here.
CCPR	ICCPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complaints can only be made about States which are parties to the First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The list of State Parties can be accessed here; select “CCPR-OP1” and scroll to the section entitled: “Ratification Status for CCPR-OP1.” ● More information can be found here.
CESCR	ICESCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complaints can only be made about States which are parties to the ICESCR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The list of State Parties can be accessed here; select “CESCR-OP” and scroll to the section entitled: “Ratification Status for CESCR-OP.” ● More information can be found here.
CMW	ICMW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complaints can only be made about States which are parties to the ICMW and have made the necessary declaration under Article 77 ICMW. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The list of State Parties can be accessed here; select “CMW” and scroll to the section entitled: “Acceptance of individual complaints procedures for CMW, Art.77.” ● More information can be found here.

TREATY BODY	MONITORED TREATY	COMPLAINT MECHANISM
CEDAW	CEDAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complaints can only be made about States which are parties to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The list of State Parties can be accessed here; select “CEDAW-OP” and scroll to the section entitled: “Ratification Status for CEDAW-OP.” ● More information can be found here.

IV. Information Needed to Make a Complaint

A. Individuals Making the Complaint

- Must be the victims of alleged human rights violations and the complaints’ subject matter must fall under the treaty body’s jurisdiction.
- Must have pursued all relevant legal avenues of redress within their own domestic systems unless the process has been unnecessarily prolonged or remedies are unlikely to bring effective relief.
- Cannot bring the same matter to another international body.
- Cannot be anonymous.

B. Submitting the Complaint

- Utilize the Online Submissions Portal under “How to submit a complaint,” accessible [here](#).
 - Creating an account is simple and free.

C. Process After a Complaint has been Submitted

- In urgent cases, a Committee may issue “interim measures” to a State Party in order to temporarily preserve the status quo and prevent harm.
- Otherwise, a semi-judicial process takes place.
 - This includes written information submitted by the parties to the complaint and, in some instances, third parties followed by oral hearings.
- In rare instances, Committees may undertake fact-finding missions.
- Decisions are made by consensus, with optional individual opinions and dissents.

- The time it takes to resolve claims varies depending on the treaty body.
 - For example, claims submitted to CERD are typically resolved within a year.
 - Further information regarding the duration of the complaints process for other treaty bodies can be found [here](#).

When determining the most suitable mechanism for making a complaint, petitioners should consider the nature of the rights violated, the focus of the treaty body's mandate, the types of remedies sought, and whether the treaty body accepts individual communications from the State in question.

**Example of a Communication Adopted by CERD:
Mahali Dawas and Yousef Shava v. Denmark (March 6, 2012)**

On June 21, 2004, the petitioners' house was attacked and both individuals were subjected to violence, including beatings. A police investigation was carried out, resulting in the conviction of four perpetrators for violence, vandalism, and illegal possession of weapons. However, only short, suspended custodial sentences were ordered, no compensation was granted to the victims, and the possible racist element of the attack was not addressed.

The petitioners initiated a civil action for torts resulting in moral damage, and included the racist motive as an aggravating factor. On September 11, 2007, a District Court found that there was no evidence establishing the racist character of the attacks against the petitioners and that the level of violence and harm suffered was not of such degree to establish a violation of the Danish Act on Torts.

On 3 October 2008, the High Court of Eastern Denmark upheld the judgment of the District Court.

On December 12, 2008, the petitioners were denied leave to appeal to the Danish Supreme Court, thereby exhausting all available domestic remedies.

On June 16, 2009, the petitioners submitted a complaint to CERD against Denmark, and CERD transmitted the communication to Denmark on 21 December 2009.

On March 6, 2012, CERD issued a decision finding that “[i]n the light of such failure to effectively protect the petitioners from an alleged act of racial discrimination, and to carry out an effective investigation, ... article 6 and article 2, paragraph 1 (d), have been violated.” It recommended that Denmark grant the petitioners adequate compensation for the material and moral injury caused by the violations of ICERD and that Denmark review its policy and procedures concerning the prosecution in cases of alleged racial discrimination or racially motivated violence.

Although the petitioners could have brought a complaint to other treaty bodies—such as the CCPR—CERD was the most appropriate forum given its specific mandate to address racial discrimination.

D. Remedies Available

- Remedies may include restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, measures of satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.
- Notably, compliance with the remedies ordered by a Treaty Body is usually low. The main benefits of intervention are often the advancement of advocacy efforts and the production of credible evidence of a State’s wrongdoing.

For more information about Treaty Bodies Complaint Procedures, all necessary information is listed on an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (“OHCHR”) fact sheet, accessible [here](#).

