

A Parliamentary Human Rights Committee

Potential Roles and
Responsibilities

American University
Center for Global Peace

Basic Principles

- Parliamentary human rights committees are premier guardians of human rights and serve to ensure the full integration human rights issues throughout the work of parliaments

Mandate of Parliamentary HR Committee

- Comprehensive mandate with legislative and administrative functions
 - Competence to address any HR issue deemed important
 - Take legislative and other initiatives to address HR problems
 - Advisory role to other parliamentary bodies on HR issues
 - Power to call for documents and witnesses
 - Power to carry out on-site missions
- (Source: IPU Handbook for Parliamentarians)

National Level Implementation of HRs

- Ratification of human rights treaties
- Budget adoption (ensuring sufficient budget allocations for human rights implementation and monitoring gov't HR expenditures)
- Oversight of Executive Branch (utilizing parliamentary procedural tools to review government action on HR issues)
- Review of proposed & existing legislation to assess conformity with human rights obligations
- Adoption of enabling legislation to ensure implementation of HR treaties
- Advisory role to other parliamentary bodies

National Level Implementation of HRs contd.

- Fact-finding / inquiry procedures (depending upon mandate)
- Briefings / hearings
- Cooperation and engagement with NHRIs
- Assistance in drafting national HRs action plans
- Awareness-raising measures:
 - Debating HRs issues
 - Media
 - Support campaigns
 - Utilize HRs days and other international days relating to HRs issues

International Efforts

- Participating in regional and international meetings
- Participating in UN human rights system processes and procedures
- Participating in HRs treaty negotiations
- Election observation and monitoring