



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Fifty-first session
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Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Nauru*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review and the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a summary of ten stakeholders' submissions² for the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations³ and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. Center for Global Nonkilling (CGNK), Oceania HR and UNU RCE highlighted that Nauru had a low level of ratification of international human rights treaty bodies.⁴ CGNK, Oceania HR and UNU RCE indicated that Nauru should build on its initial ratification of the CRC and should immediately ratify the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the ICERD, the CEDAW, the ICRMW and the Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.⁵ Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice (HKC) recommended Nauru to ratify the ICESCR.⁶ CGNK underscored the importance for Nauru to dedicate resources and seek assistance in the ratification and implementation of the core human rights treaties.⁷

3. JS1 underlined that, despite committing to ratify the ICCPR-OP 2 during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, Nauru did not make progress towards its ratification. JS1 recommended that Nauru take all necessary steps to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, without reservations.⁸

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



B. National human rights framework

Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

4. The UPR Project at BCU (UPR BCU) reported that, despite having accepted related recommendations in previous UPR cycles, Nauru had yet to establish a fully functioning national human rights institution (NHRI). UPR BCU indicated that no meaningful institutional or legislative action had been undertaken to operationalize an NHRI since the conclusion of the third cycle. There was currently no evidence of draft legislation, public consultations or budgetary allocation for such an institution. UPR BCU considered it as a systemic gap in Nauru's ability to fulfil its international human rights obligations and limited the country's capacity to engage with United Nations treaty monitoring bodies.⁹

5. UPR BCU recalled that Nauru had cited resource constraints and small population size as challenges. However, that organization considered that such barriers had not prevented similar Pacific Island nations from initiating NHRI processes with international support.¹⁰ UPR BCU indicated there was a clear opportunity before the next review cycle for Nauru to take concrete steps towards establishing an independent human rights institution with the support of regional mechanisms like the Pacific Community and the Asia Pacific Forum (APF).¹¹ UPR BCU recommended that Nauru establish an NHRI in full compliance with the Paris Principles and enact legislation clearly outlining the NHRI's independence, powers and responsibilities, including complaints handling, monitoring and advisory roles. It also recommended that Nauru ensure sufficient budgetary and administrative resources to enable the NHRI to function effectively and independently.¹²

6. UPR BCU strongly encouraged the Government of Nauru to prioritize an open, transparent and genuinely inclusive consultation process with a diverse range of actors across society for the establishment of the NHRI. These consultations should be conducted in accessible and culturally sensitive ways.¹³ It also encouraged Nauru to seek technical support from international and regional partners, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Asia Pacific Forum (APF), to design and facilitate an inclusive consultation process that aligns with best practices and international standards.¹⁴ UPR BCU recommended that Nauru initiate inclusive national consultations with civil society, parliamentarians and vulnerable groups to design an NHRI reflective of national needs.¹⁵ UPR BCU also recommended that Nauru seek technical support and cooperation from the Pacific Community, OHCHR and the APF to guide the establishment process.¹⁶

7. Unite for Rights stated that Nauru should support regional human rights courts. For that, it recommended Nauru to fund and coordinate a regional scoping study, led by Pacific stakeholders, to assess the feasibility, structure and support for a Pacific Court of Human Rights. It also recommended Nauru to convene a Pacific regional forum bringing together governments, civil society and legal experts to explore international regional court models and identify a path forward for a Pacific Court of Human Rights. In that context, Unite for Rights recommended to strengthen partnerships with ASEAN's human rights bodies (such as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights), by supporting joint initiatives and facilitating knowledge exchange to help build a South Asian Court of Human Rights and a Pacific Court of Human Rights as progress towards an international judicial architecture of regional courts.¹⁷

8. CGNK, Oceania HR and UNU RCE stressed that the Pacific was one of the remaining regions without a regional human rights mechanism. It underlined the importance of a regional perspective to fully realize human rights around the world. CGNK, Oceania HR and UNU RCE recommended that Nauru work in partnership with other Pacific Island States to create a regional human rights mechanism which allows for dialogue and determines a process that permits human rights discussions and decisions among all leaders in the region and ensures a mechanism that fosters freedom in the Pacific region.¹⁸

C. Promotion and protection of human rights

1. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

9. JS1 reported that Nauru had abolished the death penalty in the Crimes Act 2016, but the Constitution still authorized it. It recalled that, since 2021, Nauru had not taken any steps toward signing or ratifying the ICCPR-OP2 or toward finalizing the abolition of the death penalty in the country's constitution. Nonetheless, Nauru voted in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty in both 2022 and 2024. JS1 recommended that Nauru ratify that Optional Protocol and step up the Constitutional referendum process, including through an awareness-raising campaign about the importance of removing the death penalty from the Constitution of Nauru.¹⁹

Right to marriage and family life

10. Transatlantic Christian Council (TCC/CCI) indicated that, in Nauru, family played a central role in the upbringing and education of children.²⁰

Right to an adequate standard of living

11. HKC recommended that Nauru consider revising the Constitution to include the human rights to water and sanitation as well as other economic, social and cultural rights which are contemplated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²¹

