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Human rights bodies and mechanisms

Written statement* submitted by Sikh Human Rights Group, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[12 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusivity: Proposals for Demystifying Human Rights Reporting and Integrating Civil Society in the United Nations Mechanisms

While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are known worldwide, the mechanism for reporting violations remain a process that is relatively unknown to ordinary people around the world, especially people who become victims. Most people find the mechanism quite complex and those who have skills to access it are cynical about the benefits of the mechanisms, particularly as their own governments tend to resort to harassment when people do report.

It is our suggestion that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should work at demystifying the process and let it be known as widely as the UDHR is in order for people to have some confidence in the UN.

It will help to explain in simple leaflets, why the mechanism is in place, how it guarantees anonymity where sought, how it works and whether it results in positive outcomes.

Sikh Human Rights Group believes that this will make the mechanism widely known and function effectively to achieve the results it is set up for.

Sikh Human Rights Group also feels that the Advisory Committee has some exceptional people in it who bring a depth of knowledge and expertise to the work of the Human rights Council. However we feel that as experts who are nominated by States, there may be almost complete prioritisation of State matters. There is a lack of civil society input unless the experts meet with civil society representatives. Some experts do, while others tend to be shy of this engagement.

To ensure the Office of High commissioner for Human Rights work inclusive of civil society, it is suggested that there also be two representatives from the Ngo sector who should be permitted to sit within the Human Rights Advisory Committee.

This could bring enormous benefits to the debate within the Advisory Committee and broaden its scope to take the opinions, critiques and suggestions by civil society in its deliberation mandatorily rather than civil society having to rely on one of the experts to raise their concerns within the Committee.

This move will be consistent with the United Nations Summit of the Future seeking to put civil society and youth more inclusive and at the centre of policies for a better tomorrow
