

BEYOND BORDERS

Bringing Abortion Law & Policy
Experiences from Around the
World to the United States

Definitions

Treaties

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):

A UN treaty that requires States parties to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promote women's and girls' equal rights

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):

A UN treaty that establishes the rights of children and the governments' responsibility to protect them

European Convention on Human Rights:

An international treaty established by the Council of Europe to protect the fundamental civil and political rights of individuals in its member States

European Social Charter:

A counterpart to the European Convention on Human Rights, this treaty, established by the Council of Europe, protects the fundamental social and economic rights of individuals in its member States

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):

A multilateral UN treaty that commits States parties to ensuring the protection of individuals' economic, social, and cultural rights

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):

A multilateral UN treaty that commits States parties to ensuring the protection of individuals' civil and political rights

Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol):

A treaty established by the African Union that promotes and protects women's and girls' human rights in Africa

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

A foundational legal document adopted by the UN in 1948 that sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected

Bodies & Organizations

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

A quasi-judicial body charged with protecting and promoting human rights and interpreting the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Committee against Torture (CAT):

A UN treaty body comprised of independent experts that monitors and reports on the implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment among States parties

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee):

A UN treaty body comprised of independent experts that monitors and reports on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women among States parties

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR Committee):

A UN treaty body comprised of independent experts that monitors and reports on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights among States parties

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC):

A UN treaty body comprised of independent experts that monitors and reports on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

European Committee of Social Rights:

A body of independent members that monitors States' compliance with the European Social Charter

European Court of Human Rights:

An international court established by the European Convention on Human Rights that rules on alleged violations of the civil and political rights set out in the Convention

Human Rights Committee (HRC):

A UN treaty body comprised of independent experts that monitors and reports on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights among States parties

Human Rights Council:

An intergovernmental body within the UN system tasked with promoting and protecting human rights, addressing human rights violations, and issuing related recommendations

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR):

Established by the Charter of the Organization of American States, this Commission works to promote and protect human rights among member States by monitoring implementation of the American Convention on Human Rights, investigating individual petitions, and issuing reports in thematic, priority areas

Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR):

An autonomous judicial institution charged with interpreting and applying the American Convention on Human Rights

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ):

A nongovernmental organization that seeks to advance human rights and the rule of law

International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO):

A global organization that serves as the world's largest alliance of national obstetricians and gynecologists' associations, dedicated to improving women's health and rights

Special Rapporteur:

An independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council who is given a mandate to examine, report, and advise on a specific human rights issue, which can be thematic or country-specific

Working Group:

A body of independent experts established by the UN Human Rights Council that is tasked with studying a specific topic or issue and producing related findings or recommendations, typically for a temporary period

Other Common Terminology

AAAQ Framework:

The framework used to assess access to health care services under the right to health, with "AAAQ" referring specifically to the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality of those services

Concluding Observations:

Official documents issued by UN treaty bodies containing observations and recommendations for a State party following a review of the State's compliance with human rights obligations under the particular treaty

Essential Medicines List (EML):

A national or institutional list of priority medicines that satisfy the population's primary health care needs. WHO's Model List includes mifepristone and misoprostol as core essential medicines

General Comment:

An official interpretation of a human rights treaty by UN treaty bodies that provides authoritative guidance to assist States parties in understanding and complying with their human rights obligations

Ministry of Health:

A government institution that is generally responsible for managing a jurisdiction's health system and promoting the general health of the population

States:

"States parties" (or "State party") refers to countries that are bound by a specific human rights treaty. This resource uses "States" to refer to countries and "states" to refer to sub-national jurisdictions within the United States

Universal Health Coverage (UHC):

According to the WHO, a health-system goal whereby all individuals and communities can access the full range of quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship