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Consider the following table (/c4x/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/asset/_Materials__Human_Rights_Treaty_Bodies_Table_Final_.pdf) presenting the functions of the UN human rights treaty bodies. As the table illustrates, the main competence of the human rights treaty bodies (and the only mode of supervision that is obligatory for all States parties to the treaties concerned), is to receive State reports about the implementation of the human rights treaties they monitor, and to adopt Concluding Observations on the basis of this information. In addition, human rights treaty bodies may receive individual communications from victims of violations of the said treaties, although this is optional for the States parties.


In general, the other powers of these bodies play a comparatively much minor or even insignificant role. These are the powers:

- to *receive inter-State communications* (a possibility which has been dormant since the origins);
- to *make enquiries into certain situations*, which may comprise a visit on the territory of the State concerned with the latter's consent;
- or, in the case of the Subcommittee on Prevention established under the *2002 Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (which entered into force on 22 June 2006), to *visit places where persons are detained* and to make recommendations concerning the protection of these persons against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as to support the national preventive mechanisms which the States parties to the said Protocol have to set up.
- In addition, under the *2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances may decide urgently to bring the matter to the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations, if it receives information which appears to contain well-founded indications that enforced disappearance is being practised on a widespread or systematic basis in the territory under the jurisdiction of a State party (Art. 34).



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