



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Fortieth session
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Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Iceland*

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. It is a summary of 13 stakeholders' submissions¹ to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies²

2. Just Atonement Inc. (JAI) commended Iceland for ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2019.³

3. Joint Submission (JS) 1 and JS3 recommended that Iceland ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.⁴ JAI and JS1 recommended that Iceland ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.⁵

4. JS1 recommended that Iceland ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.⁶

5. The Homes Association (HH) reported that Iceland has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.⁷ JS1 encouraged Iceland to ratify the Optional Protocol.⁸

6. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and JS3 recommended that Iceland ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.⁹

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



B. National human rights framework¹⁰

7. JS1 noted that Iceland accepted numerous recommendations from its second universal periodic review to establish a national human rights institution. Such institution has yet to be established.¹¹ The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) recommended that Iceland establish a national human rights institution and ensure its financial autonomy, full institutional independence and effective discharge of its responsibilities and functions.¹²

8. JS1 echoed a recommendation to safeguard all human rights provisions when revising the Constitution, which Iceland accepted during its first universal periodic review, and encouraged Iceland to implement it.¹³

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

1. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination¹⁴

9. JS1, JAI and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe (CoE-ECRI) noted the adoption of the Act on Equal Treatment Irrespective of Racial and Ethnic Origin and the Act on Equal Treatment in the Labour Market in 2018.¹⁵ CoE-ECRI observed, however, that neither of the two Acts included the protected ground of nationality.¹⁶

10. CoE-ECRI stated that the Act on Equal Treatment in the Labour Market regulated equal treatment of individuals in the area of employment and covered the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion, disability, reduced working capacity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual characteristics and gender expression. CoE-ECRI welcomed the broad scope of the Act.¹⁷

11. CoE-ECRI observed that the Act on Equal Treatment irrespective of Racial and Ethnic Origin applied to equal treatment of individuals in relation to social protection, including social security and healthcare, social advantages, education and access to and supply of goods and services for the public, including housing. The grounds were restricted to racial or ethnic origin. CoE-ECRI noted that the Act obliged the Government to present a bill extending its scope to cover the additional grounds of religion, disability, reduced working capacity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender characteristics and gender expression, before 1 September 2019. Regrettably, this was not yet been carried out. CoE-ECRI encouraged the authorities to proceed with this extension which would result in highly progressive and comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in Iceland.¹⁸

12. JS1 recommended that the Government undertake an awareness raising campaign on the anti-discrimination legislation and the remedies available.¹⁹

13. JAI stated that Iceland has seen a rise in racist discourse in recent years.²⁰

14. JS1 noted a recommendation from the second universal periodic review to introduce a criminal law provision that expressly considered the racist motivation of an offence as a specific aggravating circumstance. JS1 reported that the Parliament, in spring 2021, did not approve amendments to the General Penal Code that included racist motivation as an aggravating circumstance.²¹

15. JS4 noted that Icelandic laws protected persons from discrimination on the ground of gender identity and expression. However, JS4 highlighted the need for more efforts to ensure the protection of the rights of women and of gender minorities. JS4 recommended that Iceland ensure the full implementation of laws and regulations to reflect the reality of different genders and how gender status affects quality of life and protection of human rights. It recommended that Iceland allocate funding and resources to develop and improve legislation on equal rights of gender minorities.²²

Development, the environment, and business and human rights

16. JAI stated that Iceland had a high CO₂ emissions per capita. Iceland's emissions primarily stemmed from industry and chemical use, followed by emissions from land transport, agriculture, and fisheries. Much of energy production of Iceland were converted to renewable energy resources. In contrast, Iceland's three aluminium smelters accounted for 30 percent of its total CO₂ emissions.²³

17. JAI stated that Iceland revised, in 2020, its original 2018 Climate Action Plan to add 15 more action items, with a current total of 48 actions. As of October 2020, its new Climate Action Plan aimed at reducing emissions by 40-46 percent by 2030 as compared to 2005, and to become carbon neutral by 2040. In 2021, Iceland submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) its new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) target of 55 percent net greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2030 as compared to 1990, an increase of 15 percent from its original Paris Agreement target of a 40 percent reduction.²⁴

