



USHRN CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

(CAT) WORKING GROUPS DESCRIPTION & FAQ

*The USHRN NGO/civil society treaty body working groups serve three main purposes:
1) Organize shadow reports; 2) Advocacy in Geneva; and 3) Advocacy at home.*

1. Organize Shadow Reports – Because the CAT Committee has advised that civil society submit fewer, shorter and more coordinated reports, organizations that work on similar issues are encouraged to work together to produce a single, 10 page shadow report. Please note that not all members of the working group need to submit shadow reports and there may be more than one report submitted by members of each working group. Please submit the shadow reports to the USHRN coordinating center by **September 17th** at cat@ushrnetwork.org in word document form.

Please contact CAT Coordinator, Tarah Demant at tdemant@ushrnetwork.org if you are planning to submit a report and indicate whether you are open to collaborating with other groups on the report.

2. Advocacy in Geneva – Each working group will produce a single, one-page document that can serve as the basis for a very short (estimated two-minute) presentation that the identified group representative will give to the CAT committee in Geneva in August. The group will also engage in social media advocacy and provide follow-up information to the CAT committee, as needed. Please note that some working groups will need to be combined based on the number of sub-issues represented and groups involved.

3. Advocacy at Home- The working group will serve as a collective of activists working on specific issues using a human rights framework. Working groups work in solidarity supporting each other's issue and under a [code of conduct](#). This advocacy involves engaging grassroots groups in the use of CAT to advance their work and with the different levels of government (including federal government consultations) to fully implement the human rights standards protected by CAT. The group will encourage local human rights/social justice advocacy initiatives before, during, and after the review. This includes social media advocacy (for example – hold a live streaming event of the review); targeted outreach to grassroots groups and different movements; creating regional or city level reports; planning regional human rights hearings (which would include educational components); and collecting testimony in written and video form to submit to the CAT Committee.

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Frequently Asked Questions?

- Q: Do I need to be writing a shadow report to be a part of a working group?
 - A: No, you can just assist in advocacy at home and/or in Geneva
- Q: What is the commitment?
 - A: That you make a concerted effort to attend and take part in working group periodic meetings (via conference call).
- Q: Do I need to be affiliated with an organization to join a working group?
 - A: No, any individual or grassroots or larger national organization can join.
- Q: Do I need to have UN experience or shadow reporting experience to be a part of a working group?
 - A: NO
- Q: Do I need to be going to Geneva to be a part of a working group?
 - A: NO
- Q: Can I be on more than one working group?
 - A: Yes, though try not to spread yourself too thin.
- Q: Do I need to write a shadow report to advocate in Geneva?
 - A: Technically yes, you need to at least sign on to another organizations report if you are not writing your own.
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- Q: How do the working groups conduct themselves?
 - A: Members come from various backgrounds and there is a code of conduct and an understanding that you will treat each other and your issues with respect and with the understanding that all are working for the furtherance of the human rights movement.