

# **Bringing Human Rights Home**

*Using International Processes to Advance  
Human Rights in Cities & Communities*

*Webinar 2 Using International Mechanisms for UPR Cities*

# Upcoming UPR Cities Webinars

- ***Thursday, July 25:*** Strategies for UPR Cities & The 3 Cs  
*(Live from Washington DC)*
- ***Thursday, August 29:*** Examples from UPR Cities

To register for upcoming webinars, please send your name, organization (if applicable), and location to: [uprcities@humanrightscities.mayfirst.org](mailto:uprcities@humanrightscities.mayfirst.org)

[Webinar recordings are or will be available online on the UPR Cities website](#)

- Webinar #1 [Introduction to UPR Cities webinar](#) Recording (36 minutes)
- Webinar #2 Using international mechanisms to Collect, Compile, and Clamor for human rights

*All webinars are at 6:00PM EST/3:00PM PST*



“When you expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights, you can then take the case of the black man in this country before the nations in the UN. You can take it before the General Assembly. You ***can take Uncle Sam before a world court.*** But the only level you can do it on is the level of human rights. Civil rights keeps you under his restrictions, under his jurisdiction. Civil rights keeps you in his pocket.”

--Malcolm X

“International lawyers are increasingly becoming urban policymakers, and urbanists must become conversant with international law.”

Frug, Gerald E. and David J. Barron. 2006. "International Local Government Law."  
*Urban Lawyer* 38(1):1-62.

# Cities & Human Rights\*

“State and local authorities are on the front lines of ensuring equality, combating discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender identity and sexual orientation, and enabling equal access to affordable housing, healthcare and education... *When state and local actors integrate human rights, they join a global community of local governments worldwide that have increasingly drawn from the human rights framework to benefit their work and their communities.*”

[Source: Bringing Human Rights Home: How State and Local Governments Can Use Human Rights to Advance Local Policy](#)

# US Conference of Mayors

In their annual gatherings, the US Conference of Mayors consider common issues and challenges they face in their regions, identifying best practices and solutions to challenges like inequality, conflict, and climate change. The [US Conference of Mayors 2019 meeting](#) is taking place this June in Honolulu, and you can see the list of resolutions on their website. Many of these provide legitimacy for our local claims, and some refer specifically to human rights standards. We can draw from the Conference Resolutions in holding our own mayors accountable to these commitments.

# Universal Periodic Review

The next UPR of the United States:  
**April 2019 through September 2020**

## UPR Cities Project

Organizers in cities across the United States will mobilize local consultations to assess the state of human rights in their communities. They will identify both achievements and pitfalls & generate and promote recommendations for strengthening human rights protections in the United States, ***working at both local and national levels.***

