

[Treaty Bodies | NGOs concerned with countries rejecting online reviews](#)

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The independent scrutiny of UN Treaty Bodies is particularly vital in contexts of acute crisis and in countries which fail to cooperate with the system, [a group of 55 NGOs says to the Committees as they are holding their annual chairpersons meeting.](#)



The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the scrutiny of UN Treaty Bodies is creating a problematic and growing [protection gap](#) worldwide. In a welcome effort to overcome these challenges, UN Treaty Bodies started holding special [online sessions](#) to [review State parties](#). However, consent is being sought from the State parties to be reviewed online, which has resulted in a number of States easily escaping scrutiny.

A [joint NGO submission](#) to the 33rd meeting of UN Treaty Bodies chairpersons suggests that instead of seeking the content from States parties, the UN Treaty Bodies ought to inform them about online reviews. The letter recommends the Committees to draw inspiration from the practice of regional human rights bodies, who merely inform States about reviews, rather than seeking their approval.

"Out of 14 online reviews undertaken or planned online by the Committees since the start of the pandemic, 7 of them have been of Western States" says ISHR's Vincent Ploton. "It is hugely detrimental to the whole system that countries that most direly need to be scrutinised can so easily escape by refusing the modalities of online reviews. We hope that going forward a fair regional balance of States parties will be reviewed by the Committees," he concludes.

Illustration: ISHR