

PROPOSAL FOR EFFECTIVE SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN NMIRFS



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HOW TO CITE THIS PUBLICATION

Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos (IDDH).
Proposal for effective social participation in NMIRF.
Joinville, SC: IDDH, 2025.

ISBN:978-65-981306-5-7

Published in september 2025

ABOUT IDDH

[The Institute for Development and Human Rights \(IDDH\)](#) is a Brazilian civil society organization that seeks to strengthen civic space in Brazil and Latin America through human rights education and the coordination of civil society organizations to expand and decentralize participation in international human rights systems.

Over the past 20 years, it has been active on two fronts: **training and research**, developing materials and training on international human rights systems using its own methodology, the IDDH Way of Educating; and **coordination and advocacy**, strengthening and encouraging the creation of networks of human rights organizations and defenders nationally and internationally.

PLATFORMS



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PUBLICATIONS

[UPR - A practical guide for civil society to build national coalitions](#)

[IDDH's 20th Anniversary Report](#)

[*Direitos Humanos na América Latina e Caribe: participação social nos Mecanismos Nacionais de Implementação. Relatórios e Acompanhamento \(NMIRFs\)*](#)

GLOSSARY

IACHR - Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

LAC - Latin America and the Caribbean

NHRI - National Human Rights Institution

NHRAP - National Human Rights Action Plan

NMIRF - National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up

NRTD - National Recommendations Tracking Database

OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

SDC - System for Dialogue and Consultation

SIMORE - Recommendation Monitoring System (*Sistema de Monitoreo de Recomendaciones*, in spanish)

UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council

URG - Universal Rights Group

WG - Working Group

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01

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, when the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published the first guidance document defining National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRFs), and the key capacities for their effectiveness, it was already being said that these mechanisms should be inclusive and open to the engagement of civil society, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), and other actors, such as parliaments, statistical institutes, and academia.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), States have already made progress in the use and creation of NMIRFs, but a decade later, we see that States are still moving slowly toward the creation of formal instruments for social participation (complementary to consultation on State reports or the submission of parallel reports to international mechanisms).

In addition to contributing useful information and alternative perspectives to those of States in the reporting stage, civil society can and wants to actively contribute to the creation and implementation of proposals, projects, and public policies aimed at complying with international decisions and recommendations that have an impact on the protection of human rights in the territories.

We believe that NMIRFs are strategic State structures that enable democratic control and broad civil society participation in the process of implementing human rights obligations and engaging with international mechanisms.

However, a [study conducted by the Institute for Development and Human Rights \(IDDH\)](#), indicate that social participation in these mechanisms is still low — even among organizations that already monitor human rights in their countries using international advocacy strategies.

■ ■ ■

In other words, despite working within international systems to report violations or pressure states to comply with their obligations, these organizations have little interaction with NMIRFs in their countries. Given the high number of NMIRFs in the region, this data highlights the need to increase knowledge and strengthen civil society engagement with these mechanisms.

Considering that democratic participation and control of foreign human rights policy must go beyond consultation processes for the preparation of international reports, we have developed a proposal to strengthen social participation in the monitoring and implementation of human rights obligations through NMIRFs.

Based on the impressions and perceptions of LAC civil society collected over five years, the proposal suggests instruments and procedures for consultation and dialogue with civil society and reinforces suggestions on how they can be improved to enable greater social control and participation.

With this proposal, we hope to promote the creation and formalization of permanent and inclusive forms of social participation in these structures and reinforce the suggestions and expectations of LAC civil society on how we envision a dialogue with States and their NMIRFs.

We begin with a brief conceptual introduction to NMIRFs and a presentation of the state of the art of these mechanisms in the LAC region. We then define what we call social participation in the monitoring of international obligations and suggest parameters and guidelines to be considered by States on this issue.

Finally, we present a proposal for social participation in NMIRFs and highlight points that civil society considers important for the maintenance of these mechanisms and their effective functioning in accordance with the principle of democratic participation.

