

their right to establish and maintain their own associations and to freedom of expression. In terms of the Roma minority in Greece, the Federation stated that members encounter discrimination in the areas of education, housing and access to public services. There is also a reference to discriminatory practices against religious minorities, especially Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses and Jews who face difficulties in obtaining building licences for places of worship and are subject to interference by the authorities in the area of education.

**Voluntary Fund for victims of torture:** (E/CN.4/1997/27, para 4)

The report notes that Greece had contributed to the Fund.

**World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights, Report of the S-G:** (E/CN.4/1997/36, para. 85)

The report of the Secretary-General notes that the UN Information Centre Athens organized a round table discussion on the occasion of the launch of the book published by DPI, *The United Nations and Apartheid*. The DPI video "UNOMSA" was screened and 200 people attended the event. During the visit of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance to Greece (1996), UNIC arranged meetings for him with NGOs, academics and representatives of religious minorities in Athens and northern Greece. UNIC also participated in the opening of a symposium on "Torture in the Middle East and North Africa: Strategies for prevention and rehabilitation" organized by the Medical Centre for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims.

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## HOLY SEE

**Date of admission to UN:** The Holy See is a non-Member State with observer status.

### TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

**Land and People:** The Holy See has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

#### Racial Discrimination

Signed: 21 November 1966; ratified: 1 May 1969.

The Holy See's 13<sup>th</sup> periodic report was due 31 May 1994; the 14<sup>th</sup> periodic report is due 31 May 1998.

#### Rights of the Child

Signed and ratified: 20 April 1990.

The Holy See's second periodic report was due 1 September 1997.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Ninth preambular paragraph; paragraph 2 (f) of article 24; articles 13 and 28.

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## ICELAND

**Date of admission to UN:** 19 November 1946.

### TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

**Land and People:** Iceland has submitted a core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.26) for use by the treaty bodies. The

report prepared by the government includes demographic data and information on the economy, the constitutional structure and government, and remedies with respect to human rights violations.

Through the courts, any individual claiming a violation of human rights make seek compensatory damages, annulment of libellous or slanderous statements, compensation for non-financial loss and/or invalidation of administrative decisions if those decision have violated rights. There is no separate constitutional court to resolve disputes related to alleged violations of constitutionally protected human rights. The Ombudsman of the Althing is elected by parliament to which an annual report is submitted. The office functions independently, however, and has responsibility to secure the rights of citizens vis-à-vis the administrative authorities. Investigations may be undertaken on receipt of a complaint or on independent initiative. The opinions of the Ombudsman are not binding on administrative authorities but, in general, the authorities act on the opinions offered.

Iceland adheres to the legal doctrine that international treaties do not assume the force of domestic law even if ratified but rather are only binding according to international law. As a consequence, human rights treaties have not been incorporated into Icelandic law and cannot be directly applied by the courts. This stipulation is balanced by the principle that domestic law shall be construed in conformity with international law and, in recent years, the Supreme Court has tended to accord international instruments added weight, particularly in terms of the European Convention on Human Rights.

#### Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Signed: 30 December 1968; ratified: 22 August 1979.

Iceland's second periodic report (E/1990/C/Add.15) has been submitted and is scheduled for consideration by the Committee at its April/May 1999 session; the third periodic report is due 30 June 2001.

#### Civil and Political Rights

Signed: 30 December 1968; ratified: 22 August 1979.

Iceland's fourth periodic report was due 30 October 1997. *Reservations and Declarations:* Paragraphs 2 (b) and 3 of article 10; paragraph 7 of article 14; paragraph 1 of article 20; declaration under article 41.

**Optional Protocol:** Acceded: 22 August 1979.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Paragraph 2 of article 5.

**Second Optional Protocol:** Signed: 30 January 1991; ratified: 2 April 1991.

#### Racial Discrimination

Signed: 14 November 1966; ratified: 13 March 1967.

Iceland's 15<sup>th</sup> periodic report was due 4 January 1998.

Iceland's 14<sup>th</sup> periodic report (CERD/C/299/Add.4) was considered by the Committee at its March 1997 session and focuses on legal reforms and other measures relevant to implementation of the Convention. The Committee's concluding observations and comments (CERD/C/304/Add.27/C/304/Add.27) note that Iceland has incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law but has not done the same with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Committee expressed the view that conferring constitutional status on the