



SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT MISSION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



Embassy and Permanent
Mission of Armenia



Permanent Mission of Fiji to
the United Nations Geneva



Permanent Mission of Pakistan
to the United Nations Geneva

The contribution of the Universal Periodic Review to strengthening national human rights protection systems

Date: 28 September 2023, 54th session of the HCR

Time: 3-4pm

Location: Palais des Nations, Room XXV, and online

<https://ungeneva-vc.webex.com/ungeneva-vc/j.php?MTID=m9be1ab9a38f5fc55feaed20678854576>

Organiser: the UPR Group of Friends / Argentina, Armenia, Fiji, Norway, Pakistan, South Africa

Co-Organizers: UPR Info

Context

The duty of the State to respect, protect and fulfil human rights requires a strong national human rights protection system. Through a set of laws, institutions, and policies, national human rights protection systems play a critical role in protecting human rights at the country level incorporating, applying, and implementing international standards into national legislation and policies. Despite the importance of having a comprehensive and robust national protection systems, there is not yet a perfect system that guarantees the full and complete enjoyment of all human rights.

The international community recognizes the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as an important mechanism to strengthen human rights on the ground. The UPR contributes to the strengthening of national human rights protection systems by requiring every UN member state to report on its human rights record every four and a half years and to implement the recommendations received from its peers through a participatory process involving civil society, parliament, and the judiciary to ensure the effective protection of all segments of society. The mechanism also reinforces national protection systems and make it more resilient by strengthening national actors, policies, legal frameworks, and by building a culture of human rights. Furthermore, thanks to its universality the UPR can address all type of human rights issues and act to prevent, respond and offer redress to human rights violations. It also contributes to promote normative standards in line with international human rights, to build accountable institutions and policies that promote and protect human rights and enables the participation of civil society that work towards the improvement of human rights on the ground. Finally, in addition to the recommendations capable of triggering these changes, the Human Rights Council established a Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the implementation of the UPR in the recommendations at national level (to support States, particularly least developed countries, and Small Island Developing States) and therefore supporting their human rights protection systems.

Objectives

The side event at the 54th HRC session aims at understanding the role and the potential the UPR has to bring about structural change, as the recommendations may suggest strengthening laws and institutions such as National Human Rights Institutions and suggesting public policies to meet the needs of specific groups, thereby strengthening national human rights protection systems.



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The meeting will be an opportunity to hear about inspiring examples of this unique mechanism contributed to improve national protection systems and consequently to advance human rights.

The discussion will address the following questions:

- How the UPR contributes to strengthening national human rights protection system?
- How national institutions (in this case NHRIs) can be strengthened by the UPR and how their work can help to implement UPR recommendations at the national level, to promote, protect, control and ensure accountability?
- How can UN Member States benefit from the UPR voluntary fund to enhance their national human rights protection system?
- How the UPR contributed to develop national policies on Human Rights?

Format

This one-hour panel discussion is open to representatives from Member States, experts, and interested civil society organizations.

Speakers are invited to prepare 7-minute interventions. A moderated questions and answer period will follow.

Moderator: Ms. Mona M'Bikay, Executive Director, UPR Info

Opening Remarks:

H.E. Mr. Federico Villegas, Chair of the UPR Group of Friends, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Argentina

Panellists

- Mr. Gianni Magazzeni, UPR Info Board Member
- Ms. Magali Lafourcade, General Secretary, Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH)
- Mr. Simon-Pierre Kinkuba, President Commission droits de l'homme du Parlement, DRC
- Dr. Damian Etone, Senior Lecturer in Int. Human Rights Law at University of Stirling – Joint Coordinator, UPR Academic Network

Closing remarks

- TBC