



Table of contents

- **Minority Fellowship Programmes 2009 and 2010**
- **Regional Expert Consultation on Good Practices in Policing and Minority Communities in Africa**
- **Independent Expert on Minority Issues**
- **Forum on Minority Issue**
- **Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**
- **Social Forum**
- **Universal Periodic Review**
- **Durban Follow-Up**
- **Treaty Bodies and country reviews**

- Mr. Mohamed Badarne (Palestinian from Israel)

The 2010 *English-speaking* fellowship is expected to take place at the OHCHR office in Geneva from April to mid-July 2010. The application deadline has passed and candidates are currently under consideration. The names of successful candidates will be announced in this newsletter and on the website below by the end of 2009.

For more details see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org.

Regional Expert Consultation on Good Practices in Policing and Minority Communities in Africa

OHCHR is organizing a "Regional Expert Consultation on Good Practices in Policing and Minority Communities in Africa" which will be held on **12-13 October 2009** in Johannesburg, South Africa. The goal of the consultation is to gather good practices in this field. Toward this end, the OHCHR is inviting police officials from various countries of the region to share their experiences.

Experts participating in the consultation are expected to highlight experiences and good practices emanating from both the national and regional levels and base their contributions on human rights law. The consultation will build on the presentation of background papers followed by discussions

Minority Fellowship Programmes 2009 and 2010

The 2009 *Arabic-speaking* fellowship will take place from **26 October to 20 November 2009**, to coincide with the next session of the Forum on Minority Issues (see below).

The candidates selected for the 2009 Arabic-speaking programme are:

- Ms. Haliz Abdulbaqi (Kurd from Iraq)
- Ms. Farahnez Rezaei (Iranian Bahaii from Kuwait)
- Mr. Oubeid Ould Imijine (Haratin from Mauretania)
- Mr. Moustafa Mouammad (Kurd from Syria)

and conclusions on specific sub-thematic areas.

Contact person for more information: Michèle Buteau mbuteau@ohchr.org.

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Independent Expert on minority issues

From 6 to 15 July 2009, the Independent Expert on minority issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, conducted an official visit to Kazakhstan, visiting Astana, Almaty and surrounding regions. The Independent Expert was pleased to note a high degree of inter-ethnic and inter-religious co-operation and tolerance in the country. However, she also identified a number of issues that require further attention and action by the Government, ranging from issues of minority representation and political participation to minority language issues, education and freedom of religion for some minority groups. The Independent Expert will present a comprehensive report on her visit to Kazakhstan to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2010. The statement of preliminary findings during this visit can be found at:

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/expert/docs/KazakhstanStatement_English.doc.

The Independent Expert is now preparing for her next official country visit -- to **Canada** -- which is scheduled to take place from **13 to 23 October 2009**. The Independent Expert will consult with Federal Government representatives and visit Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec. Furthermore, the Government of **Colombia** has confirmed that a country visit by the Independent Expert can take place in the first three months of 2010. In July 2009 the Independent Expert, deeply concerned by violence between Han and Uyghur communities in the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, requested to undertake an official visit **China**.

Contact person for more information: Graham Fox gfox@ohchr.org.

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Forum on Minority Issues

The second session of the Forum will take place on **12-13 November 2009** at the United Nations, Palais des Nations in Geneva. Its thematic focus will be: "**Minorities and Effective Political Participation**". The discussions will seek to identify challenges and problems as well as good practices in relation to minorities and political participation and to consider opportunities, initiatives and solutions. The institutional focus will be placed on ways to increase the effective participation of minorities in national and local parliaments, "minority" parliaments, advisory or consultative bodies; and central and local governments/executive bodies at the national and local levels.

The Forum will seek to provide concrete and tangible outcomes in the form of thematic recommendations of practical value to all stakeholders; which will be included in the report by the Independent Expert on the second session of the Forum session, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its thirteenth regular session in March 2010.

*NGOs and other stakeholders wishing to participate in the session must register with the Secretariat by **16 October 2009**. Accreditation and registration information is available at:*

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/accreditation_registration_2nd.htm.