18. JAI commended Iceland for doubling its contribution to the United Nations Green Climate Fund. JAI noted Iceland's announcement that it would double its contribution to two million USD at the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit.²⁵

2. Civil and political rights

*Right to life, liberty and security of person*²⁶

19. ICAN stated that Iceland should ensure that nuclear weapons do not have a role in its national defence plans and security policies. Iceland should renounce the retention and potential use of nuclear weapons.²⁷

20. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CoE-CPT) noted with regret that – despite its repeated earlier recommendations – there was still no requirement for an automatic judicial review of the need to continue involuntary psychiatric hospitalisation, neither for civil nor for forensic patients. CoE-CPT called upon the Icelandic authorities to amend the relevant legislation as regards both civil and forensic patients; if the period of involuntary placement was unspecified (or exceeds six months), there should be an automatic judicial review at regular intervals of the need to continue hospitalisation.²⁸

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

21. The Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe (CoE-GRECO) stated that the selection process with respect to judges to be nominated by the Supreme Court was still not adequately regulated. For example, it was not clear whether such positions were to be publicly advertised when vacant and whether the same guarantees of independence, impartiality, publicity and transparency, as governing all other judicial appointments, applied. It noted that revised nomination and appointment procedures of members of the Labour Court appeared to be underway.²⁹

22. As far as prosecutors were concerned, CoE-GRECO was pleased that the system was reinforced by providing for greater independence of prosecutorial decisions and to allow for appeal against such decisions. However, CoE-GRECO observed that ensuring security of tenure for all prosecutors was still an issue of concern. The Ministry of Justice has not still made any changes to the general rules on appointment of prosecutors.³⁰

23. In 2019, CoE-CPT reported that material conditions of detention were of a high standard in all the prisons visited. As regards regime, CoE-CPT recommended that the authorities pursue their efforts to develop the availability of work and other organised activities for all inmates, in particular those serving long sentences.³¹

24. CoE-CPT reported that in the prisons visited there was no systemic and prompt medical screening of newly-arrived inmates, nor were there checks for the presence of injuries and transmissible diseases.³²

25. Furthermore, CoE-CPT was concerned by the fact that prisoners continued to have extremely limited access to psychiatric care and psychological assistance. It called upon the authorities to take immediate steps to ensure that prisoners with mental health disorders who required in-patient psychiatric treatment were kept and cared for in appropriate facilities.³³

26. CoE-CPT stated that drug use continued to be one of the major challenges facing the Icelandic prison system. CoE-CPT called upon the authorities to devise and implement a comprehensive strategy for the provision of assistance to prisoners with drug-related problems including harm reduction measures.³⁴

*Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life*³⁵

27. JAI noted that the Information Act was criticized as providing insufficient safeguards, with public officials seeking to conceal embarrassing or implicating information. In 2020, the Icelandic Parliament adopted conflict-of-interest legislation as well as legislation protecting whistleblowers.³⁶

28. CoE-GRECO noted the adoption of the 2020 Act on whistleblower protection (Act n° 40/2020), which entered into force on January 2021 and provided for the protection of whistleblowers both in the private and the public spheres. CoE-GRECO welcomed the new law on whistleblowers' protection, but specific measures for its implementation in practice would also be needed.³⁷

29. JAI observed that voters in rural districts enjoyed greater representation per vote than voters in Reykjavik and its suburbs. Statistics from the 2017 parliamentary election showed that 5,350 voters were needed for a parliamentary seat in the Southwest constituency, while a parliamentary seat in the Northwest constituency required approximately only half the number of votes, at 2,690 voters per seat. JAI expressed concern that disproportionate votes might implicate the rights of Icelanders to participate in the political process, protected by Articles 3 and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.³⁸

