



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Adoption of UPR Outcomes

#HRC58 • 24 March 2025

Portugal



STATE UNDER REVIEW

The delegation of **Portugal** thanking the interpreters for their work. It is a great privilege to take the floor in Portuguese, a language spoken by nearly 270 million people across the continents, which hopefully one day will become one of the official languages of the UN.

Portugal is a country deeply committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, and this commitment is broadly enshrined in its constitution. **Human rights guide its action** both domestically and externally. That is why Portugal strongly supports the UNHRC and all its mechanisms, including the UPR. Since this is a comprehensive and inclusive exercise, which pays a premium on open dialogue between all states, Portugal believes that this can then translate into specific improvements regarding human rights in each country.

Portugal very much positively assesses its participation in previous UPR cycles. The UPR allows Portugal to assess its progress, but also to take stock of its shortcomings, continually striving to improve our public policies. It is with this spirit and with a constructive attitude and of active listening that Portugal came before the UNHRC on 6 November 2024, with a delegation headed by three Secretaries of State.

Portugal thanks the 101 delegations who actively participated in the interactive dialogue, contributing with their questions and recommendations for a very fruitful dialogue on the situation of human rights in Portugal. It also thanks the Troika of those countries that provided support during its review, namely Germany, Kazakhstan and Gambia, and indeed the UPR Secretariat. Stressing the importance to safeguard progress and instil best practises, Portugal significantly welcomes each of the recommendations received. In the light of the 281 recommendations received, Portugal **supported 252, accounting for 90% of overall recommendations**. It partially accepted 11 and took note of 18.



The addendum to the Working Group's report sets out Portugal's official position on all recommendations, to which there is an annex with additional comments regarding some of the recommendations. The addendum submitted by Portugal is the **outcome of close cooperation** between the focal points of the National Commission for Human Rights, its National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up.

There were several recommendations made to Portugal regarding **domestic violence and gender-based violence**. This area is one of our key priorities of the Government, and that is why it is strengthening its national network to support victims, ensuring more structures for shelters, protection mechanisms that are more effective and more funding for organisations operating in the field. We know that it is not enough to react. What we have to do is invest on prevention, changing mentalities.

We have to combat stereotypes that still affect the life of **girls**, restricting their choices and ambitions. These preconceived ideas accompany them throughout their lives, leading to opportunities that are systematically denied them. In other words, lower wages, barriers to progress in their career, difficulties in reconciling professional and family life. Portugal highlights that there are changes to its legislation which enabled exceptions to the minimum age of marriage, increasing it to 18. Portugal has been able to accept several recommendations that were made along those lines.

Regarding combating **human trafficking**, Portugal highlights the recent approval in December 2024 of the Fifth Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons 2025-2027. This is testimony to its continued commitment to combating this scourge. This is conceived a plan in line with the recommendations received from international organisations, particularly the Expert Group as part of the Council of Europe. It has three main areas: collating reliable information, improving access of victims to their rights, and stepping up our combating of organised crime.

Portugal recognises the challenges in **access to housing**. This sparked a series of questions, but Portugal continues to work to realise this right, particularly by launching an emergency plan with 30 measures to address the housing crisis. The plan also supervises administrative procedures in the area of building, provides for the creation of public-private partnerships, the creation of public and private statements, making available property for housing solutions that have to belong to the state and urban renting for young people, facilitating the purchase of the first home for young people, reducing the number of criteria for subsidies for young renters. Portugal has also stepped up the enhanced public funding significantly in order to help more than 120,000 families who have been identified as living in unfit housing. Portugal is undergoing the greatest investment ever in public housing, totalling €4.2 billion.

The questions covered by the recommendations noted also required Portugal's greatest attention, particularly the **protection of migrant workers** and members of their families. As a country of immigration and emigration, this is a question which merited particular attention nationally. Portugal cannot ratify the UN Convention to Protect Migrant Workers because, similar to what happens with the remaining Member States of the EU, there are areas in this legal instrument which are not the exclusive competence of Portugal. However, through the Portuguese constitution, European legislation and national public policies, Portugal has been able to grant the greatest level of protection to migrant communities in Portugal. They actually go



beyond what is set out in the UN Convention, particularly social protection offered to migrants and immigrants in a regular situation.

