

Geneva, 17 February 2017

Dear High Commissioner,

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is held up as one of the significant successes of the United Nations (UN) human rights machinery. That all UN Member States have agreed to subject their human rights records to international scrutiny twice has been a landmark achievement. As the UPR's third cycle begins, it is an opportune time for the international community to address the mechanism's key challenges.

The signatories of this letter consider that the lack of a formal follow-up procedure, in particular a thorough and independent assessment of the level of implementation of recommendations, constitutes the central limitation of the mechanism. This assessment is crucial to ensuring that States uphold their human rights commitments and deliver change on the ground. It would also provide an objective and comprehensive picture of progress made, as well as setbacks or challenges, in the implementation of recommendations. Without an assessment, Member States are not held fully accountable for the commitments and other statements made during the UPR process, and for ultimately improving their human rights record.

We are of the view that the responsibility to develop and conduct such an assessment lies primarily with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The OHCHR is uniquely positioned to take on this role given its expertise and independence and its vision of moving closer to States and all stakeholders for strengthened engagement. An authoritative assessment of the human rights progress made by each of the 193 UN Member States would also increase the visibility of the OHCHR.

The assessment should incorporate information from the State under review, UN country teams, OHCHR regional and country offices, special procedures, human rights treaty bodies, civil society, and national human rights institutions; including information contained in the three documents which form the basis of the UPR. The matrices developed by the OHCHR and intended for the State under review and civil society to add information on the level of implementation of recommendations during the third cycle will be another important source of information. The assessment should be prepared following the submission of information to OHCHR by other stakeholders so as to be able to draw from that information, and be published within a timeframe that allows the assessment to inform recommending States. We would be very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss our suggestions with you.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

The 91 signatories:

Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation
Act Alliance
Aktionsgruppe Indianer & Menschenrechte
Alkarama
All Human Rights for All in Iran
Amnesty International

Anti-Slavery International
Arab NGO Network for Development
Arseh Sevom
ARTICLE 19
Association for the Prevention of Torture
Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)
ATD Fourth World
Bytes for All, Pakistan
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Caritas Internationalis
Centre for Organisation Research & Education
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
CIVICUS
Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights in Manipur and the UN (CSCHR)
COC Nederland
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
Conectas Human Rights
Cultural Survival
Dalit Solidarity Network UK
Defence for Children International (DCI)
DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
Edmund Rice International
Ensemble contre la peine de mort (ECPM)
FIACAT
FIAN International
Fiji Native Tribal Congress
Fondation Apprentis d'Auteuil
Fondation Apprentis d'Auteuil Suisse
FORUM-ASIA
Four Freedoms Forum
Franciscans International
Freedom House
Geneva Institute for Human Rights (GIHR)
Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
Human Rights Defenders Network, Sierra Leone
Human Rights Implementation Centre of the University of Bristol
Human Rights Watch
Impact Iran
Indigenous Environmental Network
International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute
International Commission of Jurists
International Dalit Solidarity Network
International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – ILGA
International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
International Partnership for Human Rights
International Planned Parenthood Federation
International Publishers Association
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
International Service for Human Rights

Iran Human Rights
Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
Minority Rights Group International (MRG)
Organisation mondiale contre la torture (OMCT)
OutRight
Peace Movement Aotearoa
PEN International
PILIPINA Legal Resources Center
Plan International
Plataforma de Direitos Humanos Dhesca Brasil
Privacy International
Rural Community Development Program from Peshawar, Pakistan
Saami Council
SAHR - Strategic Advocacy for Human Rights, Afghanistan
Save the Children
Siamak Pourzand Foundation
Small Media
SOS Children's Villages International
Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights
Terra de Direitos, Brazil
The Association for Human Rights in Kurdistan of Iran-Geneva (KMMK-G)
The Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
The Equal Rights Trust
The Human Rights Center, Andrés Bello Catholic University
The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion
The International Disability Alliance
The Society for Threatened Peoples Switzerland
The Bahá'í International Community
United for Iran
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)
UPR Info
VIDES
VIVAT International
World Evangelical Alliance
WUNRN – Women's UN Report Network