



COVENANTS WATCH

人權公約施行監督聯盟

THE ADVOCATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
IN TAIWAN



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Covenants Watch

www.covenantswatch.org.tw



ABOUT COVENANTS WATCH



Covenants Watch (CW) is an NGO based in Taipei, Taiwan. It is committed to promoting human rights and equality for all people. Excluded from international society since the 1970s, the Taiwanese government has not been under the supervision of the United Nations system. Under these circumstances, CW strives to introduce a unique treaty review process that can hold the government accountable and ensures its domestic laws, policies and practices are aligned with international human rights standards. In addition to its domestic activities, CW plays an increasing role on the international level by participating in the Special Procedures and the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council.



WHAT WE DO

1 ADVOCACY

We encourage and urge the government to improve national mechanisms of human rights protection and promotion. We set our focus especially on the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) compliant with the 1993 UN Paris Principles and the development of tools for human rights monitoring.

2 MONITORING

We take the lead and help other Taiwanese NGOs voice their opinions throughout the periodic treaty review process by international experts – a process that is dedicated to monitoring the domestic implementation of the Covenants and the Concluding Observations and Recommendations.

3 AWARENESS RAISING

We organize seminars, trainings and activities to increase awareness regarding international human rights. These activities also serve as a forum for the local activists and general public to discuss international human rights.

4 RESEARCH

We conduct multiple in-depth analyses on human rights to provide sufficient and reliable data for policy advocacy campaigns and to introduce useful guidelines and methodologies to the Taiwanese government.

ABOUT TAIWAN

LEFT OUT BY THE WORLD

Taiwan, currently under the official name of “Republic of China (ROC)”, is a country with a population of 23.6 million people. ROC signed the ICCPR and the ICESCR, and even ratified the ICERD in 1970. However, it soon lost its seat in the UN and most of international organizations because of the One-China Policy. The ROC’s exclusion from the UN has left the rights of Taiwanese people unattended in the international arena, which is contrary to the UN’s goal of “leaving no one behind”. CW strives to bringing the values of universal human rights to Taiwanese society despite such a challenging political situation.



BETWEEN POLITICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The local human rights movements grew alongside Taiwan’s democratization in the 1980-90s, pressuring the government to relearn the international human rights standards. As a result, the government continued its efforts to follow relevant laws. However, Taiwan’s subsequent attempts to deposit instruments of ratification were sadly all rejected by the United Nations due to its contested political status, which blocks the country from opportunities to communicate with relevant UN bodies and experts to improve and effectively implement its human rights standards.

In 2009, the Legislative Yuan of Taiwan adopted *the Implementation Act on ICCPR and ICESCR*, giving the two Covenants binding forces in the domestic legal system. Since then, three core human rights treaties (CEDAW, CRC and CRPD) have been put into effect in Taiwan following the adoption of respective *Implementation Acts*.



ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICERD: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS IN TAIWAN

LACK OF EXTERNAL PRESSURE

The 2009 Act to Implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states in Article 6, “the government should set up human rights reports system in accordance with the two Covenants”, but it was unclear how this could be achieved. Given its controversial political status, Taiwan cannot submit its State Reports to the UN Treaty Bodies in Geneva for review, like other State Parties do. This exclusion has made its human rights situations unmonitored and unsatisfactory in terms of a lack of obligation mandated for Taiwan.



A "SELF-MADE" INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

Thanks to the efforts of the human rights NGOs in Taiwan – especially Covenants Watch – the government was persuaded to install a unique “local model” of the international review process, which not only follows relevant UN guidelines in general but also allows for adaptations.

Instead of reporting to the UN Treaty Bodies, the Taiwanese government invites a group of international experts to conduct a review on its state reports every four years. Each review meeting occurs in Taipei and takes approximately five days. In contrast, review meetings in Geneva last only 1.5 days. In addition, NGOs are granted the right to speak in nearly one-third of the local treaty review sessions.

Such a thorough and constructive dialogue enables the International Review Committee to carefully analyze the issues and come up with a Concluding Observations and Recommendations (COR) that will be followed up in the next round, which is similar to the UN reporting cycle.



-  Government
-  International experts
-  NGOs

CW'S ROLE IN TAIWAN

COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

CW is a non-governmental organization that operates independently from any political party or religion. It aims to monitor the government's implementation of the international human rights legislation. It was formed on 10 December 2009, the Human Rights Day, as a coalition of more than 40 organizations and individuals. Each member organization focuses on different issues ranging from judicial reform, social justice, gender equality, rights of indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, or immigrants and migrant workers to environmental protection and public health.



NGO FACILITATOR IN TAIWAN

Believing in the important role that civil society can play throughout the treaty review process, CW has focused its efforts on mobilizing and coordinating local activists by holding a series of events on UN human rights mechanisms and practices. Today, CW is undoubtedly the most important collaborative platform for NGOs, allowing them to work together on monitoring the implementation of UN human rights conventions in Taiwan.

