

# Regional Analysis of Commonwealth Human Rights Information

---

## Regional Analysis of Commonwealth Human Rights Information

The country pages summarise information for each Commonwealth member in turn, offering a snapshot for each individual state. These graphs offer an analysis of that information by Commonwealth regions: Africa, Caribbean (including Canada), Europe–Asia and the Pacific.

Figure 1. Ratification of core treaties, by region, as a percentage of potential total ratifications

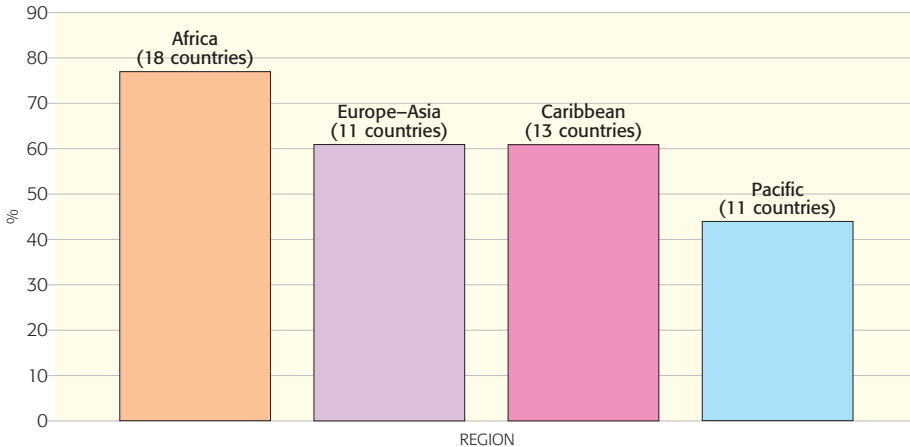


Figure 1 shows the extent of ratification of core treaties in each region as a percentage of potential total ratifications. For example, in the Africa region there are 18 countries and our focus is on 8 core treaties. This gives a total of 144 potential ratifications, the actual number is 111 ratifications. Expressed as a percentage this ratio is 77%. The rate for both the Caribbean and the Europe–Asia regions is 61% and it is 44% for the Pacific.

Figure 2. Ratification of core treaties, by region (%)

