



Every right
for
every child

2024
Report on Child Rights



Marist International
Solidarity
Foundation ETS
FMSI
For the benefit of children



SECRETARIAT OF SOLIDARITY
Marists
of Champagnat

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Marist Brothers, the Secretariat of Solidarity and FMSI: International Advocacy for Child Rights

The Institute of the Marist Brothers and the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI) are deeply committed to advocating for the rights of children and young people in the most vulnerable conditions.

In 2007, FMSI and the Marist Brothers made the decision to engage in the defense of human rights by actively participating in mechanisms provided by the United Nations, including the Universal Periodic Report (UPR).

Working in collaboration with the Secretariat of Solidarity, **they strive to raise awareness about the importance of defending human rights**, particularly for those who are most at risk. This commitment aligns with the Marist charism, which focuses on the education of children and young people across 80 countries worldwide.

To achieve their goals, both the Secretariat of Solidarity and FMSI engage in various United Nations advocacy mechanisms. Among these, the Universal Periodic Report is a key tool, allowing them to present reports and recommendations to the United Nations. The active engagement of civil society organizations in the UPR process, coupled with collaborative networking and partnerships with other stakeholders, is paramount for enhancing the

process's effectiveness and inclusivity. These interactions facilitate a broader exchange of insights, resources, and advocacy efforts, ultimately promoting a more thorough examination of human rights situations and a more robust framework for governments to address them.

FMSI has held special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2011. This status enables active participation in UN conferences, meetings, and working groups dedicated to child rights. Leveraging the collective expertise of the international Marist network, FMSI plays a crucial role in shaping global standards and international agreements concerning the human rights of children and young people.

Both FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity of the Marist Brothers welcome opportunities to collaborate with local communities to help them prepare and submit UPR that advocate for and protect the rights of children in their respective countries.



What is the UPR?

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process within the United Nations Human Rights Council that is designed to assess the human rights records of all United Nations Member States. It is a mechanism for **reviewing and improving the human rights situation** in individual countries.

As its name suggests, UPR means:

- **UNIVERSAL:** All 193 UN Member States are expected to participate in the UPR process. It is a peer-review mechanism, which means that countries are reviewed by their fellow Member States.
- **PERIODIC:** The UPR process operates on a fixed cycle, with each country being reviewed approximately once every four to five years. The review is based on a predetermined schedule, and each country's review is conducted during a specific session of the Human Rights Council.
- **REVIEW** of the human rights practices in the country under review.

Before their review, the country is expected to prepare a national report that outlines its human rights situation and efforts to improve it. Each report is based on information from the government, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

Other countries, as well as civil society organizations, can submit information and reports on the human rights situation in the country under review. **The participation of civil society in the UPR process plays a pivotal role in strengthening the accountability of governments and advancing the protection of human rights.** Civil society organizations, with their diverse expertise and grassroots connections, act as watchdogs, advocates, and

conduits for the voices of populations in marginalized and vulnerable conditions. They provide valuable information, analysis, and recommendations to the UPR, helping to shed light on human rights violations and challenges, while also promoting transparency, engagement, and collaboration between states, civil society, and other stakeholders. Through their active involvement, civil society enhances the credibility and effectiveness of the UPR mechanism, ultimately contributing to the advancement of human rights and the well-being of individuals and communities around the world. These submissions provide additional perspectives and insights.

During the review session at the UN Human Rights Council, the country under review presents its national report, and other Member States can ask questions, seek clarification, and make recommendations. This is an interactive dialogue where constructive feedback and recommendations are provided.

Following the review, the Working Group Report is prepared, summarizing the discussion and including recommendations made by other countries. The country under review is expected to formally accept or note these recommendations.

The reviewed country is encouraged to implement the accepted recommendations and report on progress during subsequent UPR cycles.

The Universal Periodic Review is a significant mechanism for promoting and protecting human rights globally. It encourages countries to engage in self-assessment, peer learning, and accountability in the field of human rights. It also provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation among countries to improve their human rights records.

Do you want to know more about it? Have a look at the [first UPR map](#) made by the Institute of the Marist Brothers and FMSI.

This comprehensive map serves as a vital tool, visually representing the extensive efforts and progress made in promoting and defending child rights globally. It stands as a testament to the Institute's commitment to transparency and accountability in human rights advocacy.

This UPR map highlights the regions and issues addressed by the Institute and serves as a strategic asset for future advocacy work.

By documenting 77 UPR submissions, it provides a clear, accessible record of the Institute's ongoing dedication to child rights: over 1122 recommendations presented, with 542 recommendations that were accepted by the States examined.

With all the single reports that can be downloaded, this map is an invaluable patrimony of the Institute, symbolizing their legacy and sustained impact in the realm of international human rights.