30. In its final report on the early parliamentary elections of 2017, OSCE/ODIHR recommended that Iceland inter alia establish an independent electoral management body with authority over the whole election process, codify the long-standing practice in candidate registration process, harmonize timelines for early voting and candidate registration, streamline various voting procedures and ensure uniform administration of elections, and regulate political campaigning of third-parties ahead of elections and increase the transparency of campaign finance. In 2020, OSCE/ODIHR stated that a number of those recommendations were still valid and reaffirmed its readiness to support the authorities in ongoing electoral reform.³⁹

*Prohibition of all forms of slavery*⁴⁰

31. The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe (CoE-GRETA) observed that the legislative framework relevant to actions against trafficking in human beings evolved as a result of amendments to the Act on Foreigners, which increased the duration of the recovery and reflection period from six to nine months. Victims of trafficking in human beings who were granted a residence permit were also entitled to receive a work permit.⁴¹ CoE-GRETA noted that the authorities also developed the institutional framework for combating trafficking in human beings.⁴²

32. CoE-GRETA stated that despite the progress achieved, some issues continued to give rise to concern and requested the authorities to take further action in a number of areas.⁴³ In particular, CoE-GRETA urged the authorities to take further steps in the area of preventing trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. It also urged the authorities to include slavery, practices similar to slavery and servitude as types of exploitation in the legal definition of trafficking in human beings.⁴⁴

33. Furthermore, CoE-GRETA urged Iceland to further improve the identification of victims of trafficking, including child victims and to strengthen its efforts to provide assistance to the victims.⁴⁵ It urged the authorities to adopt a specific legal provision on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking for their involvement in unlawful activities.⁴⁶

34. JS1 encouraged the Government to adequately fund actions for combatting trafficking in human beings and to issue a comprehensive action plan on trafficking in human beings.⁴⁷ CoE-GRETA made a similar recommendation.⁴⁸ JS1 encouraged the authorities to address the structural conditions enabling and perpetuating trafficking in human beings, which included lack of safe legal routes for refugees and migrants.⁴⁹

35. CoE-GRETA noted that training on trafficking in human beings was provided to an increasing range of relevant professionals, following a multi-agency approach. It urged the authorities to provide further training on trafficking in human beings to police officers, prosecutors and judges with a view to improving the criminal justice response to trafficking across the country and protecting victims' rights.⁵⁰

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

*Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work*⁵¹

36. In respect of reasonable working time, the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe (CoE-ECSR) observed that the working hours for seamen might go up to 72 hours per week.⁵²

37. In respect of reasonable notice of termination of employment, CoE-ECSR observed that the two weeks' notice period was not reasonable for skilled and industrial workers with more than six months and less than a year of service.⁵³

38. JS1 encouraged Iceland to continue its work to eradicate the gender pay gap.⁵⁴

39. CoE-ECSR stated that the existence of priority clauses in collective agreements which gave priority to members of certain trade unions in respect of recruitment and termination of employment infringed the right not to join trade unions.⁵⁵

*Right to an adequate standard of living*⁵⁶

40. JS1 noted that retirement pensions were below the level required to enjoy the right to an adequate standard of living. The benefits of persons with disabilities were lower than the amount paid for unemployment benefits and far below the minimum wage.⁵⁷

41. JS1 recommended that Iceland continue efforts to ensure that all retirees and persons with disabilities are able to enjoy an adequate standard of living through the provision of adequate level of social security benefits and pensions and work opportunities.⁵⁸

42. CoE-ECSR reported that the Housing Benefit Act No. 75/2016 replaced the earlier Rent Benefit Act. Under the new legislation, the administration of financial support to tenants was transferred from the municipalities to the State. The main change was that the basic amount of housing benefit rose according to the number of persons in the household, irrespective of their age. Thus, housing support was not bound by the type of family and was made more equal than it used to be. Housing benefit could, at its maximum level, amount to 75 percent of the rent, while maximum rent benefit in the old system could reach only 50 percent of the rent. Municipalities were now obliged to offer additional special housing support to tenants if certain conditions which each municipality set were met. Prior to the new system, they were permitted, but not obliged, to offer these special rent benefits.⁵⁹

