



ACTIVITY REPORT

Kyrgyzstan

CSO submission workshop

10-11 April 2019

Timeline for UPR engagement in the current cycle



UPR
■ INFO

1. Introduction

On 10-11 April 2019, 67 participants joined the *UPR submission workshop*, co-organised by *Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan*, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA), the National Center against Torture (NPM), the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic and UPR Info in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The event brought together urban and rural human rights defenders from the seven regions of the country working on a broad scope of human rights issues. UPR Info, Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan and OHCHR ROCA staff contributed with their expertise to agenda sessions, as did representatives from grassroots organisations and the INGO Search for Common Ground. The objective of the two-day workshop was to equip national CSOs to submit joint civil society submissions containing action-oriented, specific and relevant recommendations prior to Kyrgyzstan's 3rd UPR (January 2020). The workshop stressed the need to base submissions on credible first-hand evidence and encouraged coalition-building and information-sharing amongst national civil society to increase their impact prior to the review.

The event represents the first step in a series of UPR activities to be undertaken by *UPR Info* and its partner organisation, *Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan*, as part of the [in-country programme](#) (2019-2021).

2. Activity

2.1. Overview

On the first day, the workshop was opened by welcome remarks from Ms. Ismailova Tolekan Asanalievna, Director of *Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan*, Ms. Utesheva Natalia, Programme Coordinator at OHCHR ROCA, Ms. Aizharkyn Mamatova, expert at the *National Center against Torture*, Mr. Erlan Alimbaev, *vice-Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic* and Mr. Hans Fridlund, Programme Manager at *UPR Info*. Each speaker underscored the need for concerted efforts from civil society to ensure that their concerns will be reflected in the upcoming review. The convening power of *Bir Duino*, as evidenced by the high number of participants to the workshop and to the consultations held in all seven regions prior to the workshop, was also applauded and set the workshop off to a positive start.

The first segment of the Day 1 was devoted to a comprehensive introduction to the Universal Periodic Review. Lead by Hans Fridlund, the presentation situated the UPR within the broader framework of the UN human rights system, described the phases of each cycle and outlined the roles of different stakeholders. Achievements resulting from UPR implementation were shared and the complementarity between the UPR, other human rights bodies and the SDGs

was highlighted. The majority of participants had not previously engaged with the mechanism, which resulted in an interactive discussion around how to best utilise its entry points in Kyrgyzstan.

Highlights of Day 1 included a panel session with *Bir Duino*, the *Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic*, *OHCHR-ROCA* and the *National Center against Torture* to discuss the involvement of national stakeholders in the UPR since the last review in 2015, and priorities for civil society in the preparation phase of Kyrgyzstan's third review. The panel speakers included Ms. Ismailova Toleskan Asanalievna, Director of *Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan*, Ms. Natalia Utesheva, Programme Coordinator at *OHCHR ROCA*, Ms. Aizharkyn Mamatova, expert at the *National Center against Torture*, and Mr. Erlan Alimbaev, *vice-Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic*. The panel was moderated by Mr. Hans Fridlund, *UPR Info*. Participants benefitted from a thorough update on the respective role of the Ombudsman, the National Center against Torture and the OHCHR in the UPR process, and the support it provides to national stakeholders. The Ombudsman and the NPM are both members of the Coordinating Council responsible for drafting the UPR national report of Kyrgyzstan. *Bir Duino* highlighted the importance of solidarity between NGOs and the active role of CSOs in the implementation phase. The need to involve the parliament was also raised. Finally, *Bir Duino* gave the floor to participants from several regions of the country to share their experiences and expectations for the 3rd cycle of the UPR of Kyrgyzstan. The importance for CSOs to build consensus around suggested recommendations through multi-stakeholder consultations, and the value of cross-thematic joint submissions covering all regional issues were also noted.

The following session addressed the synergies between the SDGs and the UPR. Ms. Laura Sinner from *UPR Info* provided a comprehensive presentation of the mutually reinforcing nature of the two strands and shared some good practices on how CSOs can capitalise on synergies between outcomes of the SDGs, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures to add weight to their UPR advocacy. Questions from the floor prompted a conversation on the development of SMART indicators that could be used to assess levels of implementation of recommendations stemming from several human rights mechanisms and the SDGs.

After lunch, Mr. Hans Fridlund provided a technical training on the development of submissions including format, deadlines, content, SMART recommendations, the use of OHCHR matrices as well as annexes to the submission. He also highlighted the role of individual versus joint submissions, stressing the advantages of joint submissions. Finally, some best practices on submissions were presented, including the importance of CSO coalition-building.