On recommendations which were the object of **partial support**, as indicated in the addendum, there were two reasons for partial acceptance. Either Portugal could not totally subscribe to the recommendation, or the recommendation, although its drafting would suggest the contrary, had already been implemented.

On those recommendations to amend national legislation, ensuring that there is prohibition of racial discrimination, for instance, Portugal highlights its **absolute commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination or differentiated treatment** based on race, colour, descent or origin. Portugal believes it has a sufficiently robust legal framework. Portugal is deeply committed to implementing the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021-2025. Portugal has still, even more, introduced additional measures against changes to the operating of the Equality Commission, ensuring that it enjoys the necessary independence.

As regards the recommendations on **investigations into complaints of excessive use of force** by state agents, Portugal highlights the independent role of the General Inspectorate for Justice Services, the General Inspectorate for Home Affairs and the Office of the Ombudsperson. Portugal also has a national preventive mechanism, which is crucial in preventing acts of torture, particularly in those areas where individuals may be deprived of their liberty.

Portugal also stresses recent progress in public procurement in order to progressively purchase **body cameras**. It means that they will be able to be used by our law enforcement agents and Portugal hopes that this will be implemented in practise soon. Finally, Portugal highlights the signing of a Protocol between the Directorate General Responsible for Prison Services and the General Inspectorates of Home Affairs and the Services for Justice, which will facilitate the transmission of information whenever it is noted that a person who has left police detention and entered a prison establishment presents some signs of abuse or ill-treatment.

There was also a recommendation to **repeal criminal sentences for defamation** in order to strengthen freedom of expression. In this regard, Portugal highlights its high position in the Global Press Freedom Index. Freedom of expression is a national commitment. Portugal does not share the view that decriminalising defamation in its legal framework would actually contribute to strengthening that protection.

As regards **criminalising femicide**, Portugal shall continue to step up its efforts to eliminate gender-based violence. Portugal does not believe that providing for a stand-alone offence in the criminal code would actually be added value legally speaking or in terms of its effectiveness. Its legislation in force states that in these cases they are classified as aggravated murder, including crimes committed as part of domestic violence. Similarly, it believes that the definition of rape, which is aligned with the Istanbul Convention, is appropriate. So Portugal does not see any need for legislative changes as was recommended in that regard.

With regard to the annual quota under the **UNHCR Resettlement Programme**, including Rohingya refugees in this programme, Portugal highlights its commitment to increasing this quota within the limits of its national capacity.



In closing, Portugal is aware of the fact that the implementation of these recommendations is not simply a question of formal acceptance. It requires **ongoing efforts in terms of monitoring and implementation**. Portugal is committed to transforming these commitments into tangible results, ensuring that public policies effectively reflect the fundamental principles of human rights. To achieve this, Portugal will have an ongoing dialogue with both national and international parliaments. Portugal continues to unreservedly support the mission of the UNHRC.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the **Portuguese Ombudsperson** welcomes this opportunity to cooperate once more with the UNHRC during Portugal's fourth UPR cycle. As the NHRI, the Ombudsperson of Portugal has been actively engaged in the process. In its parallel report and in all its interactions with the UN bodies and members, as well as with civil society, it has provided comprehensive insights into the human rights situation in Portugal. Despite Portugal's commitment and the efforts made, significant concerns remain in critical areas. Enduring poverty may play a significant role. The Ombudsman focusses on two particularly vulnerable groups, older persons and persons with disabilities. The risk of poverty rate for older persons has grown from 71.1% in 2022 to 21.1% in 2023, the highest since 2007. Extremely low non-contributory pensions, but also the substantial delays in pension processing are two of the main obstacles to achieving social protection in an ageing population. In 2024, the Ombudsman released an important report concerning the rights of persons with disabilities. Taking measures with regard to systemic deficiencies in this area should be a national priority. In particular, the timely issuance of disability certificates should be guaranteed and the provision of assistive products should be improved. The Ombudsman reaffirms its commitment to strengthening human rights protection in cooperation with national and international partners.