Right to health

43. JS4 recommended that Iceland improve women's sexual and reproductive health and rights through allocation of sufficient resources and development of civic education programmes.⁶⁰

44. The Alliance Defending Freedom International (ADF International) noted that the Parliament amended, 2019, abortion laws to legalize the unlimited termination of a pregnancy within the first 22 weeks regardless of the reason, with later abortions requiring the approval of two doctors. Previously, abortions could be procured within the same time frame, but a committee of doctors had to approve the decision after the 16th week of pregnancy.⁶¹ The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) and JS3 made similar observations.⁶² United Families International (UFI) reported on the legal requirements of the abortions by minors.⁶³

*Right to education*⁶⁴

45. JS1 noted that the Acts on Compulsory School and Secondary Upper School stipulated that every school had to prepare a welcoming plan for children whose mother tongue was not Icelandic. Despite the requirement, provisions and services for migrant students and their parents varied considerably from one school to another. The percentage of migrant children dropping out of school after finishing compulsory education was high.⁶⁵

46. JS4 reported that there were few schools in the country that accepted students with special needs to their education programs. The education curricula for persons with disabilities were also limited. For adolescents the only study available to them was a work-related or vocational training diploma program at the University of Iceland.⁶⁶

47. JS4 recommended that Iceland increase learning opportunities for children with disabilities in all schools and ensure that persons with disabilities are not left behind and are enrolled in all academic programmes of their choice with sufficient support system to enable them to complete these programmes like the rest of the students. JS4 recommended that Iceland allocate sufficient funding for the academic needs of and learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.⁶⁷

48. ADF International noted that the Government appointed, in 2020, a task force to review the sexual education curriculum with an aim to improve sexual education and violence prevention education in primary and secondary schools.⁶⁸ ADF International recommended that Iceland inter alia ensure that sexual education programmes are aimed at promoting responsible sexual behaviour and healthy relationships.⁶⁹

4. Rights of specific persons or groups*Women*⁷⁰

49. JS1 urged Iceland to incorporate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to educate the public on Iceland's international commitments as regards to gender equality.⁷¹

50. JS1 encouraged the Government to take measures to eliminate gender stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men, in particular through awareness-raising campaigns and education.⁷²

51. JS1 noted that the 2010 amendments to the Public Limited Companies Act and the Private Limited Companies Act mandated that boards for companies with 50 employees or more have a set quota of 40 percent of women and men. JS1 expressed concern that the gender quota law only applied to companies with 50 employees. JS1 encouraged Iceland to amend the legislation on gender quotas related to the boards of corporations, so that it applies to companies with 25 employees or more.⁷³

52. JS1 stated that although the National Police Commissioner, the Commissioner of the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police and other police commissioners were women, women were still underrepresented in the Icelandic police force and the number of women police officers who were sexually harassed was still high.⁷⁴ JS1 encouraged the Government to address harassment in the police force and guarantee the right of women to be free from harassment and to safety at work, and increase the number of women serving in the police force.⁷⁵

53. JS1 expressed concern at the high number of dismissals of charges of rape and other sexual violence by the State Prosecutor and the low number of convictions in cases of rape and other sexual violence. JS1 stated that cases were dropped due to several reasons, including that witnesses were not called in for questioning or evidence such as injuries, certificates from psychologists, phone video recordings, even crime scene evidence were given little merit. JS1 observed that the recent change of the legal definition of rape to a consent-based one, did not seem to be reflected in judgements in rape cases and that older criteria were still being used.⁷⁶

54. JS1 recommended that the Government ensure adequate funding for the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences and domestic violence cases as well as the training of police, prosecutors and judges in this regard.⁷⁷

55. While noting increased cooperation between police, social services and child welfare services for cases of domestic violence, JS1 encouraged the Government to provide adequate financial resources to the Icelandic Police and other institutions party to a coordinating mechanism to carry out assistance to victims of sexual violence and conduct investigations in a satisfactory manner.⁷⁸

