



THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

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# THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

THE NCHR'S INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT

## Ensuring Universal Access to Information & Bridging the Human Rights Implementation Gap

### Mission and Objectives

Our mission is to support the achievement of universal access to information, help with the protection of fundamental freedoms and bridge the implementation gap. **We work to establish universal standards for non-coercive police investigative interviewing, support regional human rights mechanisms, and enable academics and civil society representatives to engage in regional and multilateral processes vital to the promotion of human rights in their regions.**

### Background and Challenges

Strengthening academic and civil society's knowledge of the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council is an important tool for the promotion of human rights nationally – and for increasing the legitimacy of international human rights system globally. We work in countries where the United Nations and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have limited access. An increased sharing of knowledge is essential to the universal realisation of human rights.

### Human Rights Education

Human rights are essential to maintaining freedom and prosperity around the world. However, without knowledge of such rights, citizens are not able to hold their authorities accountable. We strive to make human rights known, so citizens can gain insight and knowledge in order to enrich domestic debates on the implementation and fulfilment of human rights.

### Partners

We are building on strong international and Asian academic networks. We cooperate closely with Nordic partners, such as the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. For this three-year program, the NCHR has entered into partnerships with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, acting as Convenor for the Southeast Asian Human Rights Studies Network (SEAHRN).

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) is a part of the University of Oslo, Faculty of Law. The NCHR's **International Department (ID)** has an extended network of cooperating partners around the world including academic institutions, UN organs and civil society organisations. Our activities are supported by the Norwegian MFA.

We promote human rights through international competence building, knowledge enhancement and dialogue in the countries we cooperate with. We aim at integrating a gender sensitive approach across our six thematic areas of commitment:

- Human Rights Education
- Rule of Law
- Freedom of Religion or Belief
- Business and Human Rights
- Equality and Non-discrimination
- **UN Human Rights Mechanisms**

### CONTACT

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[www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/about/id/mechanisms/index.html](http://www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/about/id/mechanisms/index.html)

## Selected Results



(Police Superintendent Dr. Asbjørn Rachlew in conversation with Juan Méndez, Special Rapporteur on Torture, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.)

### Promotion of Universal Standards for Police Investigation at the United Nations

In October 2016, the NCHR gave a presentation on interview-based investigation and interrogation methods, during a side-event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, with the Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Méndez. The focus was to provide police with methods for investigation where human rights, effectiveness and mutual trust between the police and the population were all combined. The NCHR contributed significantly to Méndez's report based on police cooperation in Vietnam and Indonesia.



(With the UN Secretary-General: SDG pioneer, Liang Xiaohui with Ban Ki-moon. Photo: Private)

### NCHR Alumni Chosen as United Nations Pioneer

In 2016, Dr Liang Xiaohui, who has his master's degree on human rights from the NCHR, was chosen as one of ten Sustainable Development Goals Pioneers on business and human rights, selected by the United Nations among more than 600 nominees from over 100 countries. The NCHR supports his on-going research on business and human rights, and a Chinese textbook is forthcoming in 2019.



(Group photo of participants, facilitators and organisers at the second UN Human Rights Mechanisms training. Photo: Private)

### Second Training on the United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms in Geneva

In May 2018, Cuba was up for the Universal Periodic Review Hearing at the United Nations Human Rights Council, in Geneva. In connection to the session, we brought together twelve academics from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cuba and Iran for an engaging and interactive five-day training session.

## Key On-going Projects

### Asian Regional Meetings on United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms

The Asian regional meetings aim to increase the institutional capacity of Northeast and Southeast Asian academic partners by providing Chinese human rights teachers with an opportunity to engage with Asian scholars, get information about new human rights developments, and establish contacts useful to the promotion of Human Rights Education. The meetings consist of a mixture of lectures, practical exercises, group work, and visits to human rights institutions, inspiring a linkage of theory and practice and have a special focus on the achievements of the SHAPE-SEA network, new developments in International Human Rights Law and the United Nations human rights system.

### United Nations Geneva Trainings

The United Nations Geneva Trainings provide direct exposure to the work of the United Nations. The practical training sessions for academics are centred around the Universal Periodic Review hearings of Indonesia, China, Iran, Cuba and Vietnam. The series of trainings allow participants to build a rare, practitioner's insight into the functioning of many United Nations human rights institutions. This is done through a mixture of lectures, led by experts from academic institutions, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and civil society organisations directly involved in the United Nations Office and through attendance to the Human Rights Council's live Universal Periodic Review (UPR) hearings and United Nations Treaty Body sessions. The tailor-made trainings enable academics from NCHR partner universities to become immersed in the Geneva human rights milieu, through informal and interactive platforms of discussions set in a non-partisan and independent learning environment.

### Development of Universal Standards for Investigative Interviewing

In order to prevent torture and wrongful convictions NCHR is addressing the questioning of suspects victims and witnesses in criminal cases by the police. In cooperation with Norwegian Police, the Police University College, relevant United Nations agencies and other international experts NCHR seeks to promote fair trial standards and the principle of presumption of innocence. NCHR organises courses for police offices in selected countries, and disseminates information about non-coercive interviewing to police forces around the world. Multilaterally, NCHR contributed to initiate the drafting of global standards for investigative interviewing under the auspices of the UN. The drafting process began September 2018 in Geneva and is being supervised by a steering group and an advisory body where several UN organisations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), lawyers, police, intelligence and civil society organisations are represented.

### Academic Platform on Human Rights Treaty Body Review

NCHR encourages Chinese academics from partner institutions to be engaged in ongoing processes and discussions around reform of the United Nations human rights treaty body system. China is an increasingly important contributor to the United Nations and getting independent Chinese law experts involved in current debates and discussions around how to strengthen the United Nations human rights system is given priority. The NCHR provides direct support and enables Chinese participants to become involved in activities arranged by the Geneva Academy, which are linked to a new research project exploring options of reform and long-term sustainability within the treaty body system.