SECTION 3: UNITED NATIONS RACIAL JUSTICE GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

I. Background

In addition to treaty bodies, the following mechanisms are key components of the UN Human Rights System addressing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, particularly in the context of implementing the Durban Declaration. Each mechanism offers distinct opportunities for engagement, enabling civil society organizations and other stakeholders to shape international norms and advance global racial justice.

II. Relevant United Nations Racial Justice Groups and Committees

MECHANISM	UNDERLYING INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION AND MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT
Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action	Durban Declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Designed to make recommendations in order to implement the Durban Declaration.³⁹ ● NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status⁴⁰ and accredited for the World Conference against Racism may attend public meetings of the Working Group. ● Queries for the Intergovernmental Working Group can also be directed to the OHCHR, whose contact information can be found here. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here.

³⁹ “Intergovernmental Working Group on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsiidiaries/iwg-on-durban>.

⁴⁰ To acquire consultative status, NGOs must complete an online application, provide mandatory documents and satisfy certain criteria; more information on how to apply can be found [here](#).

MECHANISM	UNDERLYING INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION AND MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT
<p>Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action</p>	<p>Durban Declaration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Designed to follow the implementation of the Durban Declaration.⁴¹ ● The Group meets annually, holding both private and public meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information about upcoming sessions can be found here. ● The Group accepts information from relevant stakeholders to inform its work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submissions and queries should be directed to the OHCHR; contact information can be found here. ● Calls for input to gather information for its reports and recommendations are posted here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, a past call for input invited written contributions to inform its study on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It can be accessed here. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here; more information on their specific mandate can be accessed here.

⁴¹ “About the mandate: Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed March 3, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/chr-subsidiaries/group-of-experts-on-ddpa/about-mandate>.

MECHANISM	UNDERLYING INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION AND MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT
<p>Ad-Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards</p>	<p>Durban Declaration and ICERD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Designed to fill in the existing gaps in the ICERD, and “to provide new normative standards aimed at combating all forms of contemporary racism, including incitement to racial and religious hatred.”⁴² ● The Ad Hoc Committee holds an annual session attended by representatives of Member States, regional groups, national institutions, specialized agencies, IGOs and NGOs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Queries should be directed to the OHCHR; contact information can be found here. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here.
<p>Permanent Forum on People of African Descent</p>	<p>First and Second International Decade for People of African Descent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “A consultative mechanism for people of African descent and ... an advisory body to the Human Rights Council.”⁴³ ● The Permanent Forum holds annual sessions focused on thematic issues related to its mandate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These sessions are open to qualifying NGOs. ● Members of the Permanent Forum are required to actively consult and collaborate with civil society, including individual experts and researchers, in developing their thematic subjects. ● Information on the Permanent Forum’s methods of work can be found here. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here.

⁴² “Ad Hoc Committee on the elaboration of complementary standards,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed March 3, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsiidiaries/adhoc-committee-on-complementary-standards-to-icerd>.

⁴³ “Permanent Forum on People of African Descent,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human*

MECHANISM	UNDERLYING INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION AND MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT
<p>Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement</p>	<p>UNGA Resolutions 47/21 and 56/13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established “to further transformative change for racial justice and equality in the context of law enforcement globally, ... to investigate Governments’ responses to peaceful anti-racism protests and all violations of international human rights law, and to contribute to accountability and redress for victims”⁴⁴ ● The Expert Mechanism holds a five-day annual session in Geneva during which it engages with Member States, special procedures, treaty bodies, civil society, and other stakeholders. ● Victims, their families or friends, representatives acting with the family’s consent, IGOs and NGOs may submit information on specific violations by law enforcement against people of African descent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More information on submissions can be found here. ○ Contact information for the Expert Mechanism can be found here. ● The Expert Mechanism occasionally issues calls for input, to which individuals and organizations may contribute for inclusion in its reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Past calls can be accessed here. ● More information can be found on the official webpage, accessible here.

Rights, accessed February 1, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/permanent-forum-people-african-descent>.

⁴⁴ “Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed March 3, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsiidiaries/expert-mechanism-racial-justice-law-enforcement>.

SECTION 4: UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROCEDURES

I. Background

A. Overview

The Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council (“UNHRC”) are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights.⁴⁵ These experts act in their personal capacity. They are not UN staff members nor paid by the UN, and they cannot concurrently hold a government position.

B. Types

There are two types of Special Procedures. The first are Individual Special Procedures, which are mandates held by a single expert, referred to as “**Special Rapporteurs**” or “**Independent Experts**.” The second are **Working Groups**, which consist of groups of experts, usually composed of five members (one from each of the five regional groups).