UNHRC MEMBER AND OBSERVERS STATES

The **Dominican Republic** warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal and thanks it for presenting its additional information which shows the country's responsible attitude to promoting and protecting human rights and its commitment to this distinguished mechanism. It congratulates Portugal on accepting 90% of the recommendations received in this fourth cycle of the UPR and thanks it in particular for accepting the recommendations made by the Dominican Republic on inclusive education, climate change and equitable representation of women in politics and in public life. It commends Portugal for its National Human Rights Institution which allows adequate follow-up of the recommendations received. It wishes Portugal every success in implementing the recommendations supported and recommends to the UNHRC the adoption of the outcome document of the fourth UPR of Portugal.

Egypt warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal and the additional information provided on the country's position concerning the recommendations. It commends the efforts made on racism, including the adoption of the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination. Egypt commends Portugal's acceptance of its recommendation to combat all forms of racism and discrimination including hate speech and call on Portugal to examine the possibility of accepting the other recommendations. It wishes Portugal every success and recommends that the Council adopt the outcome document by consensus.



Gabon congratulates Portugal on improving a large number of strategies and national plans of action, particularly on gender equality, poverty, racism, domestic violence, the rights of the child, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, homeless persons and Roma. It also welcomes the measures taken to protect the rights of older persons. It wishes Portugal every success in the implementation of the recommendations made during this UPR and recommends that the Council adopt the report.

India warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal for the adoption of the EPR Working Group's report on its fourth UPR. The review shows substantive participation with delegations making a total of 281 recommendations. India appreciates the constructive engagement of the delegation of Portugal during the entire review, which reflects their commitment to the UPR process. India appreciates that as many as 252 recommendations have been accepted by Portugal, including the three recommendations made by India. While recommending the adoption of the UPR report, it congratulates Portugal on a successful review and wish them success in their efforts towards implementing the accepted recommendations.

Iran expresses concern over the ongoing human rights challenges in Portugal, particularly regarding racially motivated violence in prisons, racial profiling, and the excessive use of force against ethnic minorities and migrants, including Roma, Africans, and people of African descent. Iran asks Portugal to take concrete action to address these issues, including stronger measures to prevent police misconduct, particularly in cases of racial discrimination and violence. Iran also calls for better living and working conditions for migrant workers through the enforcement of safe housing standards and enhanced protection for victims of domestic violence, including improved access to shelters and support services. Iran looks forward to Portugal's continued efforts in advancing human rights.

The **Lao PDR** warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal to this EPR adoption session and congratulates it on the successful participation in the constructive dialogue in the fourth UPR cycle. The Lao PDR welcomes the progress made by the Government of Portugal in the promotion and protection of human rights in the country, particularly in the field of healthcare, education, and housing, among others. It is pleased to note that Portugal accepted 252 recommendations out of the 281 recommendations received during the constructive dialogue, including the two recommendations proposed by the Lao PDR. The latter wishes the Government of Portugal every success in its implementation. In conclusion, it encourages the UNHRC to adopt the UPR outcome of Portugal by consensus.

Libya welcomes the delegation of Portugal and commends its cooperation with the human rights mechanisms. It thanks Portugal for accepting a large number of recommendations arising from the fourth cycle and recommends that the Council adopt the EPR report on Portugal, wishing that country every success in implementing recommendations.

The **Maldives** warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal to the adoption of the UPR outcome report and appreciates their commitment to the UPR process. It commends the Government of Portugal for accepting most of the recommendations received during the UPR process, including the two recommendations made by the Maldives. The latter wishes the Government of Portugal every success in the implementation of the supported recommendations and requests the Council to adopt the UPR report by consensus.