56. JS1 stated that despite good efforts made by the Government in recent years, the ratio of migrant women seeking help from the Women's Shelter in Reykjavík continued to be disproportionately large. JS1 encouraged the Government to continue providing support to migrant women in abusive relationships and assisting and empowering those women.⁷⁹

*Children*⁸⁰

57. JS1 noted the adoption, in 2021, of a comprehensive national action plan on the rights of the child to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁸¹

58. JS1 noted with concern that not enough resources were allotted to the child welfare and protection services. The Government allotted extra funding to the child welfare system to address the COVID-19 pandemic. JS1 urged the Government to ensure adequate financing of the child protection services.⁸²

59. JS1 urged the Government to ensure that children are listened to and take part in decisions regarding their well-being, for example in custody cases.⁸³

60. JS1 urged the Government to ensure equal opportunities for children without discrimination, including through adequate financial support for families in order to promote equal access to resources for all children. JS1 highlighted the importance of individualized support and improved access of children living in poverty to various opportunities, including access to education regardless of their parents' financial situation.⁸⁴

61. CoE reported that the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Committee) urged Iceland to review its legislation to ensure effective protection of children from situations where abuse of children is made of a recognised position of influence. Regarding child friendly criminal proceedings, the Lanzarote Committee considered that information and advice should be provided to child victims in a manner adapted to their age and maturity, in a language they understand, and which is gender and cultural sensitive and that Iceland should address and encourage as much as possible the co-ordination and collaboration of the different players who intervene for and with the child victim during criminal proceedings.⁸⁵

62. As CoE noted, the Lanzarote Committee considered that Iceland should ensure that its specific recommendations on the child-friendly handling of proceedings involving children victims of sexual abuse be implemented also in the context of proceedings involving children affected by the refugee crisis.⁸⁶

63. CoE reported that the Lanzarote Committee urged Iceland to extend mandatory screening to the recruitment of all professionals (public or private) in regular contact with children to ensure that candidates for professions whose exercise implies regular contacts with children have not been convicted of acts of sexual exploitation or abuse of children. The Lanzarote Committee considered that Iceland should provide information on the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse of children within the general context of sexuality education.⁸⁷

*Persons with disabilities*⁸⁸

64. JS4 stated that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had not yet been incorporated into the domestic legislation of Iceland. For this reason, most persons with disabilities did not enjoy equal rights on equal bases with other citizens.⁸⁹ JS1 recommended that Iceland implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into its domestic legislation and introduce changes to relevant legislation in order to bring its legislation in accordance with the Convention.⁹⁰ Furthermore, JS4 recommended that Iceland implement a policy framework ensuring the full protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.⁹¹

65. JS1 noted the inflexibility of the labour market to offer work opportunities to persons with disabilities.⁹²

66. JS4 noted the introduction of user-directed personal assistance into national law in order to ensure the right of persons with disabilities to independent living. JS4 stated, however, that some municipalities denied individuals personal assistance because of insufficient state funding. JS4 recommended that Iceland allocate adequate funds in fiscal budget and resources to ensure that user-directed personal assistance services are provided by municipalities.⁹³

67. JS4 noted that the persons with disabilities could not fully enjoy their right to family life and were often deprived from participating in public life and in society. JS4 recommended that Iceland put in place policies and legislation that guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to family life, independent living and public participation.⁹⁴

68. JS4 stated that women and girls with disabilities were more at risk of becoming victims of violence, ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or exploitation for profit. JS4 explained that violence against persons with disabilities were often the results of prejudice and ignorance. Women with disabilities were often not believed in, when they tried to report on violence against them.⁹⁵

69. JS4 recommended that Iceland institute civic education and awareness raising programmes to combat violence against persons with disabilities and prosecute and hold accountable before the law those implicated in sexual abuse and exploitation of persons with disabilities more generally and women and girls in particular.⁹⁶

