

# Iceland

Iceland is a Member State of the Council of Europe (COE) and of the United Nations (UN), and has human rights obligations at the regional and universal levels.

## Regional: European System



As a Member of the COE, Iceland has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and is subject to the jurisdiction of the [European Court of Human Rights](#). Iceland has ratified the European Social Charter, but has not authorized the [European Committee of Social Rights](#) to decide collective complaints against it. Its human rights policies and practices are also monitored by the [COE Commissioner for Human Rights](#), who identifies gaps in human rights protection, conducts country visits, engages in dialogue with States, and prepares thematic reports and advice.

Individuals and groups have submitted complaints of human rights violations committed by Iceland to the European Court of Human Rights. For example, the Court found that there had been a violation of the right to freedom of expression in the case of a journalist who was charged with defamation for publishing an article about a high-profile criminal case involving sexual abuse claims against a director of a rehabilitation center and his wife. See ECtHR, [Erla Hlynisdottir v. Iceland \(No. 2\)](#), no. 54125/10, ECHR 2014, Judgment of 21 October 2014. Additionally, the Court may grant [interim measures](#) to protect people in urgent situations of risk in Iceland.

As a State party to the European Social Charter, Iceland must submit yearly reports to the European Committee of Social Rights on its implementation of the Charter's provisions.

Iceland is a [party](#) to the following **regional human rights treaties**:

- European Convention on Human Rights and several of its [protocols](#)
- European Social Charter
- COE Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
- COE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

## United Nations System

As a UN Member State, Iceland 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, Iceland's policies and practices are monitored by UN [treaty bodies](#). It has accepted the complaints procedure of four treaty bodies.

Iceland 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 the Child (CRC)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Iceland has submitted reservations that modify its obligations under the [ICCPR](#).

Iceland has also ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aimed at abolishing the death penalty, and optional protocols to the CRC addressing children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. Iceland has a duty to submit **State reports** to the UN treaty body associated with each UN human rights treaty Iceland has ratified. These reports must be submitted on a periodic basis and describe the steps Iceland has taken to implement the treaty provisions.

Iceland has also ratified [optional protocols](#) and made appropriate declarations allowing individuals to submit **complaints** against the State alleging violations of the ICCPR, CEDAW, CAT, and CERD. Additionally, certain UN treaties contain **inquiry procedures**, which allow the UN treaty body to consider allegations of grave or systematic human rights violations. Iceland has accepted the inquiry procedures of the CAT and CEDAW.

In September 2000, Iceland extended a **standing invitation** to UN special procedures, which means that any such mandate holders are welcome to conduct visits in Iceland. For example, the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice went on a mission to Iceland in May 2013, and published a visit [report](#) in September 2014.

For more information on Iceland's engagement with [UN human rights bodies](#), visit <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/ENACARegion/Pages/ISIndex.aspx>.

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