C. Function⁴⁶

1. Send **communications** on allegations of violations to States and others.
 - One of the most important functions of the Special Procedures.
2. Undertake **country visits** at the invitation of the relevant Government.
 - Afterwards, they present a report to the UNHRC, making recommendations directed towards the States and stakeholders concerned.
3. Contribute to the **development** of international human rights standards.
4. Engage in **advocacy**, raise public awareness, and provide advice for technical cooperation by engaging with relevant stakeholders, including CSOs.
5. Submit **reports** to the UNHRC and the UNGA on topics related to their mandates.

⁴⁵ “Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council>.

⁴⁶ *Id.*; United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*, Ashwini K.P.: *Strategic vision and initial priorities*, A/63/332 (May 30, 2023), <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/100/64/pdf/g2310064.pdf>.

II. Complaints and Communications

A. Overview

The Special Procedures can send communications to States and others in response to individual complaints from victims and witnesses regarding past, ongoing, or potential violations of the human rights of individuals, groups or communities, or regarding bills, legislation, policies or practices that do not comply with international human rights law and standards.⁴⁷

B. Information Needed in a Complaint⁴⁸

- The name(s) of the victim(s) or other identifying information, such as date of birth, sex, passport number and place of residence where applicable.
- The ethnic or religious group of the victim(s) when appropriate.
- The name of any community or organization subject to alleged violations.
- A detailed but concise factual description of the alleged violations, including information as to the date and place of any incident(s), the alleged perpetrators, their suspected motives, and any contextual information.
- Any steps already taken at the national, regional or international level in relation to the case.
- Key substantiating information.
- An indication by alleged victim(s), and/or their families or representatives, of whether they consent to the disclosure of the names of the victims in: (i) the communications; and/or (ii) a public report to the UNHRC.

C. Who Can Make a Complaint

Any individual, group, civil-society organization, inter-governmental entity, or national human rights body can submit a complaint. Where a complaint is made by a person other than the victim, the source must be reliable and the victims must agree.

⁴⁷ “Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council,” *supra* note 45.

⁴⁸ United Nations Human Rights Special Procedures, *Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council* (August 2008), https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/SP/Manual_Operations2008.pdf.

D. Procedural Requirements of Making a Complaint

- There is no need for an individual to have exhausted domestic remedies.
- There is also no need for the concerned State to have ratified an international or regional human rights treaty.
- Status updates on submissions can be found on the Communications Reports Database, accessible [here](#).
 - The Special Procedures do not generally acknowledge receipt of a complaint nor inform those who have submitted complaints of any actions taken.
- Submissions may be made to multiple Special Procedures when issues fall within overlapping mandates.
 - The Special Procedures may also issue joint statements or communications in response.

E. How to Submit a Complaint

Complaints can be submitted via an online form, accessible [here](#), or by post sent to OHCHR-UNOG, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneve 10, Switzerland.

The online complaint form (available in several languages) can be accessed [here](#).

F. Confidentiality

The identity of alleged victims is ordinarily included in communications and made public, unless the alleged victim(s) and/or their representative(s): (i) are under 18 years of age; (ii) are alleged victims of sexual violence; or (iii) have demonstrated the existence of security or protection concerns.⁴⁹

The text of all communications sent and responses received is confidential for 60 days before being made publicly available. Communications related to draft or existing legislation, policy or practice, which are deemed to not be in compliance with international human rights norms and standards, are published after 48 hours.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "Submission of information to the Special Procedures," *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://spsubmission.ohchr.org/disclosure/statement>.

⁵⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *Activities of special rapporteurs, independent experts and working groups of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council undertaken in 2022, including updated information on special procedures and information on the twenty-eighth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairs of working groups*, A/HRC/52/70 (April 4, 2023), para. 9.

Communications and responses may be published prior to this as determined by the mandate-holders, including in situations of grave concern or situations in which a Government has repeatedly failed to provide a substantive response to communications. In such cases, a Special Procedure mandate-holder may issue a press statement, other public statement, or hold a press conference.⁵¹

*G. Process Once a Complaint Has Been Submitted to the Special Procedure*⁵²

- The mandate-holders have the discretion to decide whether to act.
 - Their discretion will be exercised in light of the mandate and criteria which include the reliability of the source and the credibility of information received; the details provided; and the scope of the mandate.
- The Special Procedures may request clarifications from Governments, IGOs, or businesses in formal “Letters of Allegation” or, for matters that involve ongoing or impending human rights violations, in “Urgent Appeals.”
 - They may then issue communications to a State requesting that the concerned authorities take action to prevent or stop the violation, investigate it, bring to justice those responsible, and make sure that remedies are available to the victim(s) or their families.
- Please note that communications are not legally binding nor enforceable.