70. JS2 stated that in 2019, Iceland changed its abortion law to allow for abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy. Advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities were reportedly critical of the new law, pointing out that while women were not required to provide a reason for seeking an abortion, the obvious reason for the extended gestational limit was to make it possible to end the life of a foetus with a deviation or disability. JS2 noted that although the new abortion law did not explicitly allow for selective abortions of those deemed likely to have disabilities based on prenatal screenings, the inherent result of the law upon application was de facto discriminatory against those with disabilities.⁹⁷

71. JS2 reported that the vast majority of unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome were aborted: estimates put the figure at nearly 100 percent in Iceland. JS2 observed that while Iceland did not have an official policy to eliminate Down syndrome by the selective abortion of affected individuals, it had an explicitly discriminatory abortion law in effect. JS2 noted that there was significant evidence that among health professionals, who operated within a state-run health system, a discriminatory norm became widespread. JS2 stated that the Government should take concrete steps to reverse this harmful norm in order to fulfil the human rights of all its citizens, including those with disabilities.⁹⁸ ADF International⁹⁹ and ECLJ¹⁰⁰ made similar observations.

72. JS2 recommended that Iceland take immediate and effective steps to counteract the longstanding atmosphere of discrimination against persons with disabilities, particularly those with Down syndrome. Information about persons with intellectual disabilities and the importance of their full inclusion in society should also be a component of curricula in schools.¹⁰¹

*Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers*¹⁰²

73. JAI stated that Iceland failed to protect migrant workers against systematic exploitation. Immigrants comprised approximately 20 percent of Iceland's workforce, primarily in trades and the tourism industry. JAI observed that foreign workers were much more susceptible to exploitation by employers than locals, including underpayment, lack of overtime and breaks, and inhumane living conditions.¹⁰³ JAI considered that Iceland should be seeking to protect these workers rather than explicitly excluding protections.¹⁰⁴ JS1 encouraged the Government to adopt an action plan on migration and to undertake further actions towards diminishing the unemployment rate among migrants.¹⁰⁵

74. JAI stated that Iceland had a low rate of refugee recognition.¹⁰⁶

75. JAI reported that Iceland attempted to deport a group of asylum seekers to another country amid the COVID 19 pandemic. JAI stated that the circumstances of refugee camps of that country were well-documented and deemed by multiple international organisations as sufficient to constitute inhumane treatment. JAI noted that Article 36 of Iceland’s Foreign Nationals Act did not generally impose an obligation to review applications for international protection if applicants already received protection from another country. Nevertheless, the application “shall be processed” if it would result in a violation of the principle of non-refoulement set in Article 42, which prevented the deportation of foreign nationals to regions where, among others, they would be “in imminent danger of being killed or subjected to inhumane or degrading treatment due to circumstances similar to those pertinent to the refugee concept.” JAI recommended that Iceland halt deportations of asylum seekers to the third country and reinstate protections for them in Iceland.¹⁰⁷

76. JS4 recommended that Iceland initiate a review of the Dublin laws to ensure protected refugees arriving in Iceland are accorded the benefit of the doubt and are fairly treated according to international human rights law. JS4 recommended that Iceland examine thoroughly all the applications of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants seeking international protection in Iceland, including applications of those who already received so-called “protection” in other countries but where their rights were not fulfilled.¹⁰⁸

77. In 2020, CoE-ECRI noted the approval of a strategy to coordinate the reception and integration of all refugees, whether they came to Iceland as asylum seekers and were granted international protection in the country or as resettled refugees in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the start of the implementation of the first phase of the strategy. CoE-ECRI noted that the Multicultural and Information Centre would have an increased role in supporting both refugees and municipalities receiving them. The Directorate of Labour would provide free Icelandic lessons and cultural orientation for all refugees. Municipalities would be able to make agreements with the Ministry of Social Affairs to provide services including housing, social counselling and individual plans for all refugees settling in their areas. CoE-ECRI noted that those plans aimed to ensure that individuals and families could take advantage of their strengths in order to establish themselves in their new society.¹⁰⁹

78. Therefore, CoE-ECRI commended the Icelandic authorities for this important development which treated all refugees on an equal footing, dealt specifically with housing, employment and language classes, and had the potential of generating better integration outcomes.¹¹⁰

79. JS4 recommended that Iceland ensure refugees have timely access to basic services, including accommodation, education, health care, employment opportunities and subsistence allowances.¹¹¹

Notes

¹ The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF International	Alliance Defending Freedom International, Switzerland;
ECLJ	European Centre for Law and Justice, Strasbourg, France;
HH	Hagsmunasamtök heimilanna (The Homes Association), Reykjavik, Iceland;
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Switzerland;
JAI	Just Atonement Inc, New York, United States of America;
UFI	United Families International, Gilbert, United States of America.