The first interactive Map of the UPR submitted by the Marist Brothers exemplifies their mission-driven commitment to advocate for child rights on behalf of the Institute. It underscores their ongoing efforts to collaborate with local communities and other stakeholders to prepare and submit UPRs that advocate for and protect the rights of children globally.

This MAP not only highlights their past achievements but also reaffirms their commitment to continuing their advocacy work, ensuring that the voices of

children and young people, especially those in vulnerable conditions, are heard and acted upon at the highest international levels.

Through their active involvement and collaboration with the United Nations and other civil society organizations, the Marist Brothers, through FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity-Cmi, continue to play a crucial role in advancing child rights and improving the well-being of individuals and communities worldwide.

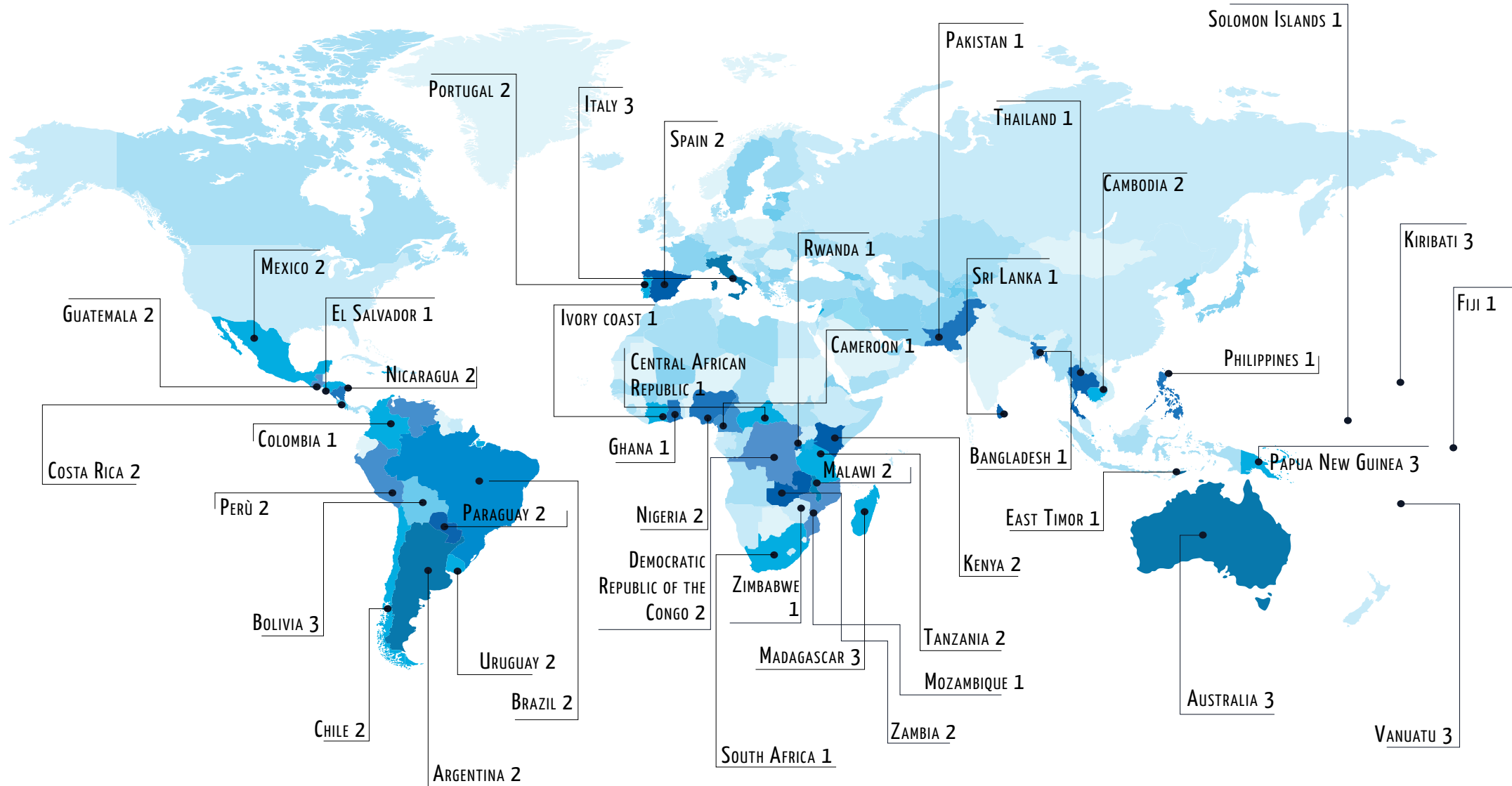
The work embedded in this map is a clear indicator of their resolve to further this important mission, with a renewed emphasis on the direct participation of children in these processes.



