

Preparing a Shadow Report for Aotearoa New Zealand's 23rd & 24th periodic CERD review (2025)



What is CERD?

The United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is a human rights treaty that requires countries who sign up to it to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial equality in law and practice. New Zealand signed up to CERD in 1972. The government will appear before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD committee) in Geneva for New Zealand's 23rd & 24th periodic review in August 2025. The CERD committee review draws on the government's report, and submissions from the Human Rights Commission, iwi and hapū, and civil society groups including NGOs, charities, community groups and individuals.

Why submit a shadow report?

Civil society groups, iwi, academics, and community organisations play a key role in this process by making your own submissions to the CERD committee (called shadow / alternative reports). These shadow reports help inform the CERD committee's review by ensuring they hear directly from those impacted by racism. The shadow reports also provide independent insight and analysis on how the government is meeting their obligations under CERD.

Shadow reports can:

- Highlight gaps between policy and lived reality.
- Provide data, case studies, and emerging issues.
- Suggest questions or recommendations for CERD to raise with the government.
- Influence the CERD committee's recommendations (called concluding observations) and advocacy efforts.
- Support follow-up and implementation of CERD's recommendations in New Zealand.

Key dates

- **14 July 2025:** Shadow reports due
- **22 July 2025:** Registrations close for in-person attendance at CERD session
- **18 August 2025:** Civil society & NGO informal meeting with CERD committee (Geneva)
- **19–20 August 2025:** New Zealand's review before the CERD committee (Geneva)

What to include in a shadow report:

Reports should focus on the key obligations under [Articles 1-7 of the Convention](#), which include the definition of racial discrimination, legal and policy obligations to eliminate it, racist hate speech and race-based hate crime, and accessing other rights including education, justice, health, employment and housing. This is your opportunity to voice your concerns and help CERD hold the government to account.

Your report may include:

- Commentary on [the government's 2021 CERD report](#).
- Issues facing diverse communities, including Māori, Pacific peoples, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants, former refugees, asylum seekers, and others.
- Intersectional analysis— for example, how gender, age, disability, and other characteristics impact racial and ethnic experiences and needs.
- Specific research, case studies, statistics, or lived experiences on racism and racial discrimination Progress made since [New Zealand's last CERD review \(2017\)](#), including whether and how the government has implemented past CERD recommendations. This helps the CERD committee assess progress and highlight areas requiring further attention.
- Questions or recommendations for the CERD committee to raise with the government during the review in August.

Reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi

As Aotearoa New Zealand’s founding constitutional document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi affirms the status of Māori as Tangata Whenua (Indigenous Peoples) and recognises their pre-existing and ongoing rangatiratanga (sovereignty) and self-determination.

Shadow reports could consider how racism and racial discrimination, and government responses to it, impact their obligations under Te Tiriti, particularly in relation to Māori rights and their experiences as Indigenous peoples.

Structure, accessibility, and language

There is no set structure for shadow reports. They can be as short or as comprehensive as you wish but can’t be longer than 20 pages. Reports may include an executive summary, key themes or findings and specific recommendations. Submissions must be in English, French or Spanish. If words or phrases in other languages are used, translations should be provided (e.g. tamariki – child).

How to submit:

1	Format: Word (not PDF), in English, French, or Spanish
2	Length: Maximum 20 pages
3	Anonymity: Avoid naming individuals without consent
3	Submission: Email to ohchr-cerd@un.org with subject line: Shadow Report – New Zealand CERD Review Indicate if it can be published online
4	Deadline: 14 July 2025

Reports can be made by individuals, organisations/groups or joint submissions.

Optional engagement in Geneva

- If you make a written submission, you can request to speak to your submission during the CERD committee’s informal NGO meetings in Geneva.
- You can also request ‘lunchtime briefing’ meetings with Committee members.
- To register for the informal meetings and lunchtime briefings with the CERD committee you must email the CERD secretariat: ohchr-cerd@un.org
- You also need to register online through the [UN Indico system](#). Registrations close on 22 July 2025. Please note all travel is self-funded.
- See this [Information Note for civil society and NGOs](#) for more information.

Support and further information

- See the [UN CERD website](#) for general information about CERD.
- See the UN CERD page on [information for civil society and NGOs](#) for further information on civil society and NGO engagement with CERD.
- See the [116th CERD session](#) page for specific information on New Zealand’s review in August.
- Organisations, groups and individuals submitting reports should be aware that the CERD Committee encourages the protection of those engaging with the Committee. Any concerns around reprisals, confidentiality, or safety can be raised with the CERD Secretariat.
- See the [Commission’s website](#) for more information on our CERD-related work.

For more information contact:
InternationalReporting@tikatangata.org.nz