Morocco wishes to express its sincere appreciation to Portugal for its constructive engagement in the UPR process and for accepting all the recommendations addressed by Morocco. This reflects Portugal's strong commitment to the continuous enhancement of human rights protections. Morocco particularly welcomes the efforts undertaken to strengthen public policies and awareness campaigns aimed at combating discrimination and racism, an essential step towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. It also commends Portugal's commitment to fully implementing the Child Guarantee Action Plan, ensuring that child poverty is effectively tackled at the local level, while aligning with the decentralisation process to promote fairness and equal opportunities. Furthermore, Morocco acknowledges the measures taken to ensure adequate conditions in migrant integration support centres and to prevent overcrowding in detention facilities. This initiative demonstrates Portugal's dedication to upholding the dignity and rights of all individuals, particularly those in vulnerable situations. Morocco supports the adoption of the UPR outcome of Portugal and wishes the delegation of Portugal all success in the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Mozambique warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal to the adoption of the fourth cycle of the UPR report. Mozambique commends Portugal on positively considering and supporting 252 recommendations and 11 partially out of the 281 recommendations received during the review, including the three recommendations from Mozambique. The latter supports the adoption of the UPR outcome of Portugal and wishes Portugal every success in implementing the recommendations accepted.

Nepal welcomes the delegation of Portugal to the adoption of the UPR outcome and thanks it for their constructive engagement with human rights mechanisms. It thanks Portugal for accepting all three recommendations that Nepal offered. Nepal appreciates Portugal's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 and the measures taken to reduce emissions and double renewable energy production. Nepal wishes Portugal every success in implementing the accepted recommendations and supports the adoption of the UPR outcome report by consensus.

Oman would like to welcome the delegation of Portugal and commends their efforts in implementing the report and in their cooperation with the UPR mechanisms in its fourth cycle. After having consulted the outcome of the UPR for the friendly nation of Portugal and their participation in the interactive dialogue, Oman recommends the adoption of the final report and wish them all the success in their implementation of the recommendations.

Pakistan appreciates Portugal for accepting around 90% of the recommendations by states, including the two recommendations by Pakistan. It commends Portugal's cooperation with the UNHRC mechanisms, the UPR, Special Procedures and other human rights mechanisms. It also welcomes various measures taken to further the human rights agenda in the country. Lastly, Pakistan wishes Portugal every success in the implementation of accepted recommendations and requests the Council to adopt the UPR outcome report with consensus.

The **Philippines** warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal to this session and thanks it for presenting updates. It thanks Portugal for accepting the Philippines' recommendations to step up efforts to combat racial discrimination, to bolster the campaign against human trafficking through targeted law enforcement training, and to further enhance education for Roma children and children of African descent, children with disabilities and those living in poverty and in rural



populations. Portugal's acceptance of over 90% of recommendations underscores its dedication to upholding international human rights standards and fostering meaningful dialogue through the UPR process. The Philippines is pleased to endorse the adoption of the UPR outcome report on Portugal and wishes the Government of Portugal success in the implementation of all accepted recommendations.

Russia notes that most of the recommendations made to Portugal, including the Russian recommendations, were supported. However, Russia remains concerned at the rise in attacks on persons of African descent and reports of a rise in unlawful police actions based on race, as well as the high frequency of hate speech on the internet and the worsening of detention conditions in penitentiaries. We hope that the accepted recommendations will be carried out correctly by Portugal and will make it possible to overcome the existing gaps in human rights in Portugal. Russia attentively follow Portugal's implementation of the recommendations and recommends adopting the report on Portugal's fourth UPR cycle.