WHERE DOES THE PROPOSAL COME FROM?

Since 2017, IDDH has been promoting the NMIRF agenda in Brazil and, since 2021, has expanded to South America through the [UPR Brazil](#) and [UPR South America Coalitions](#). In both coalitions, we advocate to strengthen participation in these international human rights mechanisms.

In the UPR Brazil Coalition, we are part of the SIMORE Working Group, which monitors the creation of the Brazilian NMIRF and supports the coalition by developing strategic materials for political advocacy on this issue.

In the UPR South America Coalition, we coordinate actions with human rights bodies responsible for NMIRFs in the region and within the Inter-American human rights system, such as the thematic hearing and seminar on NMIRFs held in November 2024 and July 2025, respectively .

To strengthen the work of both networks, in 2024 we began mapping existing NMIRFs in the region with the support of FES Brazil. In the desk research phase, we used reports from [the OHCHR \(2016\)](#), [the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\) \(2023\)](#), and [the Universal Rights Group \(URG\) \(2024\)](#), as well as official government websites to map digital tools and NMIRF in the 33 countries of LAC.

In a second phase, with the support of the UPR South American Coalition, we distributed online questionnaires to civil society organizations (CSOs) and representatives of States — and NMIRFs, when available — with the aim of accessing existing or desirable forms of social participation in these mechanisms. The preliminary results of this study are compiled in the publication ["Direitos Humanos na América Latina e Caribe: participação social nos Mecanismos Nacionais de Implementação, Relatórios e Acompanhamento \(NMIRFs\)."](#)

02

NMIRFS:

tools for advancing
human rights in LAC



The [OHCHR](#) defines NMIRFs as national public mechanisms or structures mandated to coordinate and prepare reports and engage with international human rights mechanisms, and coordinate national follow-up and implementation of treaty obligations and recommendations emanating from those mechanisms.

NMIRFs generally take the form of permanent or ad hoc commissions, committees, or working groups composed of focal points from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, statistical institutes, and, sometimes, NHRIs.

By bringing these actors together, NMIRFs seek to encourage greater coordination among States in relation to:

- **IMPLEMENTATION** of international human rights recommendations
- preparation of **REPORTS** to international and regional mechanisms
- **MONITORING** compliance with international obligations and public policies on human rights

As State mechanisms, NMIRsF are responsible for monitoring and implementing human rights policies and should work in dialogue and consultation with civil society in the performance of their activities, as suggested by the capacities for an effective mechanism³.

...

³ The four desirable capacities of NMIRFs that help to understand what is expected from them, as suggested by the [OHCHR in 2016](#), are: **engagement** with international human rights bodies (preparation of reports and responses to communications); **coordination** between State institutions (dissemination of information, organization and collection of data for reports and follow-up); **information management** (gathering and organizing international recommendations and information on implementation into categories); **consultation** (with civil society and NHRIs).

To facilitate the systematization and indexing of the large volume of recommendations and information, NMIRFs also often have a digital tool — public or closed — that organizes recommendations according to human rights themes and affected groups, also known as SIMORE, from the spanish *Sistema de Monitoreo de Recomendaciones*.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have identified at least 20 NMIRFs or digital tools, some of which are still under development, as in the case of Brazil. This number includes mechanisms of various types (*ad hoc*, ministerial, interministerial, and institutionally independent⁴) as well as digital tools for monitoring existing recommendations or those in the process of being created.

COUNTRY	HAS NMIRF/NAME (when identified)	DIGITAL TOOL
Argentina	Yes	SIMORE (inactive)
Bahamas	Yes - National Mechanism for Cooperation on Reporting - NRCM	
Bolivia	Sim - Commission for the Submission of State Reports on Human Rights and Enforced Disappearances - CPIE	SIPLUS (inactive)
Brazil	Under construction - SIMORE Brazil	SIMORE Brasil (coop. PY maio/24)
Chile	Yes	SIMORE (coop. PY nov/23)
Colombia	Yes	SISREDH (inactive)
Costa Rica	Yes - Inter-institutional Commission for the Monitoring and Implementation of International Human Rights Obligations - CIIDDHH	SIMORE + Costa Rica (inactive)
Ecuador	Yes - SIDERECHOS Network	SIDERECHOS
Guatemala	Yes - Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights - COPADEH	SIMORE (inactive)
Haiti	Yes - Interministerial Committee on Human Rights - CIDH	



⁴ [OHCHR, 2016](#); [URG, 2024](#).