**SCAN THE QR CODE
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INTERACTIVE UPR MAP!**
[CLICK HERE](#)

Reports submitted by FMSI* from 2007 until 2024

*Since 2019, UPR reports were submitted in collaboration with the Secretariat of Solidarity





1122

**Recommendations
presented by FMSI in
77 UPRs**

542

**Recommendations
addressing issues raised by
FMSI were accepted by the
States examined**

482

**Recommendations
addressing issues raised by
FMSI were considered by
the States examined**

Reports submitted by FMSI* from 2007 until 2024

*Since 2019, UPR reports were submitted in collaboration with the Secretariat of Solidarity

2007:

Guatemala

2009:

Cambogia
Vanuatu

2010:

Kenya
Kiribati
Malawi

2011:

Australia
Solomon Islands
Papua New Guinea
Tanzania
East Timor
Zimbabwe

2012:

Brazil
The Philippines Islands
Guatemala
Pakistan
Peru
Sri Lanka

2013:

Central African Republic
Nigeria

2014:

Bolivia
Cambodia
Chile
Italy
Madagascar
Nicaragua
Democratic Republic of the
Congo

2015:

Australia
Rwanda

2016:

Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Tanzania
Thailandia

2017:

Argentina
Brazil
Ghana
Peru
Zambia

2018:

Chile
Ivory Coast
Costa Rica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Portugal
Uruguay
Vanuatu

2019:

Bolivia
El Salvador
Italy
Madagascar

2020:

Spain
Kiribati
Malawi
Australia
Mozambique
Paraguay

2021:

Papua New Guinea

2022:

South Africa
Zambia
Argentina

2023:

Bangladesh
Cameroon
Colombia
Nigeria
Mexico
Vanuatu
Uruguay

2024:

Costa Rica
Dem. Rep. of the Congo
Portugal
Fiji
Italy
Madagascar
Bolivia
Kenya
Spain
Kiribati

UPR 2024 Highlights

In 2024, **FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity successfully collaborated to submit a total of 10 UPR reports.** Eight of these submissions involved the direct participation of children and young people, giving voice to their needs and concerns. Through activities held in schools and social works, children and adolescents were able to express their thoughts, which were collected and compiled into official reports presented to the United Nations.

These reports, a result of close partnerships with various stakeholders, were presented for **Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Portugal, Fiji, Italy, Madagascar, Bolivia, Kenya, Spain and Kiribati.**



Costa Rica | March 2024

Los Derechos Humanos en Costa Rica

In Costa Rica a central concern is the situation of public education, addressing issues such as access to school materials, transportation to schools, educational quality, class suspension, school infrastructures, care of classroom materials, and discipline. The importance of teacher training and authority is also noted, recognizing the challenges they face and the need for more training to improve educational quality.

Additionally, young people face several difficulties in accessing university and other age-appropriate resources, especially those living far from cities with fewer economic resources. The cost of transportation, food, and accommodation are significant barriers. Costa Rica is also facing a growing sense of insecurity and violence, especially in public spaces that become unsafe at certain times of the day, along with an increased presence of groups consuming or trafficking drugs.

Another concern is the increase in traffic and road infrastructure, which directly affects the lives of young people by reducing their time for recreation and play, a fundamental right of children. The situation of people with disabilities is equally highlighted, recognizing improvements in training related to this reality but emphasizing the need to continue working on the training of families and other involved groups.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. Right to education.**
- b. Violence against children.**
- c. Right to health.**
- d. Youth rights.**
- e. Discrimination.**
- f. Sexual exploitation and trafficking.**
- g. Transportation and road infrastructure.**

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Democratic Republic of the Congo | March 2024

Human Rights in Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, classrooms are overcrowded due to the lack of new school constructions negatively affecting educational quality. Although some schools have been built or rehabilitated, infrastructures need significant improvements, including the construction of libraries. Schools are often not prepared to receive children with disabilities or special needs.

The armed conflict in the eastern region of the DRC has worsened the educational situation. Many schools have been attacked, occupied, or closed due to insecurity, affecting more than 900,000 students according to UNICEF. Additionally, more than 300 schools are used as shelters for displaced people, preventing their educational use.

The training and motivation of teaching staff are also a concern. Although efforts have been made to improve continuous teacher training, many are not adequately prepared, and salaries are insufficient.

Regarding human rights and civic education, progress has been made in the capital and urban areas, but in rural areas, the population, especially young people, lacks sufficient knowledge of their rights, making them vulnerable to abuse. Birth registration is another challenge, with only 40% of children under five registered and only 13% with a birth certificate due to lack of access and knowledge of procedures in rural areas.