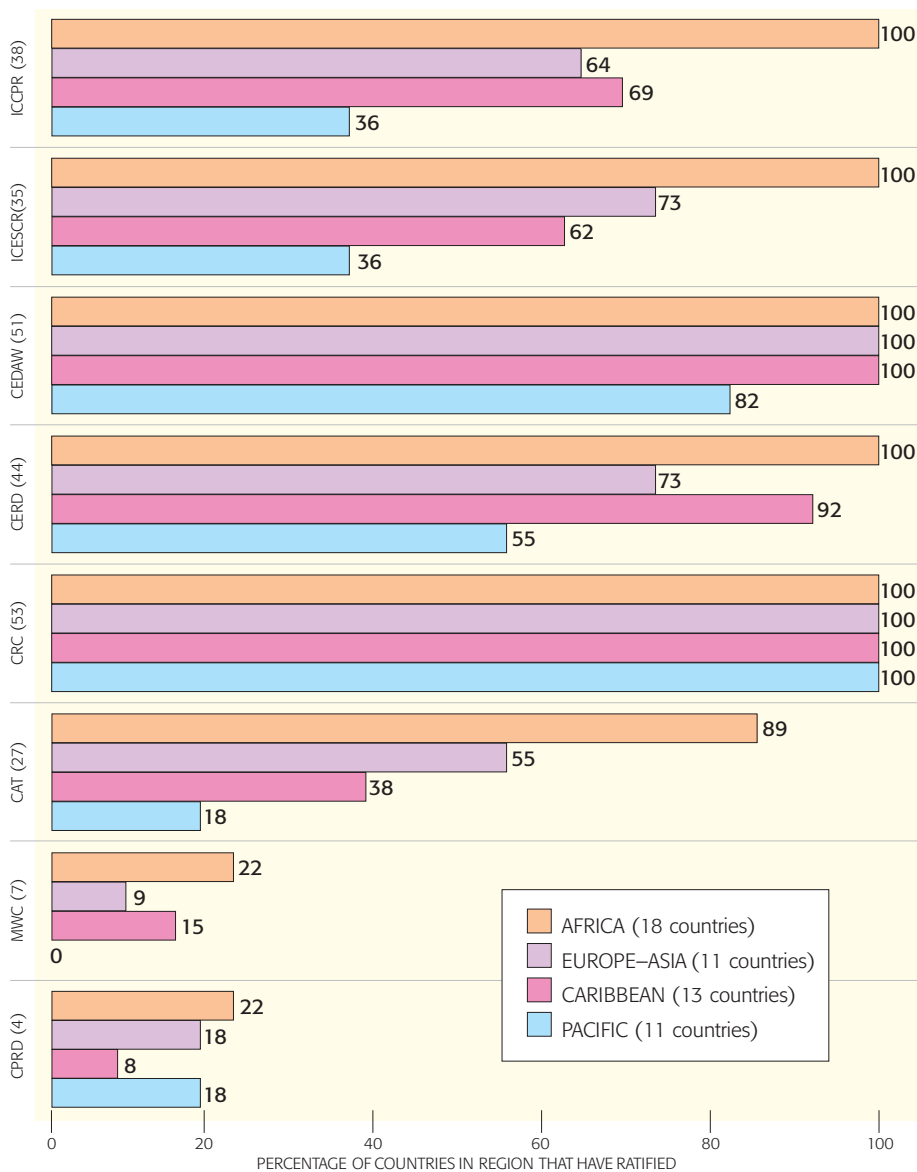


Figure 2 shows how widely each treaty has been ratified in each region. The Disabilities Convention is the latest treaty to be adopted by the United Nations, so the low ratification rate is understandable. In other cases, such as the Convention against Torture, the Commonwealth rate falls below the global average – the global ratification for this treaty sits at 76%, whereas the Commonwealth rate is 52%. The other treaties are much more firmly established however, and do enjoy higher take up. Figure 2 clearly shows that Africa is the region that has most widely taken up the treaties.

Figure 3. Highest number of ratifications, by region

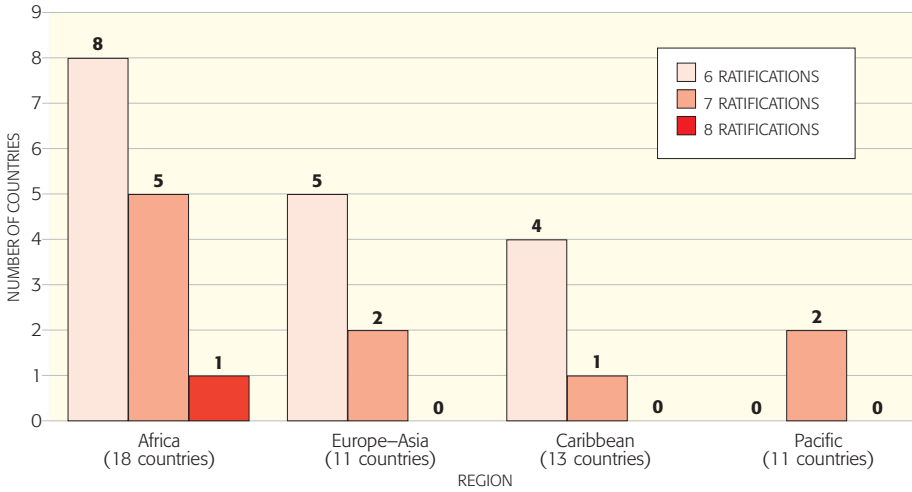


Figure 3 charts by region the countries that have the highest number of ratifications. In Africa, there are 8 countries that have ratified 6 of the core treaties, 5 have ratified 7 and one that has ratified all 8. In Europe-Asia 5 countries have ratified 6 core treaties, and 2 have ratified 7. In the Caribbean, 4 countries have ratified 6 treaties and 1 has ratified 7. In the Pacific 2 countries have ratified 7 treaties. Only 1 Commonwealth country has ratified all 8 treaties – that is Uganda.

Figure 4. Number of reservations, by region

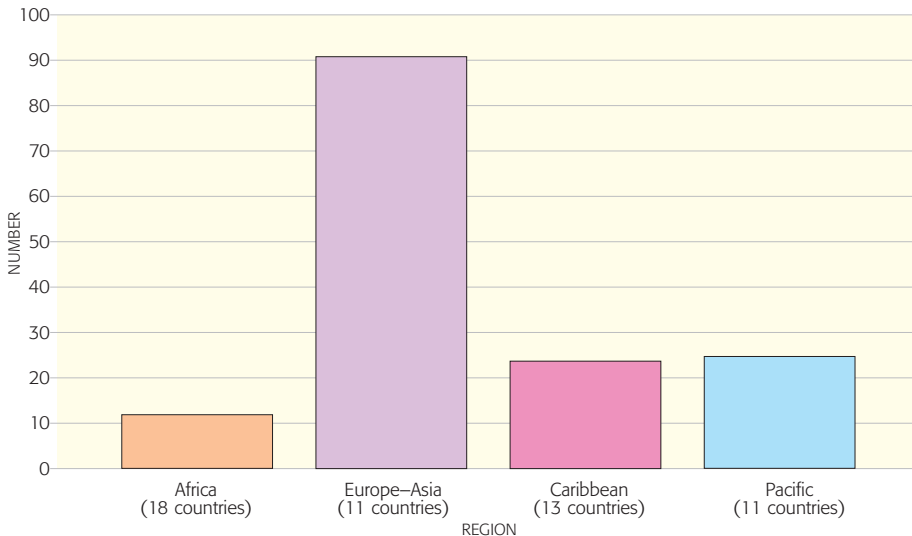


Figure 4 notes the number of reservations against all 8 treaties by region. In Africa a total of 12 reservations have been entered against the 8 treaties, in Europe-Asia 91, in the Caribbean 24, and in the Pacific 25.