During the workshop, *UPR Info* provided four main technical sessions to improve UPR knowledge amongst civil society stakeholders:

- Effective engagement at the UPR; creating long-term UPR strategies and a timeline of engagement for Kyrgyzstan;
- Synergies between the SDGs, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and the UPR; advocacy strategies to utilise these mutually reinforcing mechanisms;
- Technical training on the content, format and process of writing UPR submissions; and

- Advocacy strategies: preparing advocacy factsheets; encouraging States to make SMART recommendations.

The next sessions were devoted to practical group work. Based on their own experiences and preferences, participants from participating CSOs divided themselves into 10 thematic clusters:

- Torture and other CID treatment
- Children's Rights
- Women's Rights
- Migrants Rights
- Freedom of religion or belief
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Access to Housing
- LGBTI Rights
- Minority Rights
- Fight against Extremism

Based on the submission roadmaps and technical guidelines provided, each thematic group identified four examples of human rights issues and the corresponding SMART recommendations that they are considering to include in their respective report. The groups also utilised UPR Info's database to collect statistics and information on previous recommendations and researched what actions have been taken to implement recommendations related to their specific thematic. Experts from OHCHR ROCA and Search for Common Ground participated in the group work to share information with other CSO representatives. Finally, groups discussed further coordination for finalising the joint submission.

Day 2 of the workshop was dedicated to continuing the drafting of thematic submission and to plenary presentations of the work achieved so far by each group. During the plenary feedback session, each Group Rapporteur presented four issues and the corresponding draft recommendations. A wide range of issues were addressed, including fight against extremism, ethnic minorities rights, torture prevention, rights of persons with disabilities, freedom of religion, discrimination based on sexual orientation, child rights, women's rights, migrants' rights, access to justice, education and public services.

Based on the wealth of questions and comments triggered by each presentation, it was evident that the interactive session was popular among participants. Participants also provided information on issues addressed by other groups. It was furthermore encouraging to note that the several presentations highlighted the cross-sectoral nature of many human rights issues and the need to coordinate joint submissions to address all aspects of priority issues. Many groups had used UPR Info's database to research whether their topic had been addressed in

past reviews and phrased their recommendations in accordance with the SMART formula. However, participants agreed on the need to draft even more specific recommendations.

Participants benefited from an expert presentation on indicators from Ms. Natalia Utesheva, Programme Coordinator at OHCHR ROCA. She highlighted the importance of indicators to assess the quality of progress made and the need to justify civil society suggested recommendations by facts and thorough analyses. The OHCHR reiterated its availability to support technically and logistically CSOs in the drafting of UPR reports as well as in the follow-up phase.

The last session of the workshop discussed the finalisation of thematic joint submissions including the validation meeting as well as UPR Info's timeline of engagement in Kyrgyzstan. Participants were introduced to UPR Advocacy Factsheets and the modalities of the Pre-sessions in Bishkek and Geneva to be held in October and December 2019 respectively.

2.2. Achievements

The high number of CSO participants from all regions of Kyrgyzstan, encompassing a significant proportion of newcomers to the UPR, demonstrated the importance attached to the third cycle by national civil society. In this light, the workshop succeeded in: kick-starting the CSO submission processes; introducing activities that allow civil society to advocate for their recommendations as well as to facilitate their sustained UPR engagement after the review. On the margins of the workshop Bir Duino, OHCHR, and *UPR Info* discussed how to tailor-made support to national stakeholders based on their capacities and needs. This partnership triggered by the workshop provides a fruitful foundation for next steps.

The workshop succeeded in;

- ✓ Introducing the Universal Periodic Review to newcomers from across Kyrgyzstan;
- ✓ Sharing regional good practices from CSOs engagement with the UPR;
- ✓ Laying the foundation for joint CSO submissions through the establishment of ten thematic groups;
- ✓ Introducing *UPR Info's* database as a tool for strategic advocacy;
- ✓ Introducing national actors to key international stakeholders (international NGOs and UN agencies);
- ✓ Sharing best practices for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into UPR recommendations;
- ✓ Ensuring gender balance amongst participants (62% women; 38% men);
- ✓ Ensuring participation of CSOs from outside of the capital (42% from other regions; 58% from Bishkek).

In the margins of the workshop, UPR Info and Bir Duino engaged in several high-level meetings with independent and governmental bodies to pave the way for a collaboration among all UPR stakeholders in future UPR activities.

2.3. Lessons learnt

It will be important to sustain the participation of representatives from all regions of Kyrgyzstan to increase nationwide ownership of the UPR process and ensure the inclusion of all human rights issues. Through their regional offices, the OHCHR and Bir Duino demonstrated their willingness to help CSOs in regions by providing technical and logistic support. The collaboration between civil society and Bir Duino and OHCHR regional offices will thus be of paramount importance for the continuous engagement of regional CSOs.

