



UN HUMAN RIGHTS PACIFIC newsletter

April - June 2016

Key Activities

Fiji Corrections Service Human Rights Training Workshop (29-30 March)

Since 2014, OHCHR has undertaken a program of visits to places of detention in Suva. More recently, OHCHR organised a two day training workshop on Human Rights and Prisons on 29 and 30 March for the Fiji Corrections Service. The workshop was held at Naboro Corrections Centre. Some of the key issues which were addressed during the workshop include the proportionate use of force, superior orders and special categories of prisoners.



"After this two day workshop, I understand that the use of force shall not be entertained in prison one way or the other. The correction officer must treat his customer as his son, daughter because they have no hope in life. We are there to help them." commented one participant.

Monitoring Places of Detention in Vanuatu (4-7 April)

On 4-7 April, OHCHR conducted a monitoring visit of four detention facilities in Port Vila, Vanuatu covering the low risk, medium risk/remand, high risk and women's facilities. At the conclusion of the visit, several issues of concern were raised with the Director of Vanuatu Correctional Services. Additionally, this visit provided an opportunity to understand key issues within the VCS and to develop a tailored training workshop for staff, which will be delivered in Port Vila in July of this year.



Treaty Body Training for the Solomon Islands Government (19-21 April)

At the request of the Government of the Solomon Islands, OHCHR facilitated a three day treaty body training workshop in Honiara on 19-21 April. The workshop focused on reporting under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the establishment of a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up. Participants gained a practical knowledge of human rights reporting and developed an action plan to bring the Solomon Islands up to date with its reporting commitments. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade expressed strong interest in the establishment of a NMRF and requested further information on models from around the region which was provided by OHCHR.



Detention Monitoring Training for the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (1-3 June)

In partnership with staff from the Samoa National Human Rights Institution, OHCHR facilitated a three day workshop from 1-3 June on monitoring places of detention for the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. During the workshop, participants discussed detention monitoring methodology, the importance of the 'do no harm' principle, and helped the Commission develop a plan of action for forthcoming inspections.





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Mock Universal Periodic Review for Samoa (15 April)

In preparation for Samoa's 2nd Universal Periodic Review, OHCHR facilitated a full day mock session for the delegation that subsequently travelled to Geneva. The session replicated the interactive dialogue of the UPR with the role of other UN Members States played by civil society, the National Human Rights Institution and civil servants. The interventions made by those States covered a range of topics which were subsequently asked in Geneva and highlighted the areas the delegation needed to focus on during their preparations. "Without this mock session we would not have been so well prepared for the real thing, meaning Samoa will get a lot more out of the review thanks to a more fruitful dialogue," commented one participant.



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Mock Universal Periodic Review for Papua New Guinea (26 April)

A UPR mock session was held on 26 April at the Lamana Hotel, Port Moresby. The session was officiated by the UN Country Resident Coordinator Roy Trivedy, the Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs Martin Dhim, and the Secretary for Justice and Attorney General, Dr Lawrence Kalinoe. The session was attended by delegates from Government Departments, Embassies, development partners, UN agencies, civil society and the media. Two UPNG lecturers and a fellow researcher were also present. The mock session, facilitated by OHCHR, was to give to the Papua New Guinea delegation travelling to Geneva to attend the 25th UPR Working Group session, a feel of what was to be expected at the HRC in Geneva. All participants acted as Member States and engaged in an interactive dialogue with the Papua New Guinea delegates.



On 5 May, OHCHR, in partnership with Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) and the Ministry of Women, hosted a national forum promoting the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Apia, Samoa. The forum brought together disability sector representatives, Government, the National Human Rights Institution and donors to discuss the ratification process and develop an outcome document mapping how ratification can be achieved by the Government's stated deadline of December 2016.

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CRPD Ratification Forum, Samoa (5 May)



OHCHR has been working in partnership with the Government of Samoa for the past six months to establish an inter-ministerial National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up (NMRF). The body will be responsible for overseeing all human rights implementation planning, monitoring, data collection and reporting. A cabinet submission for the creation of the NMRF has been approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and is due for consideration shortly. OHCHR will facilitate an induction retreat for the NMRF on 19-21 July and the body will be chaired by the CEO of MFAT, Ms Pesata Noumea Simi (pictured).

