

# 10 STEPS TO WRITING A SHADOW REPORT

## SET THE STAGE

### 1 IDENTIFY YOUR EXPERTISE

- What issues do you work on?
- What are the outcomes you advocate for?
- Who can help do the work on this project? What can they do?
  - » Bring them on board as soon as you can.

### 2 IDENTIFY ALLIES

- What other organizations or experts might be interested in collaborating on the report (Steps 5-8) or “signing on” to your report once you’re done (Step 9)?<sup>1</sup>
- Try to find allies in relevant networks or research institutions for up-to-date information.
- A single shadow report supported by a large alliance, or a collection of shadow reports submitted by a broader network, is more powerful than scattered submissions.

### 3 IDENTIFY THE RELEVANT RIGHTS

- What is the connection between the work you do and the rights in the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR)?<sup>2</sup>
- Which articles of the ICCPR are most relevant?
- *Optional: Has the Human Rights Committee said anything to clarify these rights? Take a look at the Committee’s [General Comments](#).*

### 4 REVIEW ICCPR PROCESS TO DATE

- What has happened so far in the ICCPR review process about these rights?
  - » Read [the outcome of the last review](#), the U.S. Government’s [follow-up responses](#), and the Committee’s [first](#) and [second](#) reply letters.
  - » Read [the U.S. Government report](#), [Common Core Document](#), and [Annex](#).
  - » Read [the Committee’s list of issues](#).
  - » Read [the U.S. Government’s response to the list of issues](#).
  - » *Optional:*
    - Read [reports](#) that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) submitted at the list of issues stage.
    - Read the documents from the last Universal Periodic Review of the United States (2010), the last reviews of the United States by the Committee Against Torture (2006) and the Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CERD) (2008), and the U.S. Government’s most recent (June 2013) CERD report.
- *Optional: Are there federal, state, or local laws on the issue? What have courts said?*

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## 5 CLARIFY YOUR ROLE

- How can you shed more light on these rights and related issues in the United States?<sup>3</sup> You might have:
  - » on-the-ground information from the work you do
  - » first-hand accounts about rights being denied, including voices of:
    - victims whose rights have been violated
    - advocates who work with victims
    - witnesses to rights violations
  - » reports your organization has written
  - » other specialized knowledge
  - » other information you think the United Nations should know about why your work is important or how rights can be better protected and promoted.

## 6 SET GOALS

- What are your goals for the Committee's review of the United States in October?<sup>4</sup> Think about what you want the Committee to say on your behalf, about the issues you care about, in these contexts:
  - » The Committee asks the U.S. Government's delegation questions.
  - » The Committee publishes Concluding Observations noting progress and highlighting rights violations and continuing problems.
  - » The Committee makes recommendations to the U.S. Government about how it should better protect and promote human rights, and how it should monitor and assess human rights conditions.

## 7 MAKE AND IMPLEMENT WORK PLAN

- How can you use your information (Step 5) to help achieve your goals (Step 6)?
  - » Gather the information.
  - » Keep track of the sources of information.
  - » Think about how you can ensure that the information you gather is credible, relevant, and up-to-date.
  - » Include steps to use the report as an organizing opportunity in your community after you submit it (Step 10), such as planning a local hearing.
- *Optional: Develop a communications plan for raising awareness about your issues and the opportunity offered by the UN review.*
- *Optional: Document additional information.<sup>5</sup> Consider:*
  - » *interviews*
  - » *observations*
  - » *media monitoring*
  - » *submitting written questions to authorities and gathering responses.*

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## 8 WRITE REPORT

- Set up a report-writing team to take the information from Steps 3, 4, and 7 and draft a brief report.<sup>6</sup> See the [template](#). Incorporate your questions and recommendations (Step 6), revising them in light of what you learned in Step 7. Do not use “abusive” language.

