

# INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROCEDURES

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

International and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms play an important role in implementing human rights. These mechanisms have been established to increase states' compliance with international and regional human rights treaties that they have ratified. While treaties are legally binding international law, treaty interpretations issued by these human rights monitoring mechanisms are not directly binding on states, although several bodies have the mandate to issue legally binding rulings. Moreover, treaty interpretations by these bodies have been influential even at the domestic level.<sup>1</sup>

In general, human rights monitoring mechanisms take the form of either:

- ▶ an adjudicative body that acts in a judicial capacity and issues rulings that are binding on States parties that have ratified these treaties; or
- ▶ a body that examines reports submitted by States parties on their compliance with the respective human rights treaties and, in some cases, examine individual or group complaints of human rights violations under those treaties.

This chapter is intended to serve as a quick reference for the user on how to navigate both the international and regional (European) systems, providing basic information on these human rights monitoring mechanisms, including contact information.

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<sup>1</sup>See *Mini Numa Comty. v. Sec'y of Health & Ors., Juzgado del Distrito de Guerrero [JD] [District Court of Guerrero]*, J.A.IA. 1157/2007-II (Mex.); see also Christof Heyns and Frans Viljoen, *The Impact of the United Nations Human Rights Treaties on the Domestic Level* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002). (includes discussion for 20 countries of their record in complying with decisions of several major international HR committees).