Sierra Leone thanks Portugal for its continued cooperation and constructive engagement throughout the full cycle UPR process. It commends Portugal for accepting 252 recommendations, reflecting its strong commitment to addressing critical human rights challenges. Sierra Leone welcomes Portugal's acceptance of all four of Sierra Leone's recommendations. It acknowledges Portugal's ongoing efforts, including its national poverty reduction strategy and initiatives to expand access to quality education. It also notes the progress made in implementing gender equality frameworks and combating racial discrimination throughout targeted policies. Sierra Leone encourages Portugal to prioritise the full implementation of these recommendations and to use existing mechanisms, such as the National Human Rights Committee, to ensure sustained progress. Sierra Leone expresses its best wishes for the successful implementation of all EPR recommendations by Portugal and requests this Council to adopt the outcome reports by consensus.

Timor-Leste warmly welcomes the delegation of Portugal and thanks it for its constructive engagement in this full cycle of the EPR. It commends Portugal's ongoing commitment to human rights and multilateral cooperation. It also welcomes the inclusive and careful approach to analysis of the 281 recommendations received, with acceptance of 252 of them, including two made by Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste recognises and commends Portugal's dedication to upholding the principles of promotion and protection of all human rights in line with its constitutional values. It recommends that the report of the UPR of Portugal be adopted and wishes Portugal every success in implementing the recommendations accepted.

Tunisia commends the acceptance of the recommendations, especially having supported all the recommendations made by the delegation of Tunisia with regard to the efforts to promote gender equality, prevent domestic violence, fight racism, xenophobia and hate speech, as well as promoting health, education, habitat and social security. It welcomes the strategies and progress adopted by the Government of Portugal in fighting poverty and protecting the rights of children, the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the Roma people, and fighting human trafficking. Tunisia wishes Portugal all the success in implementing the supported recommendations and recommend the Council to adopt the report.



OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The video statement delivered by **Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale** was not audible, and therefore also not suitable for interpretation purposes.

The **World Evangelical Alliance** and the Aliança Evangélica Portuguesa thank the Government of Portugal for its commitment to the UPR process. They welcome Portugal's acceptance of the recommendation to intensify efforts to ensure effective responses to tackle discrimination, Islamophobia, hate speech and other related intolerance against ethnic and religious minorities. As highlighted in our written submission, they remain concerned by the ongoing political instability in the country, the increasing sympathy for populist political groups and the rise of xenophobic and racist extremism. They commend Portugal's acceptance to protect the right to freedom of religion and conscience of patients, healthcare professionals and other notably protecting conscientious objection in the medical field. They look forward to the implementation of these recommendations. However, they regret that Portugal did not accept the recommendation to ensure appropriate safeguards to fully protect freedom of religion, conscience and expression in the implementation of the law criminalising so-called conversion therapies. Teaching religious views to believers according to their theology should never be considered a crime, but the way Portuguese law is worded can give rise to interpretations along these lines, which can lead to serious limitations on freedom of religion and expression. They call on Portugal to review all legislation regarding gender self-determination to ensure recognition of social and religious perspectives that do not accept personal gender self-determination. Finally, they encourage Portugal to promote more widespread training in various ministries and government departments so that all public servants can effectively comply with the religious freedom law without discrimination and to integrate through legislation evangelical theological schools and seminaries into the national education system.

The **World Jewish Congress** gives the floor to the President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon and representative of Portuguese Jewish Community to the Government and major Jewish organisations. He congratulates Portugal on the recent nomination of Dr. João Tavares da Gama as National Coordinator for Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life. Portugal is a member of IRA even though it has not yet formally ratified the definition of semitism, which hopefully will happen soon. This will be truly important to Portugal's judicial system, to its civil servants and to all the people working in law enforcement. If there is a clear definition of what antisemitism is, there will be no doubts in acting. Portugal has a dark past concerning antisemitism. 500 years ago, Portugal expelled, persecuted and forced Jews to convert to the Crown's religion. In recent years, Portugal made an effort to compensate this shameful heritage by allowing descendants of Sephardic Jews to become Portuguese nationals. This has been overall a positive and humanistic step, but there is much yet to be done and the legal framework has to be revised. More recently, antisemitism has grown in Portugal. It is becoming more vocal, less ashamed, masquerading in the form of anti-Zionism, with several political parties calling out Jews in their speeches. We need to tackle the challenge of literacy deficit. There is a programme to educate about the Holocaust, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Holocaust Museum in Portugal. There is also a project for a Jewish museum in Lisbon that will educate about the Jewish presence in Portugal, ranging from before the establishment of the state in 1143 to the present day, including the contributions of Jews to the voyages of discovery and assistance to



