

< **19 April** 5:51 PM

## **United Nations Commission on Human Right**

Not to be confused with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Human Rights Committee, United Nations Human Rights Council, or UNHCR.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) was a functional commission within the overall framework of the United Nations from **1946** until it was replaced by the United Nations Human Rights Council in **2006**. It was a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and was also assisted in its work by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR). It was the UN's principal mechanism and international forum concerned



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

all UN member states are signatories.

It met for the first time in January 1947 and established a drafting committee for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

The body went through two distinct phases.

From 1947 to 1967, it concentrated on promoting human rights and helping states elaborate treaties, but not on investigating or condemning violators.<sup>[2]</sup> It was a period of strict observance of the sovereignty principle.

In 1967, the Commission

adopted interventionism as its policy. The

content of the decade was of Declaration of



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

Respond to serious violations of human rights

Undertake preventive human rights action

Promote the establishment of national human rights infrastructures

Undertake human rights field activities and operations

Provide education, information advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights

### **Structure**

At the time it was extinguished, the Commission consisted of representatives drawn from 53 member states, elected by the members of



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States

The Commission would meet each year in regular session for six weeks during March and April in Geneva, Switzerland. In January [2004](#), Australia was elected as chair of the 60th Session. In January [2005](#), Indonesia was elected chair of the 61st Session. Peru was elected chair of the 62nd Session in January [2006](#). The Commission held its final meeting in Geneva on March 27, [2006](#).





< **19 April** 5:51 PM

11 from the Latin American and Caribbean  
Group:

Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican  
Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico  
, Paraguay, Peru

10 from the Western European and Others  
Group:

Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ire  
land, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United  
States

The Commission would meet each year in  
regular session for six weeks during March and  
April in Geneva, Switzerland. In January [2004](#),  
Australia was elected as chair of the 60th



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

Play the leading role on human rights issues and emphasize the importance of human rights at the international and national levels

Promote international cooperation for human rights

Stimulate and coordinate action for human rights throughout the United Nations system

Promote universal ratification and implementation of international standards

Assist in the development of new norms

Support human rights organs and treaty monitoring bodies



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

ECOSOC. There were no permanent members; each year (usually in May) approximately a third of the seats of the Commission would come up for election, and the representatives were appointed for a three-year term.

Seats on the Commission were apportioned by region, using the mechanism of the United Nations Regional Groups. During its last year of service in 2005, the representation by region was as follows:

15 from the African Group:

Burkina Faso, Republic of the  
Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, South  
Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zimbabwe



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

human rights situations in specific countries or territories (known as country mechanisms or mandates) as well as on major phenomena of human rights violations worldwide (known as thematic mechanisms or mandates).<sup>[3]</sup> The Human Rights division of the U.N. is also expected to uphold and protect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **Purpose**

The objectives of OHCHR are to:

Promote universal enjoyment of all human rights by giving practical effect to the will and resolve of the world community as expressed by the United Nations

Play the leading role on human rights issues and





< **19 April** 5:51 PM

15 from the African Group:

Burkina Faso, Republic of the

Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, K

enya, Mauritania, Nigeria, South

Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zimbabwe

12 from the Asian Group:

Bhutan, People's Republic of

China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal,

Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi

Arabia, Sri Lanka

5 from the Eastern European Group:

Armenia, Hungary, Romania, Russian

Federation, Ukraine



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

types of abuses.

None of these measures, however, were able to make the Commission as effective as desired, mainly because of the presence of human rights violators and the politicization of the body.

During the following years until its extinction, the UNCHR became increasingly discredited among activists and governments alike.

The Commission held its final meeting in Geneva on March 27, 2006 and was replaced by the United Nations Human Rights Council in the same year.

## **Mandate**

The Commission on Human Rights was intended to examine, monitor and publicly report on



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

with the promotion and protection of human rights.

On 15 March [2006](#), the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to replace UNCHR with the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>[1]</sup>

## History

Eleanor Roosevelt at United Nations for Human Rights Commission meeting in Lake Success, New York in [1947](#)

The UNCHR was established in [1946](#) by ECOSOC, and was one of the first two "Functional Commissions" set up within the early UN structure (the other being the Commission on the Status of Women). It was a body created under the terms of the United Nations Charter (specifically, under Article 68) to which



< **19 April** 5:51 PM

context of the decade was of Decolonization of Africa and Asia, and many countries of the continent pressed for a more active UN policy on human rights issues, especially in light of massive violations in apartheid South Africa. The new policy meant that the Commission would also investigate and produce reports on violations.

To allow better fulfillment of this new policy, other changes took place. In the 1970s, the possibility of geographically-oriented workgroups was created. These groups would specialize their activities on the investigation of violations on a given region or even a single country, as was the case with Chile. With the 1980s came the creation of theme-oriented workgroups, which would specialize in specific