Children displaced by conflict face interruptions in their education and are more exposed to violence and mental health issues. Displaced families find it difficult to integrate into new environments, affecting their children's education. Persistent problems include accusations of witchcraft against children, child labor, especially in mining, and economic and sexual exploitation. Violence against children remains common despite efforts to address it.

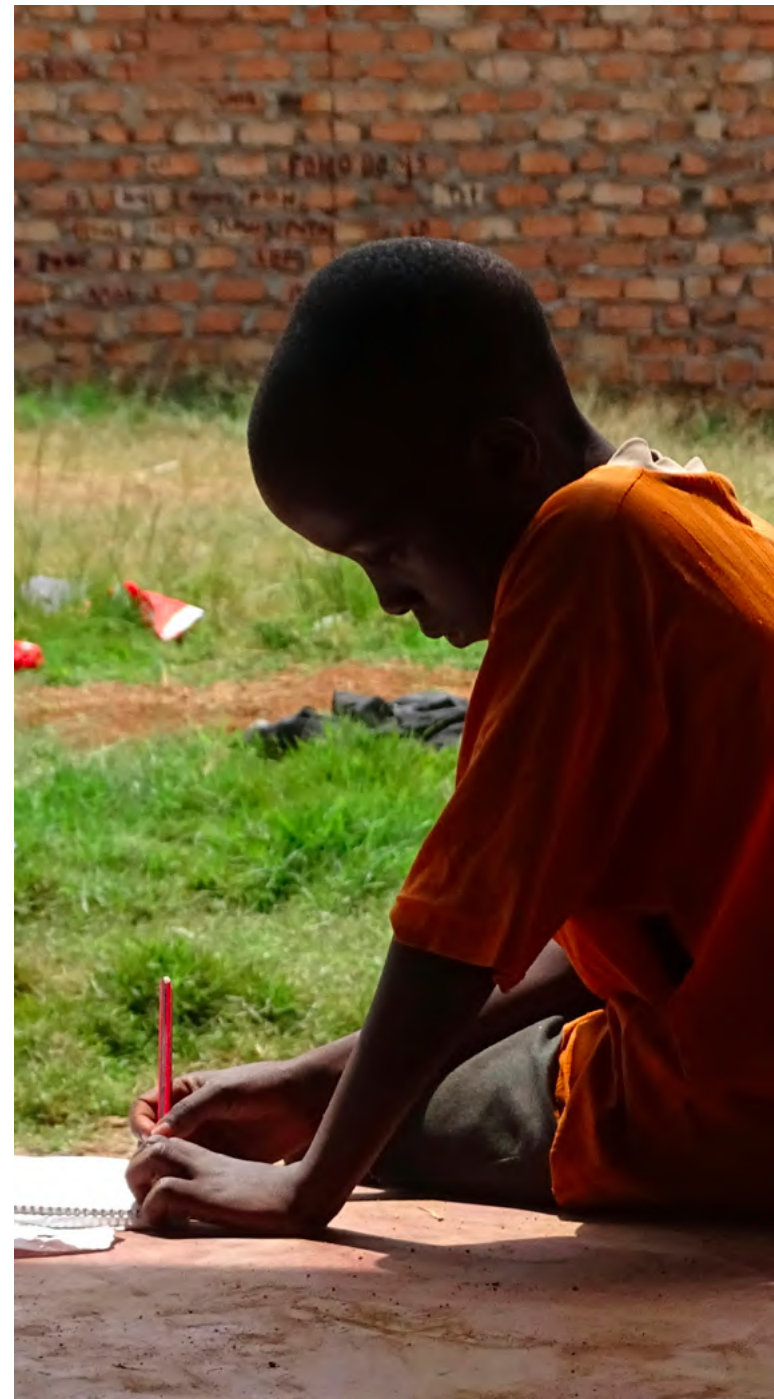
In terms of health, although initiatives like free maternity care have been promoted, child health costs remain an obstacle for many families. Violence against women is also a serious issue, especially in conflict zones, and the lack of data hinders the creation of effective programs.

Finally, gender equality remains a challenge, with women facing inequalities in education and employment, and youth facing health problems related to alcohol and drug consumption. Minorities and indigenous peoples also face discrimination and marginalization.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. **Right to education.**
- b. **Birth registration.**
- c. **Vulnerable children.**
- d. **Women's rights.**
- e. **Youth rights.**
- f. **Indigenous and minority rights.**

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Portugal | April 2024

Human Rights in Portugal

Portugal is encouraged to continue promoting the rights of people with disabilities and adopt additional measures to expand welfare and assistance services for children with disabilities.

Regarding access to education, although it is a right for children with disabilities, Portugal needs to do more steps to facilitate and make this access more effective. The Portuguese government was urged to continue working to ensure easier access to basic social services for people with disabilities, especially those with less family or institutional support. Moreover, the residential centers have to ensure that people with disabilities are informed of all their rights and able to exercise them.