The Forum will be preceded by a workshop for invited minority political actors (elected officials as well as NGO representatives) on 11 November 2009, with the objective of discussing the mechanisms needed to support capacity-building and to increase minority

political participation in countries around the world.

More practical as well as substantive information about the second session of the Forum can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/forum.htm>.

Contact Email for more information:

minorityforum@ohchr.org

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Second session of the Human Rights Council Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Expert Mechanism held its second session from **10 to 14 August 2009** in Geneva. The experts discussed the Mechanism's draft study on challenges to achieve the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to education and lessons learned. They further discussed the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Approximately 300 participants attended the session and lunch time side-events, in addition to admiring art exhibitions and participating in a celebration of the International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples, which were all organized during the week. At the end of the session, the Expert Mechanism adopted several proposals to be considered by the Human Rights Council at its 12th session (September 2009), including a proposal to prepare a study on indigenous peoples' right to participate in decision-making. The study on education and the report of the second session of the Expert Mechanism as well as the annual report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people will be presented to the Council on 28 September 2009. The Council is expected to consider the proposals submitted by the Expert Mechanism and adopt a resolution on indigenous issues providing direction for future activities and studies.

Contact person for more information: Jose Parra jparra@ohchr.org

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Social Forum

The second meeting of the Social Forum (SF) of the Human Rights Council took place from **31 August to 2 September 2009** in Geneva.

As requested by the Council in its resolution 10/29, the 2009 SF focused on: (i) National anti-poverty programmes: best practices of States in implementing social security programmes from a human rights perspective; (ii) Negative impacts of economic and financial crisis on efforts to combat poverty; (iii) International assistance and cooperation in combating poverty. The SF was attended by over 200 representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations, specialized agencies and inter-governmental organizations. The session's conclusions and recommendations will be presented to the HRC in March 2010 by the Chairperson-Rapporteur Andrej Logar (the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia).

For more information, including panel presentations (to be posted in due course), please visit:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/poverty/sfsession2009.htm>.

Contact E-mail for more information:

socialforum@ohchr.org

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Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

In 2006 the General Assembly (GA) decided that the Human Rights Council (HRC) shall "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfilment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments..." (GA resolution 60/251).

At the 5th session of the UPR Working Group which took place from 4 to 15 May 2009 in Geneva the following 16 countries were reviewed: **Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen and Afghanistan, Uruguay, Belize, Chile, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, Slovakia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.** The outcomes of the UPR regarding these countries will be adopted at the **12th plenary session** of the Human Rights Council (23-25 September 2009).

NGOs are invited to contribute information for consideration and possible inclusion by OHCHR in a summary of stakeholders' input for future UPR WG sessions. Please note that the page limit for submissions is 5 pages when submitted by individual stakeholders, and 10 pages when submitted by large coalitions of stakeholders. More detailed reports may be attached for reference only. This information will be made available on-line for others to access. A note of information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders on the UPR is available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBODIES/UPR/Documents/TechnicalGuideEN.pdf>.

Submissions should be sent to OHCHR at the following email address:
UPRsubmissions@ohchr.org.

The sixth session of the UPR Working Group (WG) will be held from **30 November to 11 December 2009**. The following 16 countries will be considered: **Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Norway, Portugal and Albania.**

The seventh session of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place from in **February 2010** and will consider the following 16 countries: **Angola, Egypt, Madagascar, Gambia, Qatar, Fiji, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador,**

Italy, San Marino, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The deadlines for the submission of stakeholders' input for these sessions have passed.

The **eight session** of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place in **May 2010**. Submissions from NGOs are invited by the following deadlines:

- **2 November 2009** for submissions on **Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR;** and
- **9 November 2009** for submissions on **Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Armenia, Belarus.**

The **ninth session** of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place in **December 2010**. Submissions from NGOs are invited by the following deadlines:

- **12 April 2010** for submissions on **Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mauritania, Lebanon, Maldives, Marshal Islands, Micronesia;** and
- **19 April 2010** for submissions on **Mongolia, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, United States of America, Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia.**

For these and future deadlines see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NewDeadlines.aspx>.

