Barbados

Barbados is a Member State of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of the United Nations (UN), and has human rights obligations at both the regional and universal levels.

Regional: Inter-American System

As a Member of the OAS, Barbados is held to the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and its human rights policies and practices are monitored by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Commission may decide complaints against the State and may also hold hearings or issue reports on the human rights situation there. Barbados has accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which may issue binding judgments concerning alleged abuses.

Individuals and groups have submitted complaints of human rights violations committed by Barbados to the Inter-American human rights system. For example, in DaCosta Cadogan v. Barbados, the Commission found that Barbados’ mandatory death penalty for murder violated the State’s duty to protect the rights to life, humane treatment, and fair trial. See IACHR, Report No. 60/08, Case 12.480, DaCosta Cadogan (Barbados), July 25, 2008. Similarly, in Boyce et al. v. Barbados, the Court addressed a mandatory death sentence for murder, finding that it violated the rights to life and humane treatment. See I/A Court H.R., Boyce et. al. v. Barbados, Preliminary Objection, Merits, Reparations and Costs. Judgment of November 20, 2007. Series C No. 169.

Additionally, the Commission and Court have issued precautionary measures and provisional measures to protect people in urgent situations of risk in Barbados.

Barbados has ratified the following regional human rights treaties:

- American Convention on Human Rights
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (“Convention of Belem do Pará”)
United Nations System

As a UN Member State, Barbados is subject to the oversight of various UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review and thematic special procedures. As a party to specific universal human rights treaties, Barbados’ policies and practices are monitored by UN treaty bodies. It has accepted the complaints procedure of one treaty body.

Barbados has ratified the following UN human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

Barbados has submitted a reservation, declaration or understanding that modifies its obligations under the following treaties: ICCPR, ICESCR, and CERD.

Barbados has a duty to submit State reports to each UN treaty body that is associated with the relevant treaty Barbados has ratified. These reports must be submitted on a periodic basis, and describe the steps Barbados has taken to implement the treaty provisions.

Barbados has ratified the Optional Protocol allowing individuals to submit complaints against the State alleging violations of the ICCPR. Certain UN treaties include inquiry procedures, which allow the UN treaty body to consider allegations of grave or systematic human rights violations. Barbados has not accepted any inquiry procedures.

Barbados has not extended a standing invitation to UN special procedures, which means that any special rapporteurs and working groups must seek specific invitations from Barbados to conduct a visit within the State.

For more information on Barbados’ engagement with UN human rights bodies, visit http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/LACRegion/Pages/BBIndex.aspx.

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