

[UPR | First joint consultation on implementation of UN recommendations held in Jamaica](#)

30.11.2018

This week the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), the [Centre for Civil and Political Rights](#) (CCPR) and the [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association](#) (ILGA) - along with national partners JFlag and TransWave Jamaica - conducted a two-day consultation to develop strategies toward the national implementation of UN recommendations in Jamaica.



Around 20 national human rights defenders from a range of organisations including WeChange, Children First and iFlex came together to examine existing UN recommendations in relation to women's rights, children's rights, HIV response, and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) persons.

Joining the group were Adley Duncan, Assistant DPP from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, who offered valuable insight at the two-day training, and George Abualzulof, of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), who delivered commentary on UN mechanisms to aid in helping and protecting defenders.

The [Universal Periodic Review](#) (UPR) is a peer review process where the human rights situation of each State is reviewed by all other UN member States every five years. During the review, the State under review receives recommendations on how to improve its human rights situation. As part of that review, the Human Rights Committee publishes concluding observations stipulating steps the State should take to improve the implementation of its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The [Human Rights Committee](#) is an expert UN body that periodically reviews the implementation of the ICCPR by each State Party.

Jamaica was reviewed by the Human Rights Committee in 2016 and underwent the second cycle of the UPR in 2015. As part of those reviews, Jamaica received the following recommendations:

- In the Charter of Rights Bill currently before Parliament, include a specific prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, repeal all legal provisions criminalising consensual relations between adults of the same sex and combat this type of discrimination through awareness-raising campaigns and education programmes in school.
- Amend the Sexual Offences Act and the Domestic Violence Act to increase protection for women and girls as well as men and boys against sexual violence.
- Strengthen the implementation of the national programme to combat HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases and ensure that discrimination against persons with HIV be prohibited

'It was disappointing to ascertain at the outset that Jamaica has taken few steps toward the full implementation of recommendations received on these issues in its most recent review by the UN Human Rights Committee and UPR. Initial discussions identified how much more needs to be done at the national level to implement these recommendations,' said ISHR's Legal Counsel and Programme Manager, Tess McEvoy.

During the consultation, clear strategies were developed toward the implementation of recommendations received. These strategies will be acted upon in the coming months.

'Jamaica will have its next UPR in 2020, and its next report to the Human Rights Committee is expected to be in 2021. We consider a lot can be achieved regarding the implementation of these recommendations in that time', said CCPR Centre's Programme Manager Andrea Meraz.

Recommendations made by these UN bodies can be crucial levers for change to complement and strengthen existing calls being made at the national level.

'We urge Jamaica to listen to calls being made from within, as well as externally, to strengthen the protection of the rights of its people, especially of those more vulnerable groups such as women, children and LGBT persons; as well as those defending their rights', said ILGA's Senior Officer, UN Advocacy Diana Carolina Prado Mosquera.

Contact: Tess McEvoy, Legal Counsel and Programme Manager, t.mcevoy@ishr.ch

Photo: ISHR

ISHR