All available UPR documentation is posted at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR>.

The reviews are webcast live and archives can be accessed at www.un.org/webcast/unhrc.

Contact for further details:

OHCHR Civil Society Unit

Tel: + 41 22 917 96 56

Fax: + 41 22 917 90 11

Email: civilsocietyunit@ohchr.org

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Durban Follow-up

From 22-26 June 2009, the *Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent* undertook an official visit to **Ecuador**. The Working Group noted that due to structural racism Afro-Ecuadorians, have been historically excluded from gaining access to higher education, promotion to higher ranks of state administration and decision-making bodies and that the government may need to rectify this situation by considering adopting affirmative action measures and a special legislation on non-discrimination. During their visit to the communities of Cenepa on Trinitaria Island and Batalla de Tarqui, both in Guayaquil, the members of the Working Group were particularly concerned by the abject poverty of these communities and the plight of the women and children that they met. In the province of Esmeraldas, Afro-Ecuadorian youths are additionally affected by high levels of violence, as a result of the influence of illegal armed actors and an illicit drug trade. The Working Group also held meetings with several Afro-Ecuadorian organisations, through which it became clear that there is a need to highlight their culture and heritage and underline its importance in Ecuadorian history and national heritage.

The next sessions of the *Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA)* is planned for **5-16 October 2009**, while that of the *Ad Hoc Committee on Complementary Standards* is scheduled for **19-30 October 2009**.

E-mail contact for further information:
adusecretariat@ohchr.org.

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Treaty Bodies and country reviews

13 to 31 July 2009 - HRC

The **Human Rights Committee** held its 96th session from 13 to 31 July 2009, during which it considered State reports of the **United Republic of Tanzania, the Netherlands, Chad, and Azerbaijan**. In

addition, Country Report Task Forces have met and adopted list of issues on reports submitted by **Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, New Zealand and Uzbekistan**.

In its concluding observations on the State report submitted by *Tanzania*, the Committee expressed concern that the State party does not recognize the existence of indigenous peoples and minorities in its territory and regretted the lack of information about certain vulnerable ethnic groups. It recommended the Government carry out, as a matter of urgency, a study on minorities and indigenous communities living on its territory, and adopt specific legislation and special measures to protect, preserve and promote their cultural heritage and traditional way of life.

In its concluding observations on the State report submitted by *the Netherlands*, the Committee expressed concern at reports of discrimination against minorities in the workplace, including in recruitment and selection. The Committee recommended the Dutch government take active steps to ensure ethnic minorities have equal access to employment opportunities, particularly through awareness campaigns for the private sector and through adequate publicizing of employment opportunities in the public sector among minority communities.

In relation to the State report submitted by *Azerbaijan*, the Committee expressed concern at the lack of information on minorities and regret at the absence of clarification by the delegation as to the steps taken to address significant concerns, in particular the reductions in the legal guarantees relating to the protection of minorities in the State party's Law on the State Language (2002) and the absence of consultative structures for representatives of minorities in the State party (art. 27). The Committee urged the State to ensure that members of minorities enjoy their rights in full compliance with article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and

recommended the State party create a national consultative organ including representatives of minorities, and translate the report and the concluding observations into the main minority languages spoken in Azerbaijan.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs96.htm>

20 July to 7 August 2009 - CEDAW

The **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** held its 44th session from 20 July to 7 August 2009, during which it considered State reports of **Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Denmark, Guinea Bissau, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Japan, Liberia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor Leste, and Tuvalu.**

The Committee expressed regret at the lack of information and statistics concerning minority women in *Japan*, as well as the lack of any proactive measures, such as policy framework, to promote their rights. The Committee recommended the Japanese state take effective measures, including the adoption of a policy framework and temporary special measures, such as appointing minority women representatives to decision-making bodies, to combat discrimination against minority women. The Committee further reiterated its request that the Japanese State includes in its next periodic State party report information on minority women, particularly with regard to education, employment, health, social welfare and exposure to violence. The Committee also called for a comprehensive study on the situation of minority women in Japan, particularly from the Ainu, Buraku, Zainichi Korean and Okinawa communities.