Joint submissions:

JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: The Icelandic Human Rights Centre (Iceland), the Women’s Rights Association, Barnaheil – Save the Children Iceland, Humanists Iceland, the National Association of Intellectual Disabilities (Iceland), and
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	Amnesty International (United Kingdom);
JS2	Joint submission 2 submitted by: The Center for Family and Human Rights and The Jerome Lejeune Foundation (United States of America);
JS3	Joint submission 3 submitted by: Center for Global Nonkilling (Switzerland) and the Conscience and Peace Tax International (United Kingdom);
JS4	Joint submission 4 submitted by: The Lutheran World Federation (Switzerland) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland and Iceland Church Aid (Iceland).
<i>Regional intergovernmental organization(s):</i>	
CoE	The Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France); Attachments: (CoE-ECRI) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Conclusion on the Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Iceland Subject to Interim Follow Up, adopted on 10 December, 2019, CRI (2020)6; (CoE-GRETA) - Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Iceland, Second Evaluation Round, Strasbourg, adopted on 7 December 2018, GRETA (2019) 02; (CoE-CPT) Report to the Icelandic Government carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment from 17-24 May, 2019, CPT/Inf (2020)4; (CoE-GRECO) Second Compliance Report, Second Addendum, Iceland, Fourth Round Evaluation, Corruption Prevention of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors, adopted by the Group of States against Corruption on 22-25 March, 2021, GrecoRC4 (2021) 8; (CoE-GRECO) Compliance Report, Iceland, Fourth Round Evaluation, Corruption Prevention of central governments and law enforcement agencies, adopted by the Group of States against Corruption on 26-20 October, 2020, GrecoRC4 (2020) 5; (CoE-ECSR) European Committee of Social Rights, Monitoring the Implementation of European Social Charter, March 2021, Iceland.
OSCE/ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Warsaw (Poland).

² For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/7, paras. 115.10-115.19, 117.1-117.9, 117.11, 118.2-118.8 and 118.10-118.12.

³ JAI, para. 31.

⁴ JS1, p. 4 and JS3, p. 7.

⁵ JAI, paras. 33 and 41 and JS1, p. 5.

⁶ JS1, pp. 4-5.

⁷ HH, paras. 2, 9 and 11.

⁸ JS1, p. 5.

⁹ ICAN, p. 2 and JS3, p. 9.

¹⁰ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/7, paras. 115.26 -115.40, 117.14, 117.16 and 117.17.

¹¹ JS1, pp. 3 and 6. For the full text of the recommendations see A/HRC/34/7, paras. 115.26-115.40 (Georgia, Namibia, Philippines, Uruguay, Hungary, Australia, Ukraine, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, France, Mongolia, Panama, Afghanistan, Paraguay, Portugal, Indonesia, Sudan).

¹² OSCE/ODIHR, para. 6. See also JS1, p. 6.

¹³ JS1, p. 5. For the full text of the recommendation, see A/HRC/19/13, para. 61.8 (Norway).

¹⁴ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.44-115.49, 115.50-115.58 and 117.26-117.28.

¹⁵ JS1, p. 6, JAI, para. 34 and CoE-ECRI, para. 1.

¹⁶ CoE-ECRI, para. 1. See also JAI, para. 34.