refugees during World War II. The objective is to continue to cooperate with the Government to foster Jewish life, combat antisemitism and all forms of discrimination, and to stimulate inter-religious dialogue and promote a more humane, respectful and tolerant society.

Humanists International thanks Portugal for its engagement in the UPR process. Portugal is a democratic nation that upholds fundamental rights. However, challenges persist regarding the full implementation of the separation between religion and state. It welcomes Portugal's acceptance of several recommendations on the right to education. However, it emphasises that public schools must remain neutral spaces for all students. On this, it stresses the need to prioritise the right to science over state-sponsored religious education. The persistence of religious symbols, such as crosses present in classrooms, remains an issue. While some schools have removed these symbols at our request, the process varies. Additionally, there have been reports of pressure on students to attend religious education classes, compromising their voluntary entry. Moreover, teachers of religious education are paid by public funds, raising concerns about the use of taxpayer money to support religious instruction. Catholic celebrations explicitly sponsored by public institutions, such as universities or branches of the army, are still a common occurrence. Portugal's acceptance of recommendations on combating discrimination in public life are welcome. However, it notes that the Portuguese State continues to provide financial support to religious entities. Public funds should serve all citizens equally. It urges Portugal to fully uphold its international human rights obligations, ensuring a fair and inclusive society based on democratic principles, not religious doctrine.

The **Centre for Global Non-Killing** praises and congratulates Portugal and the core group for the resolutions on mental health. It sincerely hopes this work will be ongoing. It also highlights with compliments the excellent and interesting report on mental health issues this session by OHCHR. Regarding mental health in Portugal, as worldwide, there are two concerns for the future. First, can human rights education alleviate mental health situations? We do trust it to be so, but it needs research, practise and confirmation. Secondly, the report of OHCHR shows that the situation of mental health in prisons is dire. It wishes all the best to Portugal in its efforts aimed at implementing all UPR recommendations.

Rajasthan Sangraha Kalyan Sastan welcomes the adoption of the Portugal's UPR outcomes and commends its commitment to human rights, social inclusion and democracy. Portugal's proactive engagement in this process alongside its acceptance of numerous recommendations demonstrates its dedication to upholding international human rights standards. It appreciates Portugal's progress in generality, environmental protection and the right of the marginalised community. The implementation of national strategies to combat disenfranchisement discrimination, promote gender equality and support for some with disabilities, reflects Portugal's commitment to fostering an inclusive society. Its continued commitment to renewable energy and marine protection serves as an inspiration for global environmental governance. Portugal's dedication to enhancing access to education is commendable, especially for vulnerable communities, including Roma children and migrants, additionally supporting and advancing child protection mechanisms, as well as strengthening measures to combat gender-based violence are crucial steps in promoting a safer and more equitable society. However, challenges remain. It urges Portugal to strengthen anti-discrimination measures, ensuring full inclusion of Roma communities, people of African descent and migrants in all sectors; continue



improving access to quality education for all, including marginalised children; further promote labour rights and social protection for migrant workers, especially in the agriculture sector; advance disability inclusion efforts by ensuring accessibility in public spaces, education and employment. It appreciates Portugal's commitment to constructive dialogue and urges its continued engagement with civil society and human rights mechanisms to implement recommendations effectively.

FACTS & FIGURES ON UPR OUTCOMES

281 Recommendations Received

252 Recommendations Supported

11 Recommendations Partially Supported

18 Recommendations Noted

FACTS & FIGURES ON PARTICIPATION

18 State Delegations

1 National Human Rights Institution

6 Non-Governmental Organizations