*H. Process After the Special Procedures Have Issued a Communication*⁵³

- In most instances, Governments are requested to provide a substantive response to Letters of Allegation within two months, and to Urgent Appeals within 30 days.
 - The Special Procedures may then decide to make further inquiries, elaborate on the recommendations or observations, take other steps to achieve the objectives of the mandate, or take no further action.
- Compilations of communications sent and responses received are then reported to the UNHRC.
 - These reports contain the letters sent by the experts, including the names of the alleged victims.

⁵¹ *Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council*, *supra* note 48.

⁵² “What are Communications?,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council/what-are-communications>; *Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council*, *supra* note 48.

⁵³ *Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council*, *supra* note 48.

I. Examples of Individual Complaints

Several publicly available examples of individual complaints submitted to the CCPR can be accessed below. Please note that none of these complaints specifically address racial justice issues. Unfortunately, there are no publicly available examples of individual complaints submitted to CERD, CESCR, the SR on Racism, or WGEPAD.

EXAMPLE	INFORMATION
Individual Complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● An example of a concise complaint can be accessed here.● Please note that this document appears to be a translation.
Request for Urgent Interim Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● An example of an interim request can be accessed here.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The complainant's legal representatives subsequently submitted a full complaint, which is accessible here.● Please note that this complaint is very extensive.
Complaints Submitted with the Assistance of Legal Counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Examples of complaints which were assisted by legal counsel can be accessed here and here.● Please note that the final complaint is very extensive.
Individual Complaints Submitted to UN Experts on Slavery and Violence Against Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● An example complaint to the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, including its Causes and Consequences and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences can be accessed here.● Please note that this complaint was also prepared with the assistance of legal counsel.

III. Special Procedures Specific to Global Racial Justice

A. Primary Resources

The primary Special Procedures that deal with global racial justice issues include (1) the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (“**SR on Racism**”), and (2) the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (“**WGEPAD**”). More information can be found on their official webpages, accessible [here](#) and [here](#).

The current **Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance** has published thematic reports on topics such as “Intersectionality from a racial justice perspective,” accessible [here](#), and “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination,” accessible [here](#).

The Special Rapporteur has also published country reports on Brazil, accessible [here](#), and the USA, accessible [here](#). In her report on Brazil, the Special Rapporteur emphasized that people of African descent, Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola communities, Roma people and those from other marginalized racial and ethnic groups continue to experience multifaceted, deeply interconnected and pervasive manifestations of systemic racism.

The Special Rapporteur has issued numerous communications, including on measures by the United States Government to end Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs and to remove race-centred content in historical exhibits and memorials. The Special Rapporteur has also raised concerns about immigration measures in the Dominican Republic, particularly in hospitals where there has been an increase in the deportations of pregnant and breastfeeding Haitian women or women of Haitian descent.

A. Secondary Resources

Although not their primary focus, a number of other Special Procedures also consider global racial justice issues. A full list can be accessed [here](#).

SECTION 5: PROCEDURE FOR INSTANCES OF REPRISALS

I. Treaty Bodies

- A person subject to intimidation and/or reprisal for engaging with a United Nations mechanism can notify the relevant treaty body via email.
 - Contact information can be accessed [here](#).
 - Scroll to the section entitled: “How can you report an act of intimidation or reprisal against individual or groups who seek to, have communicated, or cooperated with the UN treaty bodies?”
- Treaty bodies respond to allegations of intimidation and reprisals by meeting with Permanent Missions; sending communications to States; bringing the case to Special Procedures or the High Commissioner; and raising the case in concluding observations, press releases, reports to the UNHRC and UNGA, or during their interactive dialogues with countries.

II. Special Procedures

- Allegations of intimidation and reprisal can be reported using the Special Procedure Submission online form, accessible [here](#), and/or by contacting the special procedures directly.⁵⁴
- Special procedures respond to instances of intimidation by raising cases of reprisals with UN representatives and/or in public statements, press releases, reports to the UNHRC and the UNGA, or during their interactive dialogues; and sending communications to States and other stakeholders.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ “How to share information about cases of intimidation and reprisals,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/reprisals/how-share-information-about-cases-intimidation-and-reprisals>.

⁵⁵ “Acts of intimidation and reprisal for cooperation with the Special Procedures,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council/acts-intimidation-and-reprisal-cooperation-special-procedures>.

III. United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

- The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders' mandate includes the objective to “seek, receive and respond to information on the situation of human rights defenders...”⁵⁶
- For human rights defenders who have been put at risk for engaging in human rights work, more information about this mandate and how it can be utilized can be accessed [here](https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders).

⁵⁶ “Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, accessed April 2, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders>.

APPENDIX

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
CCPR	United Nations Human Rights Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
(Also CEDAW)	Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMW	Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CSO	Civil Society Organization
Durban Declaration	2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
ICMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SR on Racism	Special Rapporteur on Racism
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDM	Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
WGEPAD	Working Group on People of African Descent