

Searching for UN-documents on human rights

Norwegian Centre for Human Rights / Library. October 2017

- 1. To determine whether there exists an international instrument that may apply to a particular human rights issue of interest to you, and to find the full text instrument in the authoritative source:**

(UNTC) United Nations Treaty Collection: (*Title search*)

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/AdvanceSearch.aspx?tab=UNTS&clang=_en

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Universal human rights instruments

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx>

(sorted by topic)

The core international human rights instruments

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx>

(with monitoring bodies)

- 2. To determine whether the instrument is applicable:**

(UNTS) United Nations Treaty Collection (*Status of treaties*):

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx?clang=_en

(Chapter IV = Human rights)

Check:

Entry into force (date)

Parties, ratifications, signatures

Declarations and reservations

- 3. Explanation of UN document symbols:**

<http://research.un.org/en/docs/symbols>

- 4. To find addendums, resolutions, declarations etc related to treaty documents:**

<http://unbisnet.un.org/> (*New keyword search*)

Example: Choose field name *UN doc.symbol*, and write i.e. *CCPR* in one field and *add.* or *dec.* in the next field.

OR:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx

5. To check if travaux préparatoires have been compiled for the treaty:

UN Human rights treaties, travaux préparatoires :

<http://hr-travaux.law.virginia.edu/international-conventions>

Preparatory works for UN treaties I:

<http://www.un.org/law/avl/>

Preparatory works for UN treaties II:

<http://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/>

6. To find practice:

UN Security Council: <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/>

UN General Assembly: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/documents/index.shtml>

United Nations Official Document System (ODS): 1993 – present, also scanned documents from 1946-1993

<https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp>

UN human rights bodies:

Treaty body database

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx

Charter-based bodies database

<http://ap.ohchr.org/Documents/gmainec.aspx>

Check also the relevant human rights body website:

- **Human Rights Committee (CCPR)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/CCPRIndex.aspx>
- **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/CCPRIndex.aspx>
- **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CERD/Pages/CERDIndex.aspx>
- **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>
- **Committee against Torture (CAT)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cat/pages/catindex.aspx>

- **Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>
- **Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CMW/Pages/CMWIndex.aspx>
- **Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx>
- **Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/CEDIndex.aspx>
- **The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT)**
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/OPCAT/Pages/OPCATIndex.aspx>

NB! In the website of each treaty body you can find “Statistical survey on individual complaints» in the left column (in excel format).

Jurisprudence: <http://juris.ohchr.org/Search/Documents>

This database provides easy access to jurisprudence emanating from the United Nations Treaty Bodies which receive and consider *complaints from individuals*. It is most effective to search by Country, Treaty or Article number, and then filter from there.

7. To find judicial decisions in the International Criminal Court ICC

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/>

- List of All ICC Cases <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/cases.aspx>
- Find the relevant case by scrolling down or searching the page (Ctrl + F)
- Click on the case title to see the details

7. To cite UN documents correctly

1. How to cite UN documents:

<http://ask.un.org/faq/14438>

2. Citation guidelines in Norwegian from the Faculty of Law Library can be found here.

<http://www.ub.uio.no/skrive-publisere/referere/referansestiler/rettsvitenskap.html>

(in Norwegian)

If all else fails....

Ask the UN Library: <https://library.un.org/content/contact-us-0>

They are extremely helpful and they normally reply within 24 hours.

Example of answer and reply to the UN Library:

My question: *What were Norway's views upon "legal capacity" and "autonomy" during the negotiations about the establishment of the CEDAW? I am looking for the minutes from the negotiations prior to the formal establishment of CEDAW.*

Answer: *You find information pertaining to the preparatory work of the CEDAW in the Audiovisual Library on International Law <<http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cedaw/cedaw.html>> and in the UN-I-QUE <<http://lib-unique.un.org/DPI/DHL/unique.nsf/link/r00008>> database.*

Further information can be found in the reports of the Commission on the Status of Women (link to record in UN-I-QUE <<http://lib-unique.un.org/DPI/DHL/unique.nsf/link/r00387>>) for the years that the drafting took place.

Summary records of several of the meetings (but not all) at which the negotiations took place are available through the Official Document System (ODS <<http://documents.un.org/advance.asp>>). You will find meeting records referred to in other documents from the resources above.

Please note that not all the documents referred to in the resources above are available on the ODS.

Good luck!