## 9 FINALIZE AND SUBMIT REPORT

- Submit your final report (20 hardcopies) to the Committee no later than **September 13, 2013**.<sup>7</sup>
  - » *Optional: Before you finalize your report:*
    - Ask key stakeholders or other people to review and comment on the draft report.
    - Ask any allies (Step 2) to “sign on” to your report.
  - » *Optional: Submit your report to the U.S. Human Rights Network no later than **August 23, 2013**, so the Network can submit your report as part of its compilation.*<sup>8</sup>

## 10 ADVOCATE FOR YOUR ISSUE

- You can use your report in the context of the upcoming UN review, and also as a valuable tool for promoting social justice in the longer term.<sup>9</sup> There are many ways to get the word out:
  - » Engage in education and outreach within your organization, to the public, and to the media.
  - » Develop and implement additional strategies to use your report to promote justice for your community over the longer term.
  - » *Optional: Implement a communications plan (Step 7).*
  - » *Optional: Engage in additional advocacy:*
    - *advocacy with the Human Rights Committee*
    - *follow-up outreach when the Committee considers the U.S. report in October, and again after the Committee adopts its Concluding Observations, especially if the Committee raises any of your issues*
    - *lobbying the U.S. Government (federal, state, local) to implement any relevant Committee recommendations.*



The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Taskforce guides the USHRN ICCPR Project. The ICCPR Taskforce is in the process of coordinating social justice groups and other NGOs' participation in the upcoming review of the U.S. before the Human Rights Committee (the Committee). The Committee is the monitoring body for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

If you are interested in writing or coordinating a report, please contact the ICCPR Taskforce and inform them of your area(s) of interest. We want to hear from everyone, but we are especially interested to hear from small, grassroots groups who would not otherwise participate in the process. To get involved, please contact: [candace@ushrnetwork.org](mailto:candace@ushrnetwork.org).

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## ENDNOTES

1. See pp. 143-147 of *Discover Human Rights: A Human Rights Approach to Social Justice Work* (July 2011), available at [www.discoverhumanrights.org/download\\_dhr\\_training\\_manual.html](http://www.discoverhumanrights.org/download_dhr_training_manual.html).
2. For help with this step, see the “Where are the Rights?” on p. 47 of *Discover Human Rights*, available at [www.discoverhumanrights.org/download\\_dhr\\_training\\_manual.html](http://www.discoverhumanrights.org/download_dhr_training_manual.html), and read pp. 124-132. Also see pp. 20-21 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy* (January 2011), available at [www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/final\\_report\\_3.pdf](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/final_report_3.pdf).
3. For guidance, see pp. 21-24 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*.
4. The activities on pages 130-147 of *Discover Human Rights* may help with this step.
5. Consult pp. 24-64 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy* for suggestions. Also see pp 79-91 of *Discover Human Rights* on human rights strategies.
6. See pp. 65-81 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*, which cover report-writing.
7. For more information about how to submit your report, see the Human Rights Committee’s Information Note for NGOs, available at [www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/NoteNGOs109thSession.doc](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/NoteNGOs109thSession.doc).
8. If you are submitting for the first time or if you are submitting as a part of a coalition that does not have an established history with the Committee, submitting through the Network could help bring more attention to your report with the Committee.
9. For advice on advocacy, see pp. 83-111 of *A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy*.

## USEFUL LINKS

### US Human Rights Network ICCPR page:

[www.ushrnetwork.org/our-work/project/iccpr-international-covenant-civil-political-rights](http://www.ushrnetwork.org/our-work/project/iccpr-international-covenant-civil-political-rights)

### ICCPR Text:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx)

### Human Rights Committee:

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

### ICCPR General Comments:

[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/comments.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/comments.htm)

### HRC 109th Session (October 2013):

[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs109.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs109.htm)

### NGO reports for HRC List of Issues:

[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/NGOsReporthrscs107.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/NGOsReporthrscs107.htm)

### HRC 2006 review of the United States:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs87.htm>

### Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2008 review of the United States:

[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds72.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds72.htm)

### U.S. Government’s June 2013 CERD report:

[www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/cerd\\_report/210605.htm](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/cerd_report/210605.htm)

### Committee Against Torture 2006 review

of the United States: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=226&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=226&Lang=en)

### 2010 Universal Periodic Review of the United States:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/USSession9.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/USSession9.aspx)

### Discover Human Rights: A Human Rights Approach to Social Justice Work (July 2011):

[www.discoverhumanrights.org/download\\_dhr\\_training\\_manual.html](http://www.discoverhumanrights.org/download_dhr_training_manual.html)

### A Practitioner’s Guide to Human Rights Monitoring, Documentation, and Advocacy (January 2011):

[www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/a\\_practitioner\\_s\\_guide\\_to\\_human\\_rights\\_monitoring\\_documentation\\_and\\_advocacy.html](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/a_practitioner_s_guide_to_human_rights_monitoring_documentation_and_advocacy.html)