The “Compilation of UN information” document of Portugal also referenced the importance of ensuring that children in residential care or foster families receive the necessary attention to fully develop as individuals with full rights. The Portuguese government and other countries were urged to consider the importance of people in residential care, especially children and young people, including specific measures for their comprehensive development.

Regarding the right to education, Portugal needs to increase efforts to combat discrimination against minority groups in access to education and to implement measures to reduce school dropout rates among children in disadvantaged situations. The Portuguese government was also asked to promote educational opportunities for the immigrant population, especially children and young people.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. Rights of people with disabilities.**
- b. Care centers.**
- c. Immigration and vulnerable groups.**



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Fiji | July 2024

Human Rights in Fiji

Fiji has demonstrated progress in various areas related to human rights and development. However, the need for accessible and inclusive education is clear. To this end, there is the necessity to improve transportation to facilitate easier access to education, especially for children and young people residing in remote or rural areas. Ensuring that educational opportunities are not limited by geographic location is crucial for fostering equal opportunities. This effort should also address barriers faced by migrants, who are often disproportionately affected, particularly girls who may be deprived of education in such contexts.

Gender equality remains a priority, and the Fiji government is taking measures to combat all forms of discrimination. These initiatives are vital for creating a more equitable society where every individual, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, can thrive.

Teenage pregnancy is a significant issue with complex causes, including discrimination, limited access to secondary or higher education, and economic constraints. The government's commitment to reducing poverty is an important step in addressing some of these underlying factors.

The government's efforts to address drug-related problems are also recognized. The link between poverty and drug use exacerbates these issues, making poverty alleviation an essential component of any comprehensive strategy to combat drug abuse and trafficking. Climate change is a pressing concern, particularly for young Fijians. It is crucial to recognize that populations in vulnerable conditions are most affected by climate change, and the intersection of environmental issues with education and discrimination must be addressed. Strengthening efforts to mitigate climate impacts and protect these communities is essential for sustainable development.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. **Education**
- b. **Gender Equality**
- c. **Teenage pregnancy**
- d. **Drugs**
- e. **Climate change**



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ITALY | July 2024

Los Derechos Humanos en Italia

The report highlights significant challenges Italy faces concerning documentation, residency, and social support rights, particularly for migrants and refugees. One of the main issues is the difficulty in renewing residence permits and obtaining medical assistance due to a lack of proper documentation. There is an urgent need for more services and support structures to facilitate the renewal and issuance of residence permits. Additionally, many reception centers are inadequately resourced, underscoring the need for better support in the labor market and educational integration for migrants. The report also notes concerns about public space contamination and safety, which negatively impact the quality of life for these communities.

Italy also faces challenges related to the right to work, fair labor conditions, and the fight against labor exploitation, especially among the migrant population. The report underlines the critical need for training services that help migrants understand their rights and improve their job skills. Migrants encounter significant difficulties in finding employment and often face racial discrimination. Labor exploitation is a growing concern, particularly affecting undocumented individuals who work for low wages under precarious conditions, often without formal contracts or social security. "Black market" work is common, leaving workers without pension contributions. Young adults aged 25-30 report that about 80% of employers do not properly formalize work contracts, often underreporting hours worked and failing to pay social security or pension contributions. Many young people, especially the undocumented, are unaware of their rights and fall victim to labor exploitation, working without contracts and often not receiving their due pay.

Additionally, the report considers it essential to promote the learning of the Italian language among new arrivals, especially children and young people, as this will facilitate full integration at all levels. This goal would be further supported by increased resources for educational reinforcement in these population groups.

Finally, the report mentions that some children and young people have experienced xenophobia and discrimination in educational settings. The coalition joins their voices in urging the Italian government to increase efforts in implementing Human Rights educational programs both within and outside schools to promote full integration and acceptance of migrants and to eliminate any form of discrimination. Educational and recreational spaces are considered vital for the development of children and young people, and it is essential to ensure these spaces are well-maintained and offer the best physical facilities, given the significant amount of time children and young people spend in them.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. **Right to documentation, residence and social support**
- b. **Right to work, fair working conditions and against labor exploitation**
- c. **Right to health**



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MADAGASCAR | July 2024

Human Rights in Madagascar

Madagascar has made some progress in promoting children's rights. However significant challenges remain in prioritizing education and ensuring the well-being of children.

Education remains underfunded and underdeveloped. The report identifies several key obstacles to improving education, including a lack of adequate school infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teaching staff, and limited financial resources. These challenges collectively hinder the country's capacity to provide quality education to all children, which in turn threatens the future prospects of the younger generation and, by extension, the country's overall development.

The government's underinvestment in education is particularly alarming, with only 2.8% of Madagascar's GDP allocated to this crucial sector, significantly below the recommended global benchmark. This inadequate funding manifests in several critical issues: classrooms are overcrowded, teaching materials are insufficient, and there is a dearth of qualified educators. As a result, the quality of education suffers, and this is reflected in the national literacy rate, which hovers around 80%. The report points out that this figure indicates that a significant portion of the population (20%) remains illiterate, a condition that severely restricts individuals' opportunities for employment, civic participation, and meaningful contributions to national development.

In addition to educational shortcomings, the report draws attention to the high prevalence of child abuse in Madagascar, despite the government's acceptance of various recommendations to improve child protection. Children in Madagascar are frequently subjected to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, often perpetrated by individuals in positions of trust, such as parents, teachers, and caregivers. This widespread violence has profound negative impacts on children's development and perpetuates a cycle of abuse across generations. The report emphasizes that efforts to address this issue are further complicated by cultural norms that accept and even normalize physical punishment as a form of discipline, making it difficult to create a safe and nurturing environment for children.

On the healthcare front, Madagascar continues to face severe challenges, particularly due to a critical shortage of qualified medical personnel, including pediatricians and nurses. This shortage is exacerbated by a lack of essential medical supplies and medications, which significantly hampers the quality of healthcare available to children. Consequently, the country struggles with high child mortality rates, with many children dying from preventable diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea. These deaths are often attributed to a lack of timely access to proper diagnosis, treatment, and preventative care.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. Access to education**
- b. Right to protection**
- c. Right to health**



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BOLIVIA | July 2024

Los derechos humanos en el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia

Bolivia has made efforts to promote the rights of children and adolescents, but significant challenges remain, particularly in education, child labor, and the protection of Indigenous rights.

The Multisectoral Development Plan for Children and Adolescents (2016-2020) was implemented across all departments and municipalities in Bolivia. However, since its conclusion, no new national plan has been developed. Despite this, three departments and two municipalities have independently adopted their plans to promote the participation of children and adolescents. The existence of the Plurinational Committee on Children and Adolescents, with representatives from all departments, and numerous departmental and municipal committees is positive, but the participation in evaluating the national plan has been low, with only 22.2% of committee members involved.

In terms of education, the report notes a decline in budget allocation for education between 2019 and 2021, with a particularly concerning reduction in secondary education funding. This has had negative consequences, especially for young people who often drop out of school to work. The budget cuts also affect scholarship programs aimed at preventing school dropouts during the transition from primary to secondary education, with no significant increase in funding observed.

Regarding child labor, the lack of health insurance coverage for child and adolescent workers is alarming. Most of these children do not have formal employment contracts, which are typically required to obtain health insurance. A large percentage of municipal governments have not registered or authorized the work of adolescents aged 14 to 18, making it difficult to track and ensure their protection. Moreover, educational programs compatible with the work schedules of these young workers are scarce, with only 26.8% of surveyed members of the Union of Child and Adolescent Workers of Bolivia (UNATSBO) reporting access to such programs.

Bolivia also faces significant issues related to gender-based violence. Despite legal frameworks and international recommendations, violence against women and children remains widespread. The report highlights the lack of sufficient shelters for victims and the challenges in accessing justice, such as bureaucratic obstacles and the revictimization of survivors. The government's efforts to train public servants in violence prevention are noted, but the continuous turnover of personnel hampers these efforts, leaving much work to be done in creating a safer environment for women and children.

Additionally, the rights of indigenous communities remain inadequately protected. Despite Bolivia's constitutional recognition of indigenous rights and international commitments, indigenous leaders report that they are often not consulted in decisions affecting their lands and resources. This lack of consultation and respect for their rights contributes to a sense of marginalization and neglect among indigenous communities.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. Participation of children, adolescents and young people**
- b. Child labor**
- c. Gender violence**
- d. Indigenous peoples**



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KENYA | October 2024

Human Rights in Kenya

Kenya has made considerable strides in promoting human rights, especially in education, healthcare, and food security. Key achievements include implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and government funding to enhance educational access. Kenya has also shown commitment by supporting UPR recommendations, specifically those focusing on rural education investment and equitable access to clean water and sanitation. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully implementing these goals, particularly in underserved rural areas. Children's testimonies emphasize the ongoing need for better sanitation, learning materials, and support for children with disabilities. Kenya has introduced measures to improve education quality and accessibility, including covering examination fees for all students and aiming to ensure student safety. However, the quality of education remains a concern. Public schools are overcrowded—some classrooms have up to 70 students—while private schools have lower enrollment, highlighting inequalities in educational access. Although government subsidies make public education free, it has led to challenges such as exam cheating due to inadequate teacher-student ratios and limited resources. Testimonies from children stress the need for improved infrastructure and curriculum support, especially in public schools.

While Kenya has made progress through the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) program, rural areas continue to struggle with inconsistent access to healthcare and sanitation. In both public and private schools, sanitation facilities are inadequate, often lacking sufficient toilets for the number of students. Kenya's support for UPR recommendations related to clean water and sanitation shows a commitment to addressing these issues, yet children's testimonies highlight ongoing needs for better sanitation infrastructure.

Food insecurity persists, particularly in Kenya's arid and semi-arid regions (ASAL). Although school feeding programs are in place, they are not universally accessible, leaving some areas underserved. The government has endorsed recommendations focused on food security, and there are calls for increased nutrition education in schools. Children's testimonies call for an expanded feeding program and greater emphasis on agricultural education to improve food security. Transitioning to mechanized farming and utilizing available water sources for irrigation could further strengthen food security efforts.

Kenya's progress in advancing rights to education, health, and food is commendable, but more work is needed to address regional disparities, infrastructure challenges, and ensure that vulnerable regions have equal access to essential services. By implementing these recommendations, Kenya can strengthen its alignment with international human rights standards and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key concerns addressed:

- a. Right to Education**
- b. Right to Health**
- c. Right to Food**



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SPAIN | October 2024

Los derechos humanos en el Reino de España

Since the last Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2019, Spain has made significant strides to protect children's rights. Notable advances include the 2021 enactment of the Comprehensive Protection Act for Children and Adolescents against Violence, and the 2022 launch of a national strategy to eliminate violence against minors. Additionally, the establishment of the Ministry for Children and Youth in 2023 demonstrates a new commitment to developing and monitoring policies that safeguard young people.

In 2022, Spain's Unified Register of Suspected Child Abuse (RUMI) reported 29,970 cases, covering 48,187 types of abuse. These include neglect (41.4%), emotional abuse (28.5%), physical abuse (18.8%), and sexual abuse (11.3%). Abuse is primarily reported by social services (39.8%), followed by schools (17.5%), law enforcement (15.6%), and healthcare facilities (9.6%).

Despite progress, challenges persist in implementing protection laws. The 2021 Act designates child protection coordinators for educational settings, but resources remain limited. Delays in regional legislation, inadequate funding, and excessive bureaucracy, such as separate protocols for different abuse types, hamper effective intervention. In a recent survey, 51% of children reported witnessing or experiencing bullying, with verbal insults and theft among the most frequent abuses. Additional risks include cyberbullying and harassment through social media, where 34% of children reported contact from strangers online, 24% felt pressured to fit in, and 22% encountered upsetting online experiences.

Mental health has emerged as a critical issue, with nearly 43% of ANAR's consultations in 2023 focusing on mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression. NGOs report obstacles such as limited mental health staff and resources, sparse appointment availability, and high medication reliance. In response, the Ministry of Education launched an Emotional Well-being Program with €5 million in funding to support schools. However, Save the Children estimates that meeting actual demand requires €44.6 million, indicating a substantial funding gap.

Addressing child abuse, especially through digital channels, is another urgent priority. Recent studies report that 75% of Spanish minors have faced online sexual violence, including receiving unsolicited explicit images and pressure to share personal photos. Recommendations call for robust legal frameworks to regulate online interactions and the use of artificial intelligence to protect children from exploitation. Additionally, immigration remains a complex issue, with more than 9,000 unaccompanied minors arriving in Spain between 2021 and 2023. Spain's child-rights organizations advocate for uniform standards in assessing minors' ages and expanded protections for young migrants in reception centers.

¹for Helping Children and Adolescents at Risk

Key concerns addressed:

- a. **Protection of children and adolescents who face violence**
- b. **Unaccompanied migrant children and asylum seekers**
- c. **Children's mental health**



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Human Rights in Kiribati

The situation in Kiribati remains deeply concerning as climate change exacerbates rising sea levels, lack of living space, food scarcity, and overpopulation, threatening the future of children and youth. Kiribati's vulnerability to climate impacts is well-documented, with the National Adaptation Plan of 2021 emphasizing urgent measures and international cooperation to address these threats. Rising sea levels, particularly on low-lying islands like Tarawa, where the highest point is only 3 meters above sea level, place children's futures at risk. Youth express fear over losing their physical homeland and cultural identity, underscoring the urgent need for global intervention.

Children and young people in Kiribati identify critical concerns tied to climate change, such as coastal erosion, water scarcity, and loss of biodiversity, which are threatening their livelihoods. Overpopulation, especially on Tarawa, intensifies resource strain, affecting housing, agriculture, and healthcare services. The Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (2019-2028) highlights how limited land area worsens overcrowding and limits the space needed for housing, schools, and essential services. Recommendation 80.61, which the State accepted, supports improving living conditions, but international support is crucial for implementation.

Overpopulation also poses serious health risks, as it facilitates the spread of diseases. The large distances between islands exacerbate healthcare access challenges, which stress health service accessibility. Youth in Kiribati express concern over inadequate public transport, particularly school transport, calling for an improved network to ease mobility and reduce travel times, benefiting quality of life. The coalition endorses these recommendations, urging the international community to support improvements in public infrastructure.

In education, the government has accepted recommendations to enhance educational quality. Youth stress the need to improve English literacy to communicate with tourists, connect with foreigners, and open future opportunities. They refer to this as "English illiteracy," expressing concern about their future competitiveness. Recognizing ongoing government efforts, they urge continued investment in education.

Family life education also remains a challenge, especially with issues like teenage pregnancies. Youth advocate for comprehensive reproductive and sexual health education, as early pregnancies often lead to early marriages, which threaten girls' futures. Drug and alcohol use among adolescents, particularly marijuana and excessive alcohol consumption, pose additional health risks, lead to increased violence, and impact mental and emotional development. Youth note that substance abuse is rising and urge the government to address this issue through education and drug prevention policies, particularly in schools.

Key concerns addressed:

- a. **Climate change**
- b. **Overpopulation**
- c. **Education**
- d. **Youth Problems, including teenage pregnancy and drug issues.**



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What else can we do together?

In the ongoing pursuit of social justice and human rights, actively engaging with the UPR process and in other United Nations mechanisms is essential. FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity extend their support to Marist missions worldwide, offering resources and expertise to ensure that recommendations from the UPR process are effectively monitored and implemented. This collaborative effort is vital in holding governments accountable and advocating for the rights of the marginalized and vulnerable.

A key resource in this endeavor is the monitoring tool developed by CCIG². This tool is designed to assist Marist missions in tracking the progress of recommendations accepted or noted by their respective governments. By utilizing this instrument, it becomes possible to document advancements systematically, identify areas requiring further action, and prepare for future advocacy opportunities. The monitoring process is not only a way to measure progress but also a means to engage the wider community in the promotion of human rights.

One of the most powerful advocacy tools available to civil society organizations is the opportunity to deliver an Oral Statement before the United Nations Human Rights Council. This platform allows organizations to present their observations and concerns directly to the international community, influencing the global response to critical human rights issues. To maximize the impact of these statements, thorough preparation is required. The monitoring tool provides the necessary data and insights to craft a compelling and evidence-based Oral Statement, ensuring that the voices of those advocating for human rights are heard loud and clear.

Engaging the school community in the development of the UPR report fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among students and staff. By working together, the community can produce a report that accurately reflects the state's progress on UPR recommendations. This collaborative process not only raises awareness but also empowers participants to become active advocates for human rights.

To broaden the impact of UPR engagement, it is crucial to involve local NGOs, community groups, and national organizations. This collaboration brings diverse perspectives and strengthens the report, amplifying its influence in the UPR process. Partners at different levels can provide valuable insights and resources, enhancing the overall quality and reach of the advocacy efforts.

Raising awareness about the UPR process and its significance is an essential step in building a strong advocacy network.

Organizing events such as seminars, workshops, and public forums at both local and national levels can educate communities and stakeholders about human rights, the UPR, and their role in advocating for change. These events serve as a platform for sharing knowledge, discussing strategies, and mobilizing support.

Navigating the complexities of the UPR process can be challenging. FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity offer guidance and support in report submission and advocacy efforts, particularly in Geneva, where the Human Rights Council is based. By leveraging expertise, Marist missions can ensure that their concerns are effectively communicated, increasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful outcomes.

Providing training on the UPR mechanism, report preparation, and advocacy strategies empowers the community to contribute more effectively to the UPR process. A well-informed community is better equipped to engage in meaningful dialogue and to advocate for the implementation of accepted recommendations. This knowledge-sharing is a critical component of sustaining long-term engagement with the UPR.

Continuous monitoring of the implementation of accepted recommendations is essential for ensuring that governments fulfill their commitments. This ongoing assessment holds authorities accountable and ensures that progress is made on issues that are most important to the community. By regularly tracking the implementation of recommendations, it is possible to identify challenges and opportunities for further advocacy.

The collective efforts of Marist missions, supported by FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity, play a crucial role in advancing human rights through the UPR process. By following these steps and utilizing the available tools, Marist communities can actively contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, ensuring that their voices are heard on the international stage. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the impact of the UPR process but also empowers communities to become agents of change in the global human rights movement.

²International Catholic Center of Geneva: <https://ccig-iccg.org/>

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