



*Promoting human rights through  
the Universal Periodic Review  
<http://www.upr-info.org>*

**UPR INFO**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**RELATING TO THE PREVENTION**

**AND RESPONSE TO ABUSE IN THE**

**WORKPLACE**

**2023**

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## **Part 1 – Introduction**

### ***1.1 Mission Statement and Core Principles***

UPR Info is a non-governmental organisation committed to furthering human rights through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a human rights review process including all UN Member States. UPR Info aspires for a world free of gender discrimination and where every human being can reach their full potential without facing any other sort of discrimination.

Our loyalty to ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination is the foundation for this Code of Conduct policy.

UPR Info believes that every individual has the right to a respectful, safe, and comfortable environment, including in the workplace. UPR Info undertakes a commitment to providing this environment for all staff, associated personnel, and stakeholders. It will dedicate itself to creating a safe environment, where all unacceptable behaviors and actions will be responded to appropriately and within a timely manner. Any retaliation against those who adhere to the Code of Conduct by reporting inappropriate behaviour is prohibited.

Breaches of the policy are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### ***1.2 Purpose***

UPR Info strives to maintain a workplace free from illegal discrimination, harassment, and abuse. Workplace pillars include dignity, fairness, equality, respect, teamwork, mutual support and accountability.

To fully implement these values and goals in the organization, this Code of Conduct was created. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is as follows:

- To provide a respectful, adequate environment for all;
- To set out clear expectations and responsibilities for all UPR staff and associated personnel;
- To spread awareness about potential resources and options for employees in need.

### ***1.3 Scope***

This policy applies to all individuals working for *UPR Info* including employees, interns, volunteers, the secretariat, and Board members. This includes employees located in Geneva or elsewhere. It also applies to all relevant associated personnel.

The policy covers actions and behaviours that occur in the physical and virtual workplace, as well as outside the workplace where the work environment is impacted.

#### ***I.4 Definitions***

For the purposes of this document, “inappropriate behaviour” refers to all forms of abuse, discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

*Abuse* refers to any act of physical or emotional ill-treatment.

*Bullying* refers to consistent offensive, cruel, and insulting behaviour towards an individual or a group of people.

*Discrimination* refers to any prejudicial treatment towards an individual based on their identity or membership of a particular group of people, especially on grounds of ethnicity, age, gender or sexuality, and disability.

*Harassment* refers to any inappropriate or unwanted behaviour that may have the effect of:

- i. Offending, degrading, humiliating, or intimidating another person or group;
- ii. Interfering with another individual or group’s ability to complete their work, or creating a hostile work environment.

Harassment is most often a persistent behaviour. The act of sexual harassment is also a form of harassment and therefore prohibited.

*Safeguarding* refers to treating everyone with dignity and creating respectful relationships between colleagues, staff, and associated personnel.

*Workplace* may refer to public and private workspaces, in places where the worker is paid, and during work-related trips, travel, events, or social activities through work-related communication including cyber communication.

## **Part 2 – Awareness**

### ***II.1 Responsibilities and Expectations***

All UPR Info staff, as defined under Section I.3 of this policy, shall:

- Ensure that their behaviour at work is respectful, equitable, and nondiscriminatory;
- Educate themselves on *UPR Info*’s policies and procedures, including those outlined in this Code of Conduct;
- Promote the expectations and responsibilities found within the Code of Conduct;
- Report offensive and unacceptable behaviour and actions of which they are a witness;

- Actively embody and model acceptable behaviours and actions while in the workplace;
- Cooperate when requested to provide information considered relevant to a reported case to achieve a resolution.

## ***II.2 Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour***

Examples of unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Engaging in abusive or exploitative conduct;
- Disregarding the integrity and reputation of UPR Info;
- Making coworkers or associated personnel feel unsafe, harassed, or bullied;
- Misusing one's position of authority to exploit others;
- All forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment.

## **Part 3 – Prevention**

### ***III.1 Prevention Strategies***

Prevention is the best way to deal with violations of the Code of Conduct. UPR Info aims to prevent these instances through the following strategies:

- Implementing safeguarding techniques during recruiting and managing all staff;
- Communicating a strict zero-tolerance policy regarding violations of the Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that consequences and sanctions are clearly communicated to all *UPR Info* staff and associated personnel.

## **Part 4 – Reporting and Investigation**

UPR Info urges any employee who is witness to a violation of any policy to come forward and report the action to the appropriate source. As previously discussed, an ombud should be used as the primary resource, but there are designated personnel at UPR Info to report to if an ombud intervention fails or is unfit for the circumstance. In the case of UPR Info, the appropriate and designated sources are:

- Mme Marie Laure Canosa, Ombudsperson ([www.racinesduciel.ch](http://www.racinesduciel.ch));
- UPR Info director and deputy-director.

When a designated source has been informed of a violation complaint, he/she/they will act in the following manner:

- Record the dates, times, and facts of the violation reported;
- Inform the whistleblower what next steps will be taken to appropriately respond to the complaint;
- Keep a confidential record of all discussions;
- Ensure that the appropriate response is taken;
- Determine the appropriate sanction for the violation.

No UPR Info staff or associated personnel may investigate a suspicion to which there is a conflict of interest.

## **Part 5 – Response and Consequences**

UPR Info commits to responding to any complaint or suspicion of a violation of this policy in a respectable and appropriate manner.

### ***V.1 Ombuds***

In order to avoid conflicts of interest and/or abuse of authority, UPR Info wishes to engage in ombuds prior to other resources. An ombud is a designated neutral that can provide conflict resolution within an organisation. If a particular situation does not seem as though an ombud would be of assistance, designated personnel within UPR Info will be informed and required to assume authority over the matter.

### ***V.2 Possible Sanctions***

Any individual who has been found to have violated this Code of Conduct is subject to the following sanctions:

- Verbal or written warning;
- Adverse performance evaluation;
- Reduction in wages;
- Demotion;
- Suspension; and
- Dismissal.

The appropriate sanction is determined based on the severity and consistency of the violation in question. Prior history of violating the Code of Conduct will also be considered.

This list is not exclusive, and violations may be subject to sanctions not listed here.

### ***V.3 Monitoring Strategy***

After the appropriate sanction has been determined, and if the violator was not dismissed, UPR Info will initiate a monitoring phase. This monitoring phase will consist of check-ins to ensure the policy is being followed and respected.

The monitoring phase may include the following:

- Scheduled check-ins with the whistleblower to ensure that no recent violations have occurred;
- Scheduled check-ins with the violator to ensure understanding and respect of the policy violated.

### ***V.4 Evaluation***

Keeping policies updated and modern is a priority, and therefore UPR Info will ensure that the applicability and effectiveness of the Code of Conduct is evaluated annually by two team members and the direction.

### ***V.5 False Reports and Retaliation***

UPR Info prohibits purposeful false reports motivated by malicious or unethical intent. If an individual is determined to have made a false report, the individual will be subject to sanctions (see Part 5, V2) deemed appropriate by UPR Info.

UPR Info prohibits any form of retaliation against those who report a violation of any policy.

## **Part 6 – Related Policies**

Employees are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant UPR Info policies, including:

- Organisational Policies and Procedures (2012/2016/2018/2020)
- Risk Management Policy (2021)
- Sexual Harassment Policy (2018)
- Anti-Corruption Code (2014)
- Code of Conduct for Board Members (2019)

## Contact

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