Figure 5. National Human Rights Institutions in the Commonwealth, by region

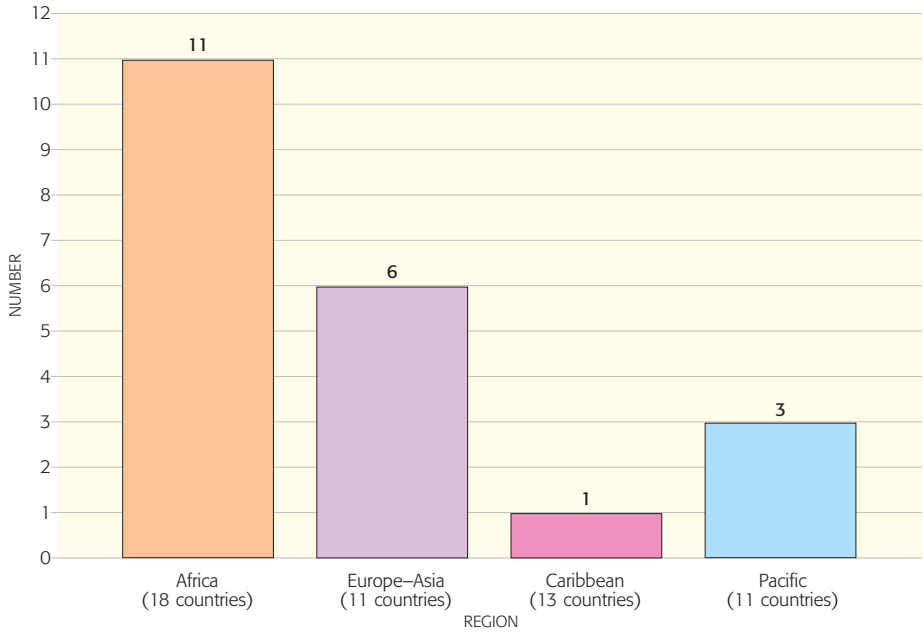


Figure 5 shows the spread of National Human Rights Institutions across the Commonwealth. Africa has 11 such institutions, Europe-Asia has 6, the Caribbean has 1 and the Pacific has 3.

Figure 6. Position on the death penalty in Commonwealth states, by region<sup>6</sup>

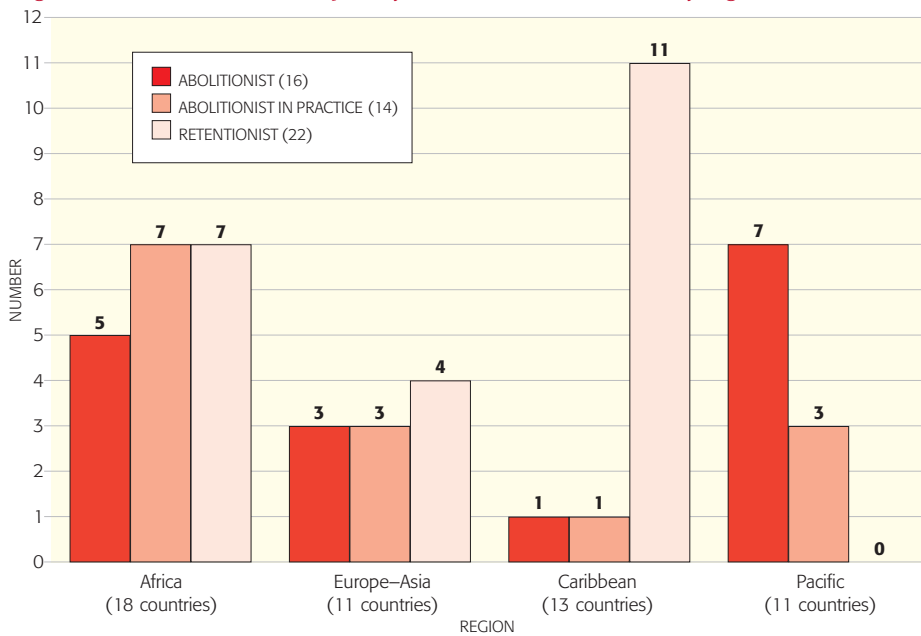


Figure 6 maps in 3 categories and by region the current position of Commonwealth states in relation to the death penalty. The three categories, which are commonly used in the field of human rights, are: countries that have fully abolished the death penalty (abolitionist); countries that retain the death penalty but have not carried out any executions in 10 years or more (abolitionist in practice); and those that retain the death penalty and carry out executions (retentionist). The data shows that in Africa 5 countries are abolitionist, 7 are abolitionist in practice and 7 are retentionist. In Europe-Asia there are 3 abolitionist countries, 3 are abolitionist in practice and 4 are retentionist. In the Caribbean 1 country is abolitionist, 1 is abolitionist in practice and 11 are retentionist. In the Pacific 7 are abolitionist, 3 are abolitionist in practice, 1 is abolitionist for ordinary crimes and none retains the death penalty.

Across the Commonwealth as a whole, 16 countries are abolitionist, 14 are abolitionist in practice, 1 is abolitionist for ordinary crimes and 22 are retentionist.

<sup>6</sup> Fiji is abolitionist for ordinary crimes. This is the only Commonwealth country in this position so has not been included in the graph.