

## ISHR releases Chinese language guide to treaty bodies

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Effective and safe engagement by civil society in the human rights treaty body process - before, during, and after the review - is essential for its success. Just in time for the UN Committee against Torture review of China, ISHR has released a [Chinese version of its Simple Guide to Treaty Bodies](#).



ISHR is pleased to release [the Chinese language version of its Simple Guide to UN Treaty Bodies](#), which contains a comprehensive overview of the structure and purpose of treaty bodies, along with information on how civil society can best interact with treaty bodies. As effective engagement by civil society in treaty body mechanisms is an essential facet of this process, ISHR anticipates that this publication will empower NGOs and human rights activists.

This translation comes at a time when the Chinese government is seeking to play an increasingly active role in the UN human rights system, in particular the Human Rights Council. This engagement conflicts, however, with the dire human rights situation on the ground. Continued attention to issues confronting human rights defenders from other UN mechanisms, informed by independent civil society and defenders themselves, will be crucial in order to see concrete improvements.

The disconnect between China's international rhetoric on rights, the recommendations it has received from UN experts, and its domestic reality of pervasive abuses, has been clear in several contexts.

As China prepares to undergo a review by the Committee against Torture next week, on 17-18 November 2015, the government has failed to create an environment in which defenders and civil society within the country can participate. Not to mention that ongoing cases of torture, abusive treatment, illegal detention, and violations of due process rights continue to be reported on a nearly daily basis.

While the Chinese government celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration in September 2015, ongoing discrimination against women and harassment of women human rights defenders was starkly illustrated by the arbitrary arrest and detention of [five feminist activists](#) in March 2015. This was only months after China's November 2014 review by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), who cited allegations that the government curtailed civil society participation through travel restrictions and censorship of reports.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) [also noted](#) serious human rights violations during its 2014 review, including reprisals against lawyers and human rights activists fighting violations of economic, social, and cultural rights. Despite this rebuke from an expert international legal body, the Chinese government again followed by a subsequent [spate of detentions and enforced disappearances](#) of hundreds of lawyers and activists in July 2015, of which 22 currently remain in detention.

These cases clearly illustrate the need for continued pressure by treaty bodies, through strong recommendations and sustained follow-up, so as to ensure that China's commitments to UN mechanisms are also reflected on the ground and in the lives of those fighting to defend human rights.

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