

Regional human rights bodies

The regional human rights bodies are:

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

Arab Human Rights Committee

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

European Court of Human Rights

European Committee of Social Rights

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

The African Charter established an African Commission for Human Rights, located in **Banjul, Gambia**.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights may decide complaints ("communications") against 54 Member States of the African Union, all parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Morocco, rejoined the African Union in 2017, becoming its 55th Member State, but had not yet ratified the African Charter as of June 2017. [IJRC] Individuals, organizations and States may submit communications concerning alleged violations of the African Charter. The Commission also reviews States' reports on their implementation of regional human rights treaties, conducts country visits, monitors priority issues through its rapporteurships and other special mechanisms, and may request "provisional measures" to prevent irreparable harm to victims.

The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has jurisdiction to give advisory opinions, and to decide complaints against the States that have accepted its jurisdiction. The Court accepts complaints from: the African Commission, a State party to a complaint before the

Commission, States parties to the Court whose citizen alleges a human rights violation, and African intergovernmental organizations. When accepting the Court's jurisdiction, a State may also authorize the Court to receive complaints against it from individuals and certain non-governmental organizations. As of July 2017, eight States have authorized such complaints. In April 2017, Tunisia made the necessary declaration for the Court to receive complaints from individuals and non-governmental organizations.

ASEAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) began operating in October 2009, under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an intergovernmental organization with 10 Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The AICHR is composed of 10 State representatives, one for each ASEAN Member State. Since its creation, the AICHR has held a number of meetings, workshops and conferences on human rights topics and on its own mandate. Its functions and procedures are outlined in the Terms of Reference and Guidelines on the Operations of the AICHR.

Establishment

In 2008, 10 individuals, one from each Member State, were appointed to a High Level Panel charged with developing the AICHR's guiding documents. The High Level Panel completed the AICHR's Terms of Reference, which lay out its general duties and structure, in 2009.

Following their first meeting in March-April 2010, the 10 representatives of the AICHR undertook the development of rules of procedure and a five-year work plan. The AICHR's next substantive project was the preparation and adoption of a regional human rights declaration.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The principle of an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was originally provided for under the OAS charter of 1948, but the Commission itself was not created until 1959. The body held its first meeting in 1960, and conducted its first in-country assessment visit, to the Dominican Republic, the following year. The mandate of the Commission, which is based in Washington DC, was initially fairly narrowly defined. However, this was broadened dramatically in 1965 when the Commission expressly received mandate to examine individual human rights cases. The body became increasingly active from this date. Today it receives

approximately 1,500 petitions and holds around 100 hearings annually. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights may decide complaints (“petitions”) against all 35 Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS). Petitions must allege a violation of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man or of the American Convention on Human Rights, provided the State concerned is one of the 23 States that are parties to the Convention. The Commission accepts petitions from individuals, groups of individuals, non-governmental organizations recognized by any OAS Member State, and States. The Commission also issues emergency protection requests (“precautionary measures”), undertakes country visits, publishes reports on human rights conditions, holds public hearings on cases and thematic questions, and monitors priority topics through its rapporteurships.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights may only examine contentious cases against States that have both: ratified the American Convention and recognized the Inter-American Court’s jurisdiction (currently 20 States). Cases must first be decided by the Commission before they can be referred to the Court, either by the State party involved or by the Commission. The Court also has jurisdiction to issue advisory opinions and to order emergency interim measures (“provisional measures”).