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Establishment of a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up, Samoa

IDAHOT 2016 (17 May)

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) – 17 May – is internationally recognized as an important date to advance the rights of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI). To celebrate this day, OHCHR and partners organized an event in Suva, featuring presentations by OHCHR, Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and United Nations Resident Coordinator. The event also included a panel discussion on the issue of mental health of LGBTI people in Fiji and the Pacific, as well as screenings of the Pacific UN Free & Equal video, and performances by the members of the LGBTI community.

* On 31 May, Nauru decriminalized same sex relations.



As we approach the end of the 2nd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), OHCHR is focusing its efforts on assisting States to develop strategies to implement the UPR recommendations made to them. UPR implementation will ensure that the efforts made by States during the reporting and review phases lead to concrete changes in the countries concerned.

On 13 and 14 May, OHCHR and SPC/RRRT facilitated a two day workshop in Kiribati on the implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. The workshop was organized by the Kiribati Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs (MWYSA) for the Kiribati National Human Rights Taskforce (KNHRT). The taskforce which consists of Government and NGO representatives is mandated by Cabinet to 'monitor the implementation of the ratified human rights treaties at national level and attend to comments and feedbacks (updates etc) from the UN Working Group on the UPR and other ratified Conventions'.

Over two days, the KNHRT reviewed the 70 recommendations that Kiribati accepted from its second UPR in January 2015 and focused on developing a national UPR implementation plan. While the taskforce were not able to complete the implementation plan by the end of the workshop and as such it is yet to be formally endorsed, there was significant interest in finalizing the plan. MWYSA as the chair of the taskforce and a core member will lead this process. The KNHRT expressed interest in receiving further support and technical assistance from regional actors, including OHCHR, to advance this initiative.

Similarly, on 19 May, OHCHR organised a training workshop for Government officials in the Marshall Islands on developing a UPR implementation plan. On 25 May, OHCHR also organized a working session for members of the UPR Taskforce in FSM on developing a UPR implementation plan.



UPR implementation work in Kiribati, RMI and FSM

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Papua New Guinea Human Rights Forum (22 June)

The second quarterly Human Rights Forum was held on 22 June at the Department of Justice and Attorney General. More than 40 stakeholders from the Government, Ombudsman Commission, and civil society as well as development partners and UN agencies attended. The Public Solicitor, the General Secretary of the Catholic Bishop Conference, and the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services were amongst the participants. Updates were provided on challenges and progress in key human rights areas including amongst others, the establishment of the NHRI, disability and human rights, violence against women, child labour, human trafficking, the Papua New Guinea sorcery and witchcraft related National Action Plan, access to the National Court Human Rights Track, conditions of detentions, and the Manus Regional Processing centre.

It was also timely for the Ombudsman Commission to give an update on the status of the investigation initiated by their office into the University students protests and the use of force by the police occurred last 8 June. The Papua New Guinea UPR Task Force's Committee spokesperson from the Department of Foreign Affairs was also present and updated the Human Rights Forum on the ongoing Government consultation related to the recommendations received by Papua New Guinea during the 2nd cycle UPR and the elaboration of responses to be submitted to the HRC by the end of August 2016. The Human Rights Forum consists of members from the Government, Ombudsman Commission, civil society organizations, development partners and UN agencies. The Forum is held quarterly in a year and is chaired by the Department of Justice and Attorney General with the support of OHCHR.



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Pilot Testing Workshop on human rights for the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (27 June -1 July)

From 27 June to 1 July 2016, OHCHR conducted a one week Pilot Testing Workshop on Human Rights for the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC). The workshop was organized by OHCHR at the Bomana Police Training College with the support of the Australian Government. Fifteen police officers, including four female police trainers, attended the workshop. The exercise was the first of this kind and is part of the second phase of the Human Rights Capacity Building and Training Programme between the UN and the RPNGC. The Pilot workshop aimed to test draft training materials to be integrated in the Bomana Police Training College curricula. Training sessions included, amongst others, general principles on human rights, state's responsibilities, rights of victims, use of force and firearms, human rights during arrest and detention, policing of peaceful assemblies, ethical and lawful policing, law enforcement and non-discrimination.



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