

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

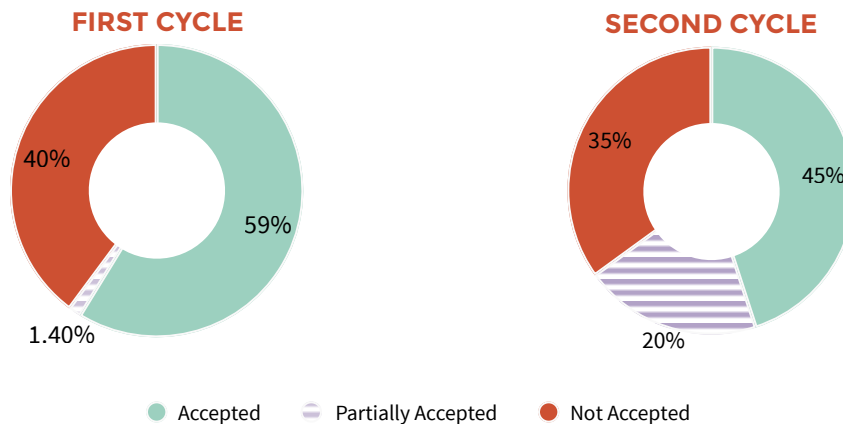
The **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** was conceived to ensure the more equitable treatment of United Nations (UN) member states. As such, the UPR is a human rights mechanism uniquely favored by many member states, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. Indeed, Iran has stated that the UPR is the “most pertinent, effective and trustful UN mechanism for the review of the human rights situation of all States.” Iran’s approach to the UPR, however, raises questions about its level of commitment to the mechanism, as well as to upholding its international human rights obligations overall.

The UPR is a dynamic process through which any UN member state, as a peer, can propose recommendations to a “State under review” on how to best advance human rights in its respective country. Recommendations accepted by the state then become a framework for its promotion of human rights, as well as for stakeholders to dialogue with the state and measure its progress.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has thus far undergone two rounds of review and is amongst the top five states for the most recommendations received. During its second cycle of review, Iran received **291** recommendations, of which it accepted **130** recommendations in full and **59** in part. It outright rejected **102** recommendations. In contrast to the first cycle, Iran pulled away from pledging fully to recommendations that call for needed reforms. In effect, Iran regressed in its approach during the second cycle of the UPR and demonstrated three negative trends.

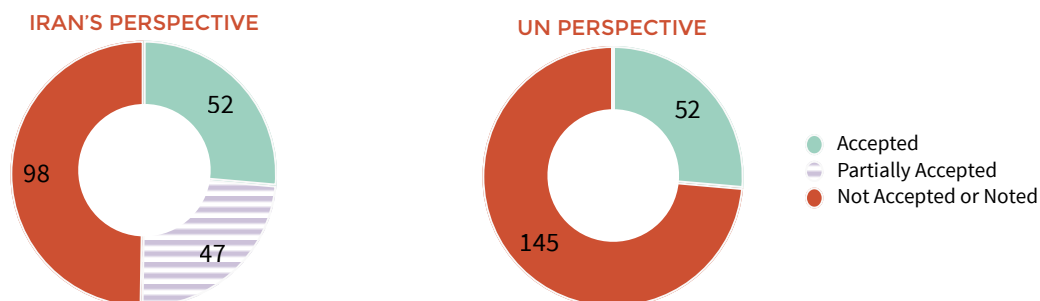
1. PARTIAL ACCEPTANCE: Rather than fully accepting recommendations, Iran chose to “accept in part” a large number of recommendations without providing a clear explanation as to which part of the recommendation it was willing to commit to. This effectively reduced its relative support for the recommendations it received compared to the first cycle and undermines the utility of the recommendations to stakeholders. In fact, according to the UN’s guidelines, partially accepted and rejected recommendations are categorized identically as “noted.”

HOW IS IRAN APPROACHING THE UPR?



2. WEAKER SUPPORT FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS: Iran avoided fully accepting the majority of recommendations (145) regarding civil and political rights. This trend is regrettable because it is precisely Iran's violations of civil political rights—including right to life, freedom from torture, freedom from discrimination, freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and religion or belief—that have been repeatedly highlighted as most concerning by UN bodies: UN Secretary-General, General Assembly, Special Procedures, High Commissioner of Human Rights, and the treaty bodies.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SECOND CYCLE



3. WEAKER POSITIONS ON RECOMMENDATIONS SIMILAR TO THE FIRST CYCLE: Iran took weaker positions by not accepting or only partially accepting specific recommendations that were nearly identical to ones it had accepted during the first cycle.

FIRST CYCLE ACCEPTED	SECOND CYCLE NOT ACCEPTED OR PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
<p> 122: Amend its press law to define the exceptions to article 24 of its Constitution in specific terms that do not infringe upon the internationally guaranteed rights of free speech and a free press (Canada)</p>	<p> 138.228: Amend its press law to define the exceptions to article 24 of its Constitution in specific terms and that do not infringe upon freedom of expression (Canada)</p>
<p> 120: Repeal all criminal provisions dealing with freedom of expression and freedom of assembly to comply with international human rights standards (Slovakia)</p>	<p> 138.227: Repeal all legal provisions that infringe the freedoms of expression, assembly and association, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Belgium)</p>
<p> 34: Ensure the equal treatment of women and girls in law and practice (Austria)</p>	<p> 138.100: Ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and girls (Austria)</p>

Iran proudly claims its cooperation with the UPR, yet these trends raise questions about its commitment to utilizing the mechanism to address its most significant human rights challenges. These trends compound concerns that the Islamic Republic of Iran failed to implement the sizable majority of recommendations it took on in the first cycle.

As the mid-term of Iran's UPR approaches, the question remains, will Iran uphold its human rights promises? The next part of this study, to be published in the fall of 2017, will present a mid-term assessment of the implementation of Iran's second-cycle UPR recommendations. Below are the preliminary findings:

PRELIMINARY SECOND CYCLE IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

SCORE	TOTAL # OF RECS.	ACCEPTED	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
IMPLEMENTED	4	4	0
PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	27	25	2
NOT IMPLEMENTED	96	41	55
INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION	42	41	1
PENDING FURTHER REVIEW	16	15	1