The Committee further expressed concern on persistent media stereotyping and negative portrayals of ethnic minority women in *Switzerland*. The Committee recommended targeted measures for the media and educational system to promote more positive

images of ethnic minority women and women from migrant backgrounds. The Committee called on the State party to review these measures and include information on this matter in its next State party periodic report. The Committee also expressed concern about employment discrimination against women from non-Western ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds, particularly as compared to the treatment of European Union, US and Canadian women in Switzerland, and about new provisions for married women required by the Foreign National Act, which might pose difficulties for victims of violence to acquire or renew Swiss residency permits. The Committee called upon the State to take effective measures to end discrimination against minority and migrant-background women, and to monitor the effects of its laws on migrant communities.

In relation to the report submitted by *Spain*, the Committee expressed concern about the lack of positive media portrayals of minority women, including Romani women and women of migrant backgrounds. The Committee called upon Spain to strengthen its anti-discrimination efforts, particularly through the adoption of targeted measures to promote positive images of ethnic minority women in the media and educational system. The Committee also expressed regret about a general lack of comprehensive data and information on the situation of ethnic minority women with respect to education, health, employment and social and political participation. The Committee recommended the Spanish government collect data on this issue and present it in its next State party periodic report.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws44.htm>

3 August to 28 August 2009 - CERD

The **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** held its 75th session from 3 to 28 August 2009, during which it considered State reports from **Azerbaijan, Chad, Chile,**

China, Columbia, Ethiopia, Greece, Peru, Philippines, Poland and the United Arab Emirates.

It is observations on the State party report by *Azerbaijan*, the Committee commended the government's National Plan of Action for the Protection of Human Rights, including its provisions for strengthening dialogue between cultures and protecting the cultural heritage of national minorities. However, the Committee also expressed regret about the lack of current statistical data on the employment of members of ethnic minorities, and recommended Azerbaijan include such information in its next periodic report. The Committee further expressed concern about the absence of consultative structures for representatives of minorities that would give them a voice in the legislative process, and recommended the Azerbaijani government create a national consultative organ, which would include representatives of minorities, to encourage their participation in the decision-making process on policies that interest and affect them. Finally, the Committee expressed concern about a lack of information as to whether the government is providing education and instruction in Armenian for the 30,000 ethnic Armenians living in Azerbaijan. The Committee encouraged the Azerbaijani government to further examine this issue, and provide information in its next State party report.

In relation to the report submitted by *China*, the Committee welcomed the adoption of a National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009-2010 and its provisions for ethnic minorities. However, the Committee also expressed concern about the lack of statistical data available on the socio-economic status of ethnic minorities, and urged the Chinese government to include such information in their next State party report. The Committee further noted that the Chinese State has not adopted a comprehensive law against racial discrimination, and recommended the State adopt such a law at the national level to combat discrimination on

the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin. The Committee additionally expressed concern at reports of incentive systems for workers to settle in minority regions, which could substantially alter the demographics of these regions and negatively affect local traditions and cultures. The issue of household registration was also noted by the Committee, which expressed concern that it is being used for de-facto discrimination against ethnic minorities. The Committee suggested the Chinese government review these policies. In addition, the Committee expressed concern that policies on administrative detention and re-education through labour are being applied disproportionately in relation to members of ethnic minorities, and requested further information on this topic. The Committee also recommended the Chinese government intensify its efforts to increase participation of all minority groups in public service, political life and economic growth, and whilst taking into account the intersectionality between ethnicity and religion, ensure the respect for the right of all ethnic groups to enjoy freedom of religion. To this end, the Committee also requested the Chinese government strengthen its measures to reduce the high illiteracy rates amongst certain ethnic minorities, provide free and open access to health care services, and improve employment rates among ethnic minorities.

