

The domestic impact and effectiveness of the process of state reporting under UN human rights treaties in the Netherlands, New Zealand and Finland: Paper-pushing or policy prompting?

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Propositions

The domestic impact and effectiveness of the process of state reporting under UN human rights treaties in the Netherlands, New Zealand and Finland. Paper-pushing or policy prompting?

Jasper Krommendijk
3 July 2014

1. The Concluding Observations are neither paper-pushing nor policy prompting. Rather they serve as “practical props” which give extra strength and legitimacy to the arguments of domestic actors advocating for policy or legislative changes.
2. Had the present research included (developing) countries in transition to a democracy, the conclusion would, most probably, be that the Concluding Observations are less effective in such countries than in the three established liberal democracies studied in this book.
3. The reason why the Concluding Observations have been more effective in Finland than in the Netherlands is reflective of the self-righteous and defensive attitude of Dutch politicians and government officials.
4. UN human rights treaty bodies should do less instead of more in the context of state reporting: it is essential for treaty bodies to prioritise and focus on the most important issues instead of trying to cover everything.
5. One should be careful of continuously proclaiming new human rights and developing new human rights treaties, such as rights of older persons or the right to peace.
6. A true human rights culture is still in its infancy in the Netherlands: human rights are seen as primarily relevant for others and the knowledge about human rights among Dutch politicians and the wider public is limited.
7. The law in the books does not always fully reflect the law in practice; legal scholarship should therefore be complemented by other disciplines.
8. International decision makers do not truly mean it when they reiterate “Never again” after each genocide or atrocity in an empty, mantra-like way.
9. Every PhD candidate should have a right to a free membership of a sports club with at least sauna facilities and a kids club, since this is essential to the successful and timely completion of the dissertation.
10. *‘Questions of science, science and progress do not speak as loud as my heart’*
Coldplay – ‘The scientist’