It will be important to also address the issues of civic space, human rights defenders, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion and expression and socio-economic rights since these issues were widely raised by recommending states in past reviews of Kyrgyzstan. Freedom of association and peaceful assembly as well as freedom of opinion and expression are both in the top ten of the most addressed issues at Kyrgyzstan's 2nd UPR cycle. Thus, an update on the level of implementation of this high number of recommendations is needed.

It will moreover be important to identify Embassies who are keen to support the UPR work on CSOs to ensure engagement from resident embassies at the second activity; the In-country Pre-session scheduled to take place in October 2019 in Bishkek.

3. Way forward

It will be important to decide whether each of the thematic groups will contribute to a joint cross-sectoral submission in addition to submitting a joint submission on behalf of the respective group. The decision on which route to follow must be based on consultations between the members of their respective cluster. In the meanwhile, each Group Rapporteur is expected to submit the roadmap which they worked on during the workshop to Bir Duino and UPR Info. This will constitute the baseline for the CSO submission/s. Bir Duino, OHCHR and UPR Info will continue to discuss the potential of conducting additional activities to finalise the submissions ahead of the deadline on 18 July 2019. In October 2019, an In-country Pre-session will enable national CSOs to discuss the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan and share their suggested recommendations with resident diplomats three months before its third UPR in January 2020.

4. Testimonies



Murat Karypov
Deputy Director - "Nash Vek"
Bishkek

"It was my first experience with the UPR and the first time that I get the opportunity to learn about the UPR. I learned how CSOs can submit UPR reports and about the other activities that UPR Info is implementing to strengthen CSOs capacities and engagement in the UPR. NGOs in Kyrgyzstan are active, independent and oriented on the rule of law. Even though there are many ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan, CSOs from all regions are working together. In this vein, my organisation plans to gather all opinions, including views from the different CSO representatives from other regions in order to submit one joint UPR submission on persons with disabilities. Next week, we will organise a meeting with local NGOs working on persons with disabilities to include their views. The objective is to submit one report containing views from all regions of Kyrgyzstan. My organisation will engage in future UPR Info activities and we will do our best to get the most out of this collaboration. To strengthen capacities of CSOs across the country, it would be great for UPR Info to organise webinars on the UPR so that more CSOs can be reached and informed about the UPR. Having more CSOs trained on the UPR would be useful for exchanging important information on the human rights situation in the country."



Olga Djanaeva
Director - Women's public
association "Alga"
Chuy region

"Thanks to this workshop, I learned about the UPR mechanism, the procedure, content and format of a CSO UPR report as well as important information on the different aspects of UPR preparation. It was crucial for CSOs to understand how they can participate in the improvement of the human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan through the UPR. To have participants from all regions of the country added much value to the workshop since the UPR is not well known and understood here. The workshop was not only a training since time was allocated to practical sessions. Within my group work, we identified specific problems related to women's rights and then we discussed together with grassroots organisations on how to mitigate them. We also discussed about data and evidence of the problems identified as well as indicators that we can use for the drafting of our joint report. We analysed all previous gender equality related recommendations made to Kyrgyzstan and assessed the level of implementation in order to draft five priority recommendations for the 3rd cycle. Since I work in Chuy region, I will organise a consultation meeting with our local women's organisations and activists and share the skills that I have learned at the workshop. I will gather their opinions about the existing problems in the field of gender equality and compare with what we have developed at the workshop. The

objective of this consultation meeting is to gather information from different grassroots organisations in order to draft one joint submission on gender equality for the 3rd cycle of the UPR of Kyrgyzstan.”



Amadaliva Feruza

Consultant and social worker
“Info Center Rainbow”
Osh region

“At the workshop, we reviewed what happened at the previous UPR cycles of Kyrgyzstan. The workshop helped us to analyse and systematize knowledge on human rights issues. We knew the problems the country is facing in terms of children rights, but It was a general overview. Thanks to the workshop, we learned how to focus on more specific sub-issues and analyse baseline information as well as existing national legislation to assess the current situation concerning children rights. To write relevant UPR recommendations and a convincing report based on evidence, we need to gather this baseline information. We will now analyse information from first source. Even though the workshop was very helpful in strengthening CSOs reporting skills, it was hard to digest all information in two days. It would have been great to receive all information in advance so we can come to the training with questions. My organisation has been working on vulnerable groups and collaborated with NGOs working on child rights and ESC rights. Recently, we worked more specifically on HIV positive children and persons with disabilities. We will participate in further trainings and events around the UPR and provide inputs to the joint UPR submission which will cover many aspects of vulnerable groups including children with HIV and children with disabilities.”

