

## Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - UPSC Notes

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, also known as, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is one of the UN human rights bodies. International organizations and UN bodies are especially important for the [UPSC exam](#), as they feature regularly in the daily news

### Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – OHCHR

The OHCHR is entrusted by the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) with the mandate to protect and promote all human rights for everyone all over the world.

- It plays a vital role in conserving the integrity of the 3 interconnected pillars of the [United Nations](#):
  - Human rights
  - Peace and security
  - Development
- It offers technical expertise and capacity-development to aid the implementation of global human rights standards on the field.
- It actively helps governments in making the enjoyment of human rights a reality for everyone.
- The Office also speaks out on issues of human rights violations.
- It is a part of the UN Secretariat and was established in 1993.
- It is headquartered in Geneva and has many regional offices as well.
- The OHCHR is headed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

**Note: The OHCHR is different from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), though both work in the field of promotion of human rights.**

To know more about [Important Headquarters of International Organizations](#), check the linked article.

### OHCHR Functions

The chief functions of the Office include:

1. Preventing human rights violations.
2. Promoting respect for human rights.
3. Encouraging international cooperation to safeguard human rights.
4. Coordinating, strengthening and streamlining activities related to human rights within the United Nations.

### OHCHR Funding

Almost 2/3rd of the funding for the Office comes from voluntary contributions from donors and member states. The rest is covered by the general budget of the UN.

## OHCHR and India

In March 2020, the OHCHR announced an intention to file an application in the Supreme Court of India asking to be impleaded in the petitions challenging the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

- While the OHCHR stated the intentions of the CAA as admirable, that of protecting persecuted minorities, it said the law also raised questions of human rights, particularly, with respect to equality before law and non-discrimination.
- The Office questioned the criterion of giving citizenship to Buddhists, Hindus, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs and Jains from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan alone.
- The Office also talked about the impact CAA would have on certain migrants.
- The Indian External Affairs Ministry responded by saying that the CAA is an internal matter for India and the Parliament had the sovereign right to make laws.
- The Ministry also said that no foreign body had no locus standi on the issue.

## Frequently Asked Questions related to Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

### What is the role of the UN OHCHR?

The mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is to ensure universal enjoyment of all human rights, to remove obstacles to their effective implementation, and to enhance coordination and cooperation of human rights-related activities throughout the United Nations system.

### Who is the present High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations Organization?

On September 1, 2018 Michelle Bachelet assumed her functions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was established in 1993 and Ms. Bachelet is the seventh Commissioner.

### What is the structure of the UN OHCHR?

The office is headed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who co-ordinates human rights activities throughout the UN System and acts as the secretariat of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.