



## **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW – FOURTH CYCLE**

Submission to the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council's Universal  
Periodic Review Working Group

October-November 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

**ANDORRA**

The Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam) is a nongovernmental organization that was founded in 1997 and has held Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2014. We are headquartered in New York and Washington, D.C., and are a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that is dedicated to reestablishing a proper understanding of international law, protecting national sovereignty, and the dignity of the human person.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Andorra is notable among its European neighbors for its strong legal protections for the lives of the unborn. However, it has faced pressure from UN entities, including within the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), to liberalize its abortion laws. We contend that Andorra's laws are entirely consistent with its international human rights obligations, and encourage Andorra to continue to defend life from conception, and join with other countries in affirming the right to life for the unborn and the fact that there is no international right to abortion.

## THE RIGHT TO LIFE

2. The right to life, which is the prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other human rights, is affirmed by numerous international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),<sup>2</sup> whose preamble recognizes that "these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person." The preamble to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child acknowledges that children have a right to protection "before as well as after birth"<sup>3</sup> which is repeated in the preamble to the Convention of the Rights of the Child.
3. There is no internationally agreed human right to abortion. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) states that "in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning," and encourages governments to help women avoid abortion, adding that "any measures or changes related to abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process."<sup>4</sup> Subsequent negotiations involving language about "sexual and reproductive health" and "reproductive rights," terms introduced into UN policy at ICPD, refer back to this agreement.

## ANDORRA'S PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH AND THE UNBORN

4. The Constitution of Andorra recognizes the "right to life and fully protects it in its different phases."<sup>5</sup> Consistent with this, abortion is illegal in all cases according to the Andorran penal code.<sup>6</sup> This position is in line with the teaching of the Catholic Church, which counts a large majority of Andorrans among its adherents. While UN agencies do not report a maternal mortality ratio for Andorra, its Human Development Index as reported by the World Health Organization is very high, with its health care, education, and economic stability regarded as excellent.<sup>7</sup> All of these things have been achieved by Andorra without changing its abortion laws.

## EXTERNAL PRESSURE

5. In its previous UPR sessions, Andorra has received recommendations explicitly calling for the liberalization of its abortion laws, despite their being entirely consistent with its human rights obligations as set out in the binding human rights treaties ratified by Andorra as well as other international agreements. No global human rights treaty ratified

by Andorra asserts a human right to abortion, or could reasonably be interpreted as including such a right.

6. In the first cycle of the UPR, Andorra was asked by the Netherlands to decriminalize abortion under certain circumstances. This recommendation was noted by Andorra. In the second cycle, Andorra received recommendations from the Netherlands and France to amend its abortion legislation, both of which were noted by Andorra. In the third cycle, Andorra was urged to decriminalize or legalize abortion by nine countries (Iceland, Montenegro, Mexico, the Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Germany, France, and Italy). All of these recommendations were marked as “noted” by Andorra.<sup>8</sup>
7. Through its responses at the UPR, Andorra has expressed its position that abortion is not an international human right, and therefore has rejected all UPR recommendations to liberalize its abortion laws, as such recommendations are not only inconsistent with national laws and priorities but also outside the scope of internationally agreed human rights standards and obligations.

## THE GENEVA CONSENSUS DECLARATION

8. In 2020, the ministers and high representatives of 34 countries met to launch the Geneva Consensus Declaration, in which they committed to promoting four objectives: improve women’s health, protect human life, strengthen the family as the basic unit of society, and defend the sovereignty of nations regarding their laws and policies to protect life.<sup>9</sup>
9. The language of the Geneva Consensus Declaration is drawn exclusively from documents agreed by consensus, including core UN human rights treaties, the founding documents of the UN such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and major meeting outcomes such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development.
10. While Andorra has not yet signed the declaration, doing so would place it in the company of other countries affirming prior UN agreements that promote women’s health without including abortion and standing against external pressure to liberalize its abortion laws.

## NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

11. As stated in the Geneva Consensus Declaration, concerning the legal status of abortion and the protection of the unborn, it is a matter of longstanding consensus that “each nation has the sovereign right to implement programs and activities consistent with their laws and policies.” However, opposition to this sovereign right of countries has become increasingly commonplace in those parts of the United Nations system governed more by expert opinion or bureaucratic oversight than by the standard of negotiated consensus. There is no global mandate to pressure countries to liberalize their abortion laws or expand the categories for non-discrimination as a matter of international human rights law concerning, for example, sexual orientation or gender identity, and to the extent that mandate-holders engage in such behavior, they do so *ultra vires*.
12. Nevertheless, the frequency of such pressure has only increased toward countries whose laws restrict abortion to protect the unborn, or which maintain a traditional view of marriage and the family, in line with the human rights obligations expressed in the binding treaties they have ratified. Such nonbinding opinions have been elevated in many

parts of the UN, although they have never been accepted nor adopted by consensus in the General Assembly.

13. The Geneva Consensus Declaration, by anchoring its every assertion in a document adopted by consensus, reaffirms the centrality of the family, the rights of women and children and the fact that these rights are not upheld by abortion, and the importance of national sovereignty, especially in those places where global consensus does not exist.
14. Unlike other UN human rights mechanisms, the UPR provides a space for sovereign nations to speak to each other and provide encouragement to fulfill their human rights obligations. To the extent that this venue has been used to exert further pressure on countries to liberalize their abortion laws or redefine the family as a matter of national law and policy, global consensus on these matters must be upheld and promoted in the UPR as well, particularly by those countries that have already taken a stand in this regard by signing the Geneva Consensus Declaration.

## CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

15. We encourage Andorra to continue protecting life from conception, both by maintaining its legal ban on abortion and by providing women facing crisis pregnancies with alternatives to abortion.
16. We encourage Andorra to join with the countries that have signed the Geneva Consensus Declaration affirming that there is no international human right to abortion and affirming that women's optimal health can be achieved without abortion.
17. Andorra should continue to reject calls to weaken its pro-life laws, including in the UPR.

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (1948). "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Paris. Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

<sup>2</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (1966). "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." New York. Article 6: "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life."

<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (1959). "Declaration on the Rights of the Child" (Preamble). New York.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations International Conference on Population and Development. (1994). "Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development" (Sections 8.25). Cairo.

<sup>5</sup> Andorra. Andorra's Constitution of 1993. Available at [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Andorra\\_1993](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Andorra_1993)

<sup>6</sup> Andorra. Criminal Code of the Principality of Andorra (2005) Available at <https://legislationline.org/taxonomy/term/25688>

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organization, European Region. UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) (Andorra). Available at <https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/hfa-explorer/hdi/andorra/>

<sup>8</sup> Documentation available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/ad-index>

<sup>9</sup> Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family, 2020. Available at <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/626>