Right to health

12. CFAM indicated that, as a remote island in the Pacific region, Nauru continued to experience limitations in health care delivery, including regarding prevention, mitigation, and treatment of diseases affecting pregnant women.²² CFAM stressed that, while Nauru remained off track for meeting its target under the Sustainable Development Goals, it could achieve significant improvements in maternal health by addressing non-communicable diseases and by strengthening the healthcare infrastructure and workforce needed to treat obstetric emergencies.²³ CFAM alerted that the rate of non-communicable diseases was exceptionally high in Nauru. The country faced the world's highest per capita level of obesity and the second-highest diabetes prevalence. Limited healthcare capacity, poor diet stemming from a reliance on imported processed foods and socioeconomic barriers had helped drive these poor health outcomes.²⁴ CFAM recommended that Nauru continue improving maternal and child health outcomes, including by ensuring adequate and affordable maternal health care, with special attention to addressing non-communicable diseases, such as obesity and diabetes. It added that Nauru should continue to expand programmes aimed at improving maternal nutrition and screening for and managing diabetes during pregnancy.²⁵

13. CFAM, European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) and TCC/CCI indicated that, according to Section 68 of the Crimes Act 2016 of Nauru, abortion was outlawed unless to save the life of the mother.²⁶ ECLJ underlined that, since the last UPR review, Nauru had not made efforts to change that law and expand access to legal abortion.²⁷

14. CFAM reported that Nauru struggled with ensuring access to key medical supplies and equipment and retaining medical professionals, often relying on expatriate professionals on short-term contracts.²⁸

Right to education

15. TCC/CCI indicated that, while access to education was high, learning outcomes remained low. It pointed at challenges of literacy and numeracy at early grades.²⁹ TCC/CCI stated that the Constitution of Nauru explicitly affirmed parental rights in education.

16. TCC/CCI reported that, in practice, elements of sexuality education were integrated into the school curriculum through the Family Life Education (FLE) and the Physical

Activity and Wellness Studies (PAWS), particularly at the secondary level (Years 7–10). It alerted that the Education Act 2011 limited the involvement of parents in the provision of consent with regard to children with disabilities in school.³⁰

17. Unite for Rights underlined that, for the 80th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), it was essential for students to learn that they have rights and that there was a plan to make their rights enforceable in court. Unite for Rights recommended that Nauru ensure that the legacy of the UDHR, including its plan for human rights to be enforceable in the courts of all countries, is systematically embedded in national education standards, including national curriculum, particularly in civics, history, and social studies, as well as updated to reflect contemporary issues within Nauru. It also recommended that Nauru increase funding and long-term support for civil society organizations specifically dedicated to delivering human rights education on the UDHR, especially those working with populations in vulnerable situations and in remote areas.³¹

Development, the environment, and business and human rights

18. HKC explained that Nauru began phosphate mining in the early 1900's, which quickly became the country's main source of income. However, mining stopped by the mid-21st century due to resource depletion and great environmental concerns. The long-term damage to the environment caused by phosphate extraction had led to issues such as water contamination from heavy metals and chemicals, air pollution and habitat deconstruction. The decline of the natural environment due to climate change was rapidly increasing, causing numerous days of flooding each year and threatening fresh water supply.³² HKC recommended Nauru to ensure all climate change and infrastructure programmes are gender inclusive by requiring gender impact assessments.³³

19. CGNK, Oceania HR and UNU RCE recommended that the government of Nauru work in partnership with United Nations agencies and States to address and mitigate human rights impacts of climate change with a view to ensuring the survival and well-being of the people of Nauru. They added that Nauru should adopt a national plan of action that provides a human rights framework to address the challenges of climate change on immediate and long-term situations.³⁴

2. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

20. HKC reported that women were disproportionately affected due to traditional cultural norms that assigned them primary responsibility for domestic duties. According to HKC, women and girls were 14 times more likely than men to die during a natural disaster and they were also subject to a number of secondary impacts of natural disasters including increased workload, reduced economic opportunities and gender-based violence.³⁵

21. HKC considered that women's access to clean water was a severe human rights issue in Nauru.³⁶ The lack of preparation for climate change greatly impacted women and girls' livelihoods, limiting women's economic and educational opportunities and reinforcing gender inequalities.³⁷ HKC recommended that Nauru ensure the availability of safe and sufficient water for all women and girls, by prioritising public investment in water infrastructure, expanding the installation of private water tanks for the most vulnerable first and strengthening women's participation in water governance and climate adaptation planning, as well as ensuring women's meaningful representation in decision making bodies.³⁸

