Guyana 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, Guyana 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. Guyana has not accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Individuals and groups have submitted complaints of human rights violations committed by Guyana to the Inter-American human rights system. For example, in Daniel and Kornel Vaux, the Commission found that Guyana violated the Vaux brothers’ rights to humane treatment and a fair trial when police officers beat them to extract confessions, and a domestic court failed to exclude these confessions as evidence during trial, resulting in their conviction and sentencing to death. See IACHR, Report No. 81/07, Case 12.504, Daniel and Kornel Vaux (Guyana), October 15, 2007.

Additionally, the Commission has issued precautionary measures to protect people in urgent situations of risk in Guyana.

Guyana has ratified the following regional human rights treaties:

- 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, Guyana 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, Guyana’s policies and practices are monitored by UN treaty bodies. It has accepted the complaints procedure of one treaty body.

Guyana 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 against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- 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)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)

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

Guyana has ratified optional protocols to the CRC addressing children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. Guyana has a duty to submit State reports to each UN treaty body associated with the treaties Guyana has ratified. These reports must be submitted on a periodic basis, and describe the steps Guyana has taken to implement the treaty provisions.

Guyana has also ratified the Optional Protocol allowing individuals to submit complaints against the State alleging violations of the ICCPR. Additionally, certain UN treaties include inquiry procedures, which allow the UN treaty body to consider allegations of grave or systematic human rights violations. Guyana has accepted the inquiry procedure of the CAT.

Guyana has not extended a standing invitation to UN special procedures, which means they must seek specific invitations to conduct a visit within the State. For example, the Independent Expert on minority issues went on a mission to Guyana in July 2008 and published a report in February 2009.

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

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