

## *The United States' International Human Rights Obligations*

As a member of the United Nations (UN) and of the Organization of American States (OAS), the United States' human rights practices are monitored by various human rights mechanisms. Some of these mechanisms oversee implementation of specific treaties that the U.S. has ratified, while others monitor human rights in thematic areas. Some also accept individual complaints, carry out country visits, and/or issue emergency protective measures.

### *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)*

As a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), the U.S. adopted the **American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man**, the world's first general human rights instrument. The IACHR promotes and monitors the United States' compliance with the Declaration through on-site visits, reporting, thematic rapporteurships, public hearings, and review of individual complaints ("petitions"). This is the only such individual human rights complaint mechanism relevant to the U.S.

### *United Nations Human Rights Treaties and Treaty Bodies*

The United States has ratified three of the core UN human rights treaties, as well as two Optional Protocols, and is monitored by 4 of the 10 UN human rights treaty bodies. These bodies require States to submit regular reports on their implementation of a specific treaty, regarding which the treaty bodies issue "Concluding Observations" with recommendations for improvement. The treaty bodies also issue "General Comments" on the meaning of the treaty's provisions. The U.S. has not authorized any UN treaty body to receive individual complaints against it.

#### **Human Rights Committee**

The Committee monitors implementation of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, which addresses a broad range of rights.

#### **Committee Against Torture (CAT)**

CAT monitors compliance with the **International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**.

#### **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

CERD reviews compliance with the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)**.

#### **Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

The CRC monitors U.S. implementation of two **Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which deal with children in **armed conflict** and the **sale of children**. The U.S. has not ratified the Convention itself.

### *The United Nations Human Rights Council*

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is an intergovernmental body within the UN, charged with promoting human rights and addressing serious human rights problems around the world. The HRC is composed of 47 Member States. It oversees the Universal Periodic Review and Special Procedures.

#### **Universal Periodic Review**

UPR is a peer review system in which the HRC reviews UN Member States' human rights records – including conformity with the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** - every 4 years.

#### **Special Procedures**

The HRC establishes Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Working Groups to monitor and promote human rights around the world through visits, investigations and reporting.