Icelandic Human Rights Institute

# Act no. 88/2024, on the Icelandic Human Rights Institute.

**Art. 1.** *The Icelandic Human Rights Institute.*

The Icelandic Human Rights Institute operates under the auspices of the Icelandic Parliament, Althingi. Its main role is to promote and protect human rights in Iceland, as defined by the Constitution, national legislation, international human rights treaties and other international obligations.

The Icelandic Human Rights Institute performs its tasks independently and is not subject to instructions from any other entity, including the Parliament.

**Art. 2.** *Mandate.*

The Icelandic Human Rights Institute shall work to ensure that public authorities and private actors respect human rights across all spheres of society.

The tasks of the Institute include, inter alia:

a. Providing advice to public authorities, and as appropriate to private actors, on the promotion and protection of human rights.
b. Monitoring the implementation of national legislation and international human rights obligations and, where relevant, providing recommendations concerning ratification of, or accession to, international instruments aimed at promoting human rights protection.
c. Examining the human rights situation in the country, drawing the attention of the Parliament and public authorities to potential human rights violations, and making recommendations for improvement.
d. Cooperating with domestic, foreign, and international iInstitutions and organizations active in the field of human rights and promoting coordination.
e. Submitting reports to international human rights monitoring bodies.
f. Encouraging, supporting, and participating in research, education, and public discourse on human rights.
g. Offering individuals guidance, information, and assistance in human rights matters, including on domestic and international complaints mechanisms.

The Institute does not make decisions in individual cases.
The Icelandic Human Rights Institute monitors the implementation of the United

Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in accordance with Article 33, Paragraph 2, of the Convention.

The Institute also carries out rights protection for persons with disabilities, pursuant to Article 9.

**Art. 3.** *Board.*

The Parliament elects five members and five alternates to the Board of the Icelandic Human Rights Institute for terms of four years.
Should a board member pass away or become otherwise unable to serve, the Parliament shall elect a replacement. The same applies if a board member steps down voluntarily or is removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Parliament.

Board members shall collectively possess expertise across diverse fields relevant to the Institute's work, including at least three lawyers with expertise in human rights. When electing, care shall be taken to ensure that the proportion of women and men is as equal as possible, and not less than 40% when there are more than three representatives. This does not prevent the election of people with a gender-neutral registration in the national registry. Members of Parliament or Government Ministers are ineligible. No person may be appointed to the Board more than three consecutive times. No more than three new members may be elected at any given time.

The Board shall determine its internal division of tasks and elect a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Board's role is to set strategic priorities in consultation with the Director and to monitor the operation and governance of the Institute.

Remuneration for board members shall be determined by the Presidium of Parliament.

**Art. 4.** *Director.*

The Board shall appoint the Director of the Institute for a term of five years. The Director shall hold a university degree and have expertise and experience in the field of human rights. The appointment shall follow the rules of administrative law. The Director may be reappointed once, without public advertisement, for an additional five-year term.

The Director manages the daily operations and administration of the Institute and represents it externally. The Director is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the

Institute, except in major substantive or policy-making matters, which must be referred to the Board.

The Board of the Icelandic Human Rights Institute determines the Director's salary and terms of employment. The Director may not hold any other paid position or undertake assignments that are incompatible with their role.

The Director may only be removed from office in cases of serious misconduct, and the approval of four out of five board members is required.

**Art. 5.** *Staff.*

The Director hires the staff of the Institute. The Director may also engage experts for specific projects and enter into cooperation agreements with institutions or organizations on specific assignments.

Staff are subject to the provisions of the Act on the Rights and Duties of Civil Servants. Employment contracts are concluded by the Speaker of Parliament in accordance with the Act on Collective Agreements of Public Servants, no. 94/1986, Article 3, Paragraph 3.

**Art. 6**. *Advisory Committee*.

The Board of the Icelandic Human Rights Institute shall appoint an Advisory Committee of stakeholders for three-year terms. The Committee shall consist of at least twelve individuals who represent as diverse groups of stakeholders as possible. Appropriate support and reasonable accommodation shall be provided to ensure equal participation opportunities.

The Board of the Icelandic Human Rights Institute shall publicly advertise for representatives for the Advisory Committee. The following entities shall always be represented:

a. The Human Rights Institute of the University of Iceland
b. The Icelandic Red Cross
c. Amnesty International Iceland
d. Barnaheill- Save the Children Iceland
e. The Icelandic Women's Rights Association
f. National Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (Þroskahjálp)
g. The National Queer Organization of Iceland (Samtökin '78)
h. The ÖBÍ Human Rights Association- (Icelandic Disability Alliance)

i. The Mental Health Alliance (Geðhjálp)
j. The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Advisory Committee shall support the Icelandic Human Rights Institute by providing advice, information, and opinions as needed.

**Art. 7.** *Access to Information and monitoring.*

Institutes, companies, and civil society organizations are obliged to provide the Icelandic Human Rights Institute with all information and written explanations deemed necessary to carry out its role under Article 2. The Icelandic Human Rights Institute can also demand the submission of reports, documents, minutes, and other material relevant to its monitoring role. This authorization also applies to electronic data. Data shall be submitted to the Institute free of charge. The Institute cannot demand classified information related to state security or foreign affairs, unless authorized by the responsible Minister.

**Art. 8.** *Report.*

The Icelandic Human Rights Institute shall submit an annual report to the Parliament on its activities and on the status of human rights in Iceland during the previous calendar year. This report must be made publicly available by October 1st each year.

**Art. 9.** *Disability Rights Protection.*

The Icelandic Human Rights Institute carries out rights protection for people with disabilities, The Director hires staff for the Disability Rights Protection.

The Disability Rights Protection staff must have knowledge and experience of the rights of persons with disabilities. Preference shall be given to those with professional qualifications suited to the role. The Disability Rights Protection must not engage in work deemed incompatible with their work.

When supporting a child with disabilities, the Disability Rights Protection shall always act in the best interest of the child. They shall listen to the child's views and take them duly into consideration in accordance with the child's age and development.

The role of the Disability Rights Protection is governed by the Act on rights protection for persons with disabilities.

**Art. 10.** *Confidentiality.*

Members of the Board and Advisory Committee and the Director of the Icelandic Human Rights Institute are bound by confidentiality concerning information acquired in the course of their duties, where such information must remain confidential to protect legitimate public or private interests. The same applies to Institute staff, including the Disability Rights Protection, and any individuals acting on behalf of the Institute. This obligation remains in force even after the end of employment or engagement.

**Art. 11.** *Entry into Force*

This Act shall enter into force on 1 May 2025. Subparagraphs i–l of item 1 of Article 12 and interim provision II shall enter into force on January 1st, 2025.