Children

22. HKC considered that corporal punishment was a severe human rights issue in Nauru.³⁹ HKC underlined that corporal punishment had already been banned in few settings such as schools and penal institutions. The Education (Amendment) Act 2025 was enforced in June 2025. Section 37 subsection (2) of that Act specified that corporal punishment should not be used as a form of discipline in schools. Further, subsection (3) listed five circumstances where an authorised teacher or principal was allowed to use corporal punishment against a student. These were: (a) to maintain discipline of a student's conduct in the school; (b) to prevent or

minimise harm to a student or another person; (c) to prevent a student from engaging or continuing to engage in misconduct including any criminal conduct; (d) to prevent a student from engaging or continuing to engage in threatening, offensive or disruptive behaviour; or (e) in such other reasonable circumstances which required the use of corporal punishment. HKC considered that point (e) of Section 37 subsection (3) of that Act was arguably vague enough to allow the defence for the majority of potential offences.⁴⁰ HKC considered that this amendment to the Education Act directly went against the recommendations accepted by Nauru in the 3rd UPR cycle by actively re-introducing the use of corporal punishment in schools. HKC recommended that Nauru repeal changes made in Section 37 of the Education Act 2011 through the Education (Amendment) Act 2025 to fully prohibit corporal punishment in all circumstances. It also recommended that Nauru introduce an educational scheme on the consequences of corporal punishment and reasonable alternatives.⁴¹

23. HKC underlined that there was no law that explicitly prohibited corporal punishment in the home.⁴² HKC recommended Nauru to enact laws that explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including the home.⁴³

24. TCC/CCI indicated that teenage pregnancy remained a serious concern in Nauru and represented one of the most persistent threats to the well-being of adolescent girls. It added that formal policies targeting teenage pregnancy prevention or support for pregnant adolescents were absent.⁴⁴ TCC/CCI recommended that Nauru respect the rights of teen mothers to return to school.⁴⁵

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

25. CFAM highlighted the lack of recognition of same-sex marriage despite several recommendations to decriminalize same-sex behaviours, including sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds for non-discrimination, made during the previous UPR cycles. Nauru decriminalized homosexual behaviour in 2016, but the country did not change its non-discriminatory laws.⁴⁶

Notes

¹ A/HRC/47/17, A/HRC/47/17/Add.1, and A/HRC/47/2.

² The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org. (one asterisk denotes a national human rights institution with A status).

Civil society

Individual submissions:

CFam	Center for Family and Human Rights, New York, NY 10017 (United States of America);
CGNK	Center for Global Nonkilling, 1218 Grand-Saconnex (Switzerland);
ECLJ	European Centre for Law and Justice, The, Strasbourg (France);
HKC	Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, Sheffield (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
Oceania HR	Oceania HR, Honolulu (United States of America);
TCC/CCI	Transatlantic Christian Council, Bodegraven (Netherlands);
Unite for Rights	Unite for Rights, San Francisco (United States of America);
UNU RCE	UNU RCE, Honolulu (United States of America);
UPR BCU	The UPR Project at BCU, Birmingham (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

Joint submissions:

JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: Advocates for Human Rights, Minneapolis (United States of America); World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.
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³ The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

⁴ CGNK, p. 3, Oceania HR, p. 3, and UNU RCE, p. 3. See also UPR BCU, para. 1.

⁵ CGNK, p. 3, Oceania HR, p. 3, and UNU RCE, p. 3. See also UPR BCU, para. 1.

⁶ HKC, para. 32.

⁷ CGNK, p. 3, Oceania HR, p. 3, and UNU RCE, p. 3.

⁸ JS1, paras. 1 and 5.

⁹ UPR BCU, paras. 5, 13 and 14.

¹⁰ UPR BCU, para. 14.

¹¹ UPR BCU, paras. 16–17.

¹² UPR BCU, p. 5.

¹³ UPR BCU, paras. 18–19.

¹⁴ UPR BCU, para. 21.

¹⁵ UPR BCU, p. 5.

¹⁶ UPR BCU, p. 5.

¹⁷ Unite for Rights, p. 3.

¹⁸ CGNK, p. 3, Oceania HR, p. 3, and UNU RCE, p. 3.

¹⁹ JS1, paras. 4–5.

²⁰ TCC/CCI, paras. 3 and 25.

²¹ HKC, para. 32.

²² CFAM, para. 5.

²³ CFAM, para. 7.

²⁴ CFAM, para. 6.

²⁵ CFAM, para. 19.

²⁶ CFAM, para. 8, ECLJ, paras. 5 and 7, and TCC/CCI, para. 15.

²⁷ ECLJ, 10. See also TCC/CCI, p. 3.

²⁸ CFAM, para. 6.

²⁹ TCC/CCI, para. 4.

³⁰ TCC/CCI, para. 14.

³¹ Unite for Rights, pp. 4–5.

³² HKC, para. 17.

³³ HKC, para. 32.

³⁴ CGNK, p. 4, Oceania HR, p. 4, and UNU RCE, p. 3. See also HKC, para. 32.

³⁵ HKC, para. 18.

³⁶ HKC, paras. 2 and 23.

³⁷ HKC, para. 20.

³⁸ HKC, para. 32.

³⁹ HKC, para. 2.

⁴⁰ HKC, paras. 2–13.

⁴¹ HKC, paras. 14–15.

⁴² HKC, para. 8.

⁴³ HKC, para. 15.

⁴⁴ TCC/CCI, paras. 20 and 22.

⁴⁵ TCC/CC., p. 4.

⁴⁶ CFAM, paras. 12–13.