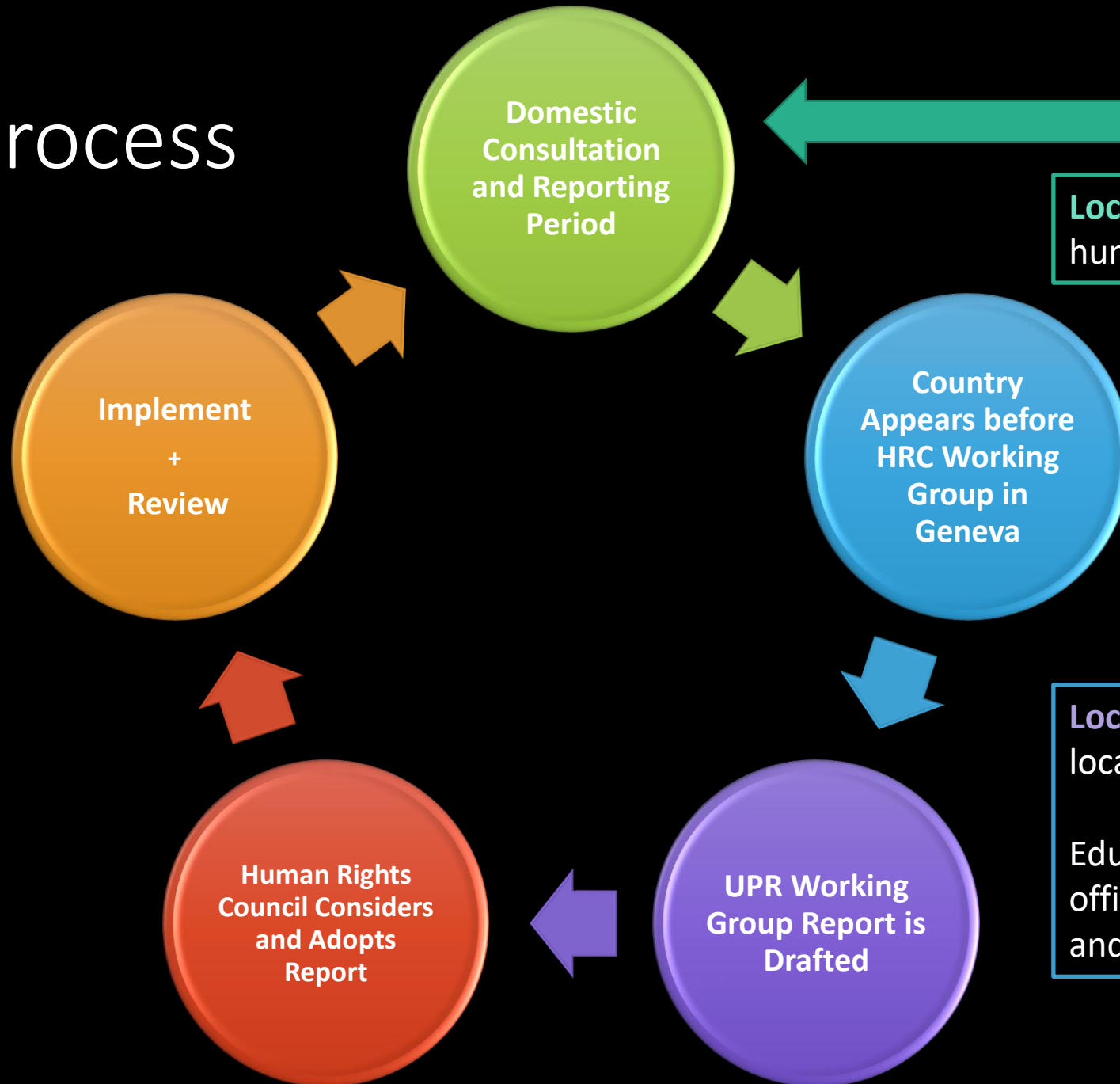


***“We have the words, now we need the music- and the music is action.”***

--Bella Abzug 1920-1998



# The UPR Process



**\*We are here**

**Local:** Collect evidence on human rights for UPR process

**Local:** Educate public and local officials about UN UPR report and local implications.

**Local:** Collect and publicize local human rights conditions.

Educate public and local officials about UN processes and local conditions.

## UPR Cities USA-“The 3 Cs”:

### Steps for organizing local UPR Cities & Communities

**1) Collect** local testimony about human rights.

**2) Compile** summary reports of local human rights conditions. Name key problems/challenges as well as positives/progress. Use this to report to local officials and press for local responses.

**3) Clamor!** Publicize the final UPR report and press local governments to implement recommendations. (September 2020)

## *UPR Reports can draw from a wealth of international human rights instruments*

- The [US Human Rights Cities Alliance](#) supports local organizers in their work to make connections between local needs and international human rights treaties and documents.

*The [UPR Cities](#) website and the following slides provide some key human rights resources for local groups.*

# Treaty Bodies

*The United States has ratified the following international human rights treaties, which makes the US government subject to periodic reviews of its performance. [The US Human Rights Network](#) helps support and link grassroots efforts to report on local human rights practices and to hold public officials accountable to international commitments. **Treaty Bodies have made a number of recommendations to the US regarding supporting state and local human rights implementation.** ([Link to UN Treaty Bodies](#))*

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Human Rights
  - [2014 Concluding Observations Report](#)\*
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
  - [2014 Concluding Observations Report](#)\*
- Convention Against Torture
  - [2014 Concluding Observations Report](#)\*
  - Link to [2014 USHRN Stakeholder Report](#) “Torture in the Homeland” with Chicago Police case

*\*These reports provide a baseline of the most recent set of recommendations made by treaty review committees to the US government. We can draw from these recommendations in assessing local human rights practices and the extent to which they reflect these recommendations.*

# Other international mechanisms for use by Human Rights Cities

- [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (2015) “2030 Agenda”
- [New Urban Agenda \(Habitat III, 2016\)](#)
  - Recognition of the **social function of land**
  - **progressive realization of the right to adequate housing for all;**
  - prevent arbitrary **forced evictions**
  - Centering needs of **vulnerable groups**
  - enabling the participation and **engagement of communities** and relevant stakeholders
- [International Decade for People of African Descent](#)

# United Nations Special Rapporteurs & Expert Working Groups

- **Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing (Est. 2000)**
  - [UN Special Rapporteur visit to US](#) (2010)
  - 2018 Letter to US and Global Investment Firms ([Link to campaign](#))
- [Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty \(1998\)](#)
  - [2018 Report on US Country Visit](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health \(2002\)](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on the right to food](#)
- [UN Expert Working Group on People of African Descent](#)
- Unofficial UN Country Visit on Water Rights ([Press Statement](#))
- [UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#)
  
- ***Guide for advocates*** [“Engaging UN Special Procedures to Advance Human Rights at Home”](#)

# When crafting local reports, activists can draw from prior UPR reports:

- **Prior UPR Reviews of US Human Rights Record**

- 2015 Official Report of the UPR Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council
- 2011 Official Report of the UPR Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council

## Civil Society/Stakeholder Reports

- 2015 US Human Rights Network UPR Stakeholder Report
- 2010 Shadow Report- USHRN
- 2010 submission focusing on racial health disparities and discrimination

# Sample recommendations from [2015 UPR Report to US](#)

- “Expedite the ratification of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**”
  - “Pass legislation ... to prohibit ... life imprisonment without the possibility of parole on offenders who were children at the time of offending”
- “Expedite the ratification of the **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women**”
  - “Pass legislation to ensure **women receive equal pay for equal work**”
- “**Strengthen human rights education** programmes and training for all civil servants, particularly for law enforcement and immigration officers, and combat impunity concerning abuses against defenceless persons”
- “Create a **national human rights institution**”



# **Bring Human Rights Home!**

*Join other cities & communities in the  
2019-2020 UPR Cities Project*

**North American Human Rights Cities Alliance**

[wiki.humanrightscities.mayfirst.org](http://wiki.humanrightscities.mayfirst.org)

**Contact us:** [uprcities@humanrightscities.mayfirst.org](mailto:uprcities@humanrightscities.mayfirst.org)