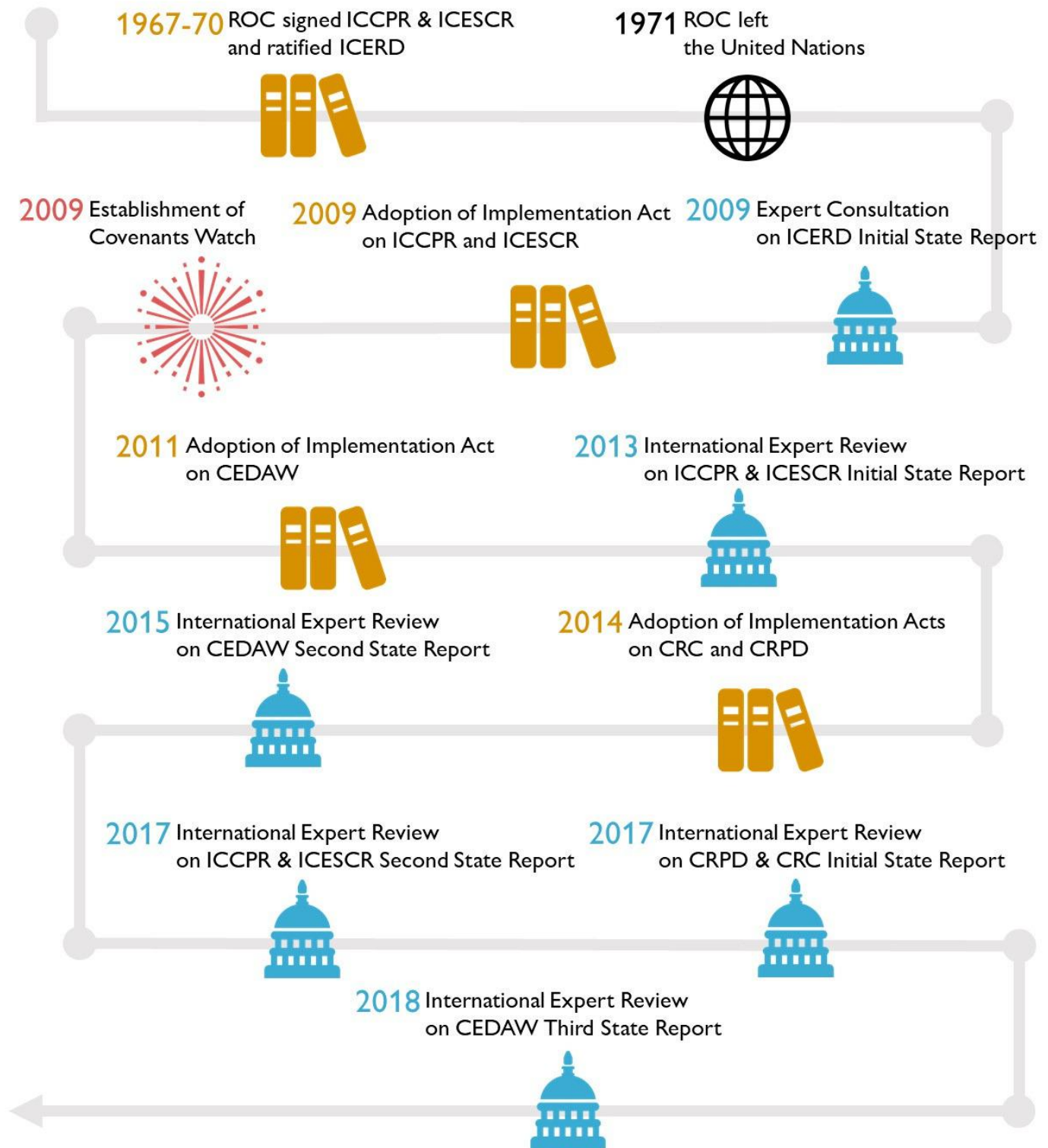
For the 1st international review on ICCPR and ICESCR in 2013, Covenants Watch successfully co-organized 67 NGOs to submit a joint shadow/parallel report, which was highly valued by the international review committee. For the CRPD review in 2017, CW coordinated 16 groups, more than half of which are organizations of persons with disabilities. Thanks to these experiences, the NGO coalition led by Covenants Watch is able to familiarize itself with cross-cutting human rights issues and patterns of intersectional discrimination, and produce reliable analysis that reflects the views of the pluralistic society.

In parallel, CW belongs to the Economic Democracy Union, the Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform, and the Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan. It is also one of the member organizations of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and brings the voices from Taiwan to the Asia region.



CW'S PAST AND FUTURE

Among 9 Core Human Rights Instruments designated by the UN, 5 have been granted the domestic legal binding power and periodically monitored in Taiwan. However, other 4 treaties* still remain uncovered. CW's endeavor towards advancement of human rights will continue.

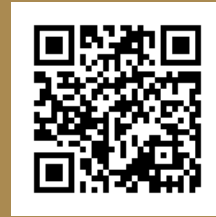


* ICERD: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICMW: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families
CPED: International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
CAT: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

SUPPORT US.

Taiwan still has a lot to improve.
When you help us, you are protecting human rights in Taiwan.
May human rights prevail.

To donate, please visit our website.



CONTACT US.

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