Annex 1: Agenda

UPR SUBMISSION WORKSHOP IN PREPARATION OF THE THIRD UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF KYRGYZSTAN

10-11 April 2019
Dostuk Hotel, 429B Frunze Street
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

DAY 1 – 10 April	
08.00 – 08.30	Registration
08:30 - 09:00	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic [NHRI] • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • <i>UPR Info</i>
Session 1: Effective engagement at the UPR	
09:00-10:30	<p>Objective: <i>To introduce the UPR to newcomers; identifying where the UPR fits within the UN's human rights framework; demonstrate how NHRIs and CSOs can utilise the UPR to further their human rights objectives; effective UPR strategies; timeline of engagement for Kyrgyzstan's UPR.</i></p> <p>Facilitator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hans Fridlund, Programme Manager, <i>UPR Info</i> <p>(20 minutes Questions & Answers [Q&A])</p>
10:30 – 10:45	Tea Break
Session 2: Panel discussion - Update on the UPR in Kyrgyzstan	
10:45 – 11:30	<p>Objective: <i>To learn from experiences of national stakeholders in the UPR process; what developments have happened since the previous cycle; what are the priorities of the 3rd cycle</i></p> <p>Moderator: Hans Fridlund, <i>UPR Info</i></p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • National Center against Torture (NPM) <p>(15 minutes each, followed by Questions & Answers [Q&A])</p>
Session 3: Synergies between the SDGs and the UPR	

11:30 – 12:30	<p>Objective: <i>The objective of the session is to explore how NHRIs and CSOs can invoke the mutually reinforcing nature of the SDGs and UPR recommendations, and to illustrate how these strands can strengthen one another in the implementation process.</i></p>
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Sinner, Programme Assistant, UPR Info <p>(15 minutes each, followed by Questions & Answers [Q&A])</p>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
Session 4: CSO submissions to Kyrgyzstan’s 3rd UPR	
13:30 – 15:00	<p>Objective: <i>Technical training on the development of submissions including deadlines; format; content; SMART recommendations; matrices; annexes etc. Identifying the role of individual versus joint submissions. Building coalitions; best practices</i></p>
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hans Fridlund, UPR Info <p>(20 minutes Q & A)</p>
15:00 – 15:15	Tea Break
Session 5: Establishment of thematic groups	
15:15 – 16:15	<p>Objective: <i>Establishing thematic groups that will begin developing the joint submission. Each group will select a Group Rapporteur.</i></p>
Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info
Session 6: Group work – Drafting the submission	
16:15 – 17:00	<p>Objective: <i>The thematic groups establishes a timeline for the drafting process, including identifying structure, content, SMART recommendations etc. Each group can begin to develop their respective submission using the template that will be provided.</i></p>
Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info
17:00 – 17:15	Wrap up of Day 1

DAY 2 – 11 April

09:00 - 09:15	<p>Recap: Quiz on themes discussed the previous day</p>
Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info
Session 6 continued: Group work – Drafting the submission	

<p>09:15 – 11:30</p> <p>Facilitators</p>	<p>Objective: <i>The thematic groups establishes a timeline for the drafting process, including identifying structure, content, SMART recommendations etc. Each group can begin to develop their respective submission using the template that will be provided.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info
<p>11:30 – 11.45</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tea Break</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Session 6 continued: Group work – Drafting the submission</p>	
<p>11:45 – 12:30</p> <p>Facilitators</p>	<p>Objective: <i>The thematic groups establishes a timeline for the drafting process, including identifying structure, content, SMART recommendations etc. Each group can begin to develop their respective submission using the template that will be provided.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan
<p>12:30 – 13:30</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch break</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Session 7: Plenary presentations</p>	
<p>13:30 – 15:00</p> <p>Facilitators</p>	<p>Objective: <i>The Group Rapporteur from each group presents their roadmap for thematic submission. Feedback and suggestions from the facilitators and the plenary.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info <p>(Depending on number of thematic groups, each Rapporteur will have approximately 5 minutes to present, followed by feedback)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Session 8: After the submission - Advocacy strategies</p>	
<p>15:00 - 16:00</p> <p>Facilitators</p>	<p>Objective: <i>Discuss the finalization, future workshops and validation of the submission, UPR Info's timeline of engagement in Kyrgyzstan; Introduction to UPR Advocacy Factsheets; modalities of the UPR Pre-sessions in Bishkek and Geneva; best practices from coalitions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hans Fridlund, UPR Info
<p style="text-align: center;">Session 9: Closing remarks</p>	
<p>16:00 - 16:15</p> <p>Facilitators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan • Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic [NHRI] • Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Kyrgyzstan • UPR Info
<p style="text-align: center;">End of workshop</p>	



Promoting and strengthening
the Universal Periodic Review
<http://www.upr-info.org>

Contact



UPR Info
Rue de Varembé 3
1202 Geneva
Switzerland



Website <http://www.upr-info.org>



Phone: + 41 (0) 22 321 77 70
Fax: + 41 (0) 22 321 77 71



General enquiries
info@upr-info.org



<http://twitter.com/UPRInfo>



<http://www.facebook.com/UPRInfo>