The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR")

The ICCPR, administered by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to which the United States has ratified the ICCPR and are bound to protect and respect the human rights set forth.

There are two optional protocols (OPs) to the ICCPR.

The OPs adopt procedures that are mechanisms for the ICCPR. A State Party to this protocol shall appoint a member of the committee to serve as a member of the committee. The committee shall consist of five members, each of whom shall be a national of a party to the ICCPR.

The OPs aim at the abolition of the death penalty. A State Party to the protocol commits to "take all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty within its jurisdiction." The process involves ratifying the treaty, implementing the protocol, and reporting on progress. The review process focuses on the implementation of the rights and obligations under the ICCPR.

The Human Rights Committee’s ("HR Committee") role

The Human Rights Committee consists of 18 independent experts. The members of the ICCPR include the United States for a four-year term and can be re-elected. The Committee meets three times a year. The United States has four functions: monitoring and implementing the ICCPR to its state parties. The ICCPR includes provisions that allow individuals to bring cases before the Human Rights Committee.

The ICCPR protects the right to freedom of expression, equality before the law, and the right to a fair trial.

Op provides an opportunity for states to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations and experts in the process of implementing the ICCPR.

The ICCPR’s Optional Protocol (OP) to the ICCPR includes a procedure for states parties to submit reports on the implementation of the ICCPR. The reports are subject to scrutiny by the Committee. The OP also establishes a mechanism for individuals to bring complaints to the Human Rights Committee.

The ICCPR is a key international human rights treaty. It includes provisions on civil and political rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and security of person; freedom of speech and of association; and the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs.

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