The Committee further commended the allotment of seats in the parliament to ethnic minority groups and the recognition of these groups under the *Ethiopian Constitution*. However, the Committee also registered its concern at reports of continuing caste-like racial discrimination against ethnic minorities. The Committee recommended the State undertake a study about the spread and causes of this pattern of discrimination, and take steps to combat it, providing further information on this issue in its next State party report.

In its concluding observations on the report submitted by *Greece*, the Committee took note of the Greek State's definition of minority being exclusively applied to the Muslim minority in Thrace, and called upon the Greek government to conduct research to assess and evaluate the incidences of racial discrimination affecting all groups based on national or ethnic origin, and take steps to eliminate such discrimination. In particular, the Committee requested more information about the Turkish, Pomak and Romani groups that form the Muslim minority in Thrace, and about the measures the government has taken to protect the identity and human rights of these groups. The Committee also expressed concern about reports of forced dissolution and refusal to register some associations having words such as "minority", "Turkish" or "Macedonian" in their titles. The Committee thus recommended that the State party adopt measures to ensure the effective enjoyment by persons belonging to every community or group of their right to freedom of association and of their cultural rights, including the use of mother languages. The Committee was also concerned with obstacles encountered by Roma and Turkish-speaking persons, particularly in access to employment, housing, health care and education, and recommended the Greek government adopt adequate measures to improve the living conditions and educational standards of these groups.

In relation to a report submitted by *Poland*, the Committee noted with appreciation the enactment of a Law on National Ethnic Minorities and Regional Language, aimed at protecting minority languages. However, the Committee remained concerned that the Romani population in Poland continues to suffer social marginalisation and high poverty levels. The Committee recommended the Polish State enhance its efforts towards the full integration of the Roma into Polish society through improvement of their living standards and poverty reduction. The Committee also requested statistical data on the life expectancy and poverty levels in

Poland, disaggregated by region and ethnic group.

The Committee further expressed regret over the lack of statistical data on the rights enjoyed by ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in *the Philippines*. The Committee recommended the State use the 2010 census to include indicators, disaggregated by ethnicity and gender on the basis of voluntary self-identification, and provide the information in their next State party report.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds75.htm>

14 September to 2 October 2009 - CRC

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** will hold its 52nd session from 14 September to 2 October 2009, during which it will consider State reports from **Bolivia, Mozambique, Pakistan, Philippines and Qatar**. The Committee will also review State party reports from **Poland and Yemen** under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and State party reports from **Poland and Turkey** under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crc52.htm>

12 October to 16 October 2009 - CMW

The **Committee on Migrant Workers** will hold its 11th session from 12 to 16 October 2009, during which it will consider State reports from **Sri Lanka**.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmwc/mws11.htm>

12 October to 30 October 2009 - HRC

The **Human Rights Committee** will hold its 97th session from 12 to 30 October 2009, during which it will consider State reports from **Switzerland, Moldova, Croatia,**

Russian Federation and Ecuador. In addition, Country Report Task Forces will consider and adopt list of issues on reports submitted by **Cameroon, Columbia, El Salvador, Estonia, and Israel.**

More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs97.htm>

19 October to 23 October 2009 - CRPD

The **Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** will hold its 2nd session from 19 to 23 October. Within the framework of this session, the Committee will hold on 21 October 2009 a day of general discussion on Article 12 of the CRPD - The right to equal recognition before the law.

More information can be found at:
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/Session2.aspx>

2 November to 20 November 2009 - CESCR

The **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** will hold its 43rd session from 2 to 20 November 2009, during which it will consider State reports from **the Republic of Korea, Poland, Chad, Madagascar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs43.htm>

23 November to 26 November 2009 - CESCR

The **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** will hold a pre-sessional working group from 2 to 20 November 2009, during which it will consider State reports from **Uruguay, Afghanistan, The Netherlands, Switzerland, The Dominican Republic and Tanzania.**

More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrwg43.htm>

2 November to 20 November 2009 - CAT

The **Committee against Torture** will hold its 43rd session from 2 to 20 November 2009, during which it will consider State reports from **Azerbaijan, Columbia, El Salvador, Moldova, Slovakia, Spain and Yemen.**

More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats43.htm>