- 17 CoE-ECRI, para. 1.
18 CoE-ECRI, para. 1. See also JS1, p. 6.
19 JS1, p. 6.
20 JAI, para. 28.
21 JS1, pp. 11 and 12.
22 JS4, pp. 6 and 7.
23 JAI, paras. 18 and 19.
24 JAI, paras. 20 and 21.
25 JAI, para. 22.
26 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, para. 117.39.
27 ICAN, p. 2.
28 CoE-CPT, para. 66.
29 CoE-GRECO Second Compliance Report, paras. 18 and 32.
30 CoE-GRECO Second Compliance Report, paras. 27 and 32.
31 CoE-CPT, p. 3.
32 CoE-CPT, p. 3.
33 CoE-CPT, p. 4.
34 CoE-CPT, p. 4.
35 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, para. 117.41.
36 JAI, para. 26.
37 CoE-GRECO Compliance Report, paras. 83, 84 and 89.
38 JAI, para. 30.
39 OSCE/ODIHR, paras. 10 and 13.
40 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.59-115.61, 117.36 and 117.37.
41 CoE-GRETA, para.189.
42 CoE-GRETA, para.190.
43 CoE-GRETA, para.196.
44 CoE-GRETA, paras. 63 and 150.
45 CoE-GRETA, paras. 101, 113 and 120.
46 CoE-GRETA, para. 162.
47 JS1, p. 12.
48 CoE-GRETA, para. 33.
49 JS1, p. 12.
50 CoE-GRETA, paras. 42 and 191.
51 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.68-115.74.
52 CoE-ECSR, p. 3.
53 CoE-ECSR, p. 3.
54 JS1, p. 9.
55 CoE-ECSR, p. 3.
56 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.97 and 117.30.
57 JS1, p. 6.
58 JS1, p. 7.
59 CoE-ECSR, p. 5.
60 JS4, p. 7.
61 ADF International, para. 12.
62 ECLJ, para. 23 and JS3, p. 8.
63 UFI, paras. 18-22.
64 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.97 and 117.31.
65 JS1, p. 10.
66 JS4, p. 6.
67 JS4, p. 6.
68 ADF International, para. 22.
69 ADF International, para. 28.
70 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/7, paras. 115.64 -115.67, 115.70, 115.73-115.89, 117.33 and 117.36.
71 JS1, p. 5.
72 JS1, p. 7.
73 JS1, p. 9.
74 JS1, p. 7.
75 JS1, p. 7.
76 JS1, p. 8.
77 JS1, p. 8.

- ⁷⁸ JS1, pp. 7 and 8.
⁷⁹ JS1, p. 8.
⁸⁰ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.90-115.95.
⁸¹ JS1, p. 10.
⁸² JS1, pp. 9 and 10.
⁸³ JS1, p. 10.
⁸⁴ JS1, p. 10.
⁸⁵ CoE, p. 7.
⁸⁶ CoE, p. 10.
⁸⁷ CoE, p. 8.
⁸⁸ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.48 and 115.96.
⁸⁹ JS4, para. 7, p. 3.
⁹⁰ JS1, p. 4, See also p. 5.
⁹¹ JS4, p. 4.
⁹² JS1, p. 6.
⁹³ JS4, pp. 3 and 4.
⁹⁴ JS4, p. 4.
⁹⁵ JS4, paras. 10 and 11, p. 4.
⁹⁶ JS4, p. 5.
⁹⁷ JS2, paras. 4 and 6.
⁹⁸ JS2, paras. 7 and 12.
⁹⁹ ADF International, paras. 12-20.
¹⁰⁰ ECLJ, paras. 12-21.
¹⁰¹ JS2, para. 21. See also ECLJ, para. 23 and ADF International, para. 28.
¹⁰² For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/19/13, paras. 115.99-115.104 and 117.40.
¹⁰³ JAI, para. 32.
¹⁰⁴ JAI, para. 42.
¹⁰⁵ JS1, p. 11.
¹⁰⁶ JAI, para. 35.
¹⁰⁷ JAI, paras. 36 and 43. See also JS4, p. 1.
¹⁰⁸ JS4, p. 2.
¹⁰⁹ CoE-ECRI, para. 2.
¹¹⁰ CoE-ECRI, para. 2.
¹¹¹ JS4, p. 2.
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