COUNTRY	HAS NMIRF/NAME (when identified)	DIGITAL TOOL
Honduras	Yes - <i>Special Human Rights Response Group - GERDH</i>	SIMOREH
Jamaica	Yes - <i>Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights - IMCHR</i>	
Mexico	Yes	SERIDH
Panama	Yes - <i>National Permanent Commission for the Compliance and Follow-up of Commitments made by Panama at the National and International Levels in the Field of Human Rights</i>	
Paraguay	Yes - <i>SIMORE</i>	SIMORE Plus
Peru	Yes - <i>Intersectoral Protocol for Peru's Participation in International Human Rights Protection Systems</i>	
Dominican Republic	Yes - <i>Inter-institutional Human Rights Commission</i>	SIMORED Plus
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Yes - <i>National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up on Human Rights</i>	
Uruguay	Yes - <i>SIMORE Network</i>	SIMORE
Venezuela	Yes - <i>Human Rights Coordination Board</i>	

The existence of 20 NMIRFs in the region in 2025 signals progress towards the creation of these tools and reinforces their potential use as a means of advancing human rights in the territories. To suggest a proposal for participation in these mechanisms, we first consider it important to define what we mean by social participation in matters of international human rights obligations.

03

WHAT WE MEAN

by social participation

03 WHAT WE MEAN BY SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Here, we refer to social participation as the way in which individuals, groups, CSOs, and different segments of society express their demands in public spaces and participate in or seek to influence the formulation of policies and proposals related to human rights.

We understand that broad dialogue with civil society is strategic in promoting and protecting human rights at all levels of governance in States — municipal, provincial, national — and in the international environment—through regional and international systems.

At all these levels of governance, there are instruments and procedures that organize or create structures to enable civil society actors to be heard and consulted. In some States, such as Brazil, there are Participatory Councils on Public Policy, Working Groups, National Conferences, Consultations, and for example, Hearings⁵.

In international systems, depending on the bodies or mechanisms in question, civil society participates formally by submitting parallel reports, oral and written interventions, *amicus curiae* briefs, and, more informally, by engaging in dialogue with key actors at events, meetings, and, in the case of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), during the [pre-sessions](#) organized by [UPR-Info](#).

Civil society participation in these spaces plays a fundamental role in providing information, filing complaints, pressing for accountability, and implementing international recommendations and decisions by States.

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⁵ ABONG; FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION (FES Brazil). ["O papel da sociedade civil na política participativa do governo Lula III"](#) [electronic resource]. 2025.

03 WHAT WE MEAN BY SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

With their expertise and interest in protecting the most vulnerable and affected groups and the general population, these actors also have much to contribute to States in aligning their practices with the fulfillment of international obligations emanating from international systems.

In this context, NMIRFs become a strategic place for civil society to engage in important dialogue to participate in and monitor the development and implementation of human rights policies at the national level.

To strengthen civil society participation at all these levels of governance States must observe certain parameters to enable social control and collaboration with these actors.

GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



I. Transparency and access to information

States should inform both policymakers and society at large in an objective and accessible manner about their obligations under international human rights systems and the progress made in implementing them in their territories, defining and disseminating the methodology and indicators used to collect human rights data and keeping them up to date.



II. Accountability

States should be accountable to the general public and to international systems for their actions in the field of human rights, highlighting progress, challenges, and gaps in the monitoring and implementation of international obligations.

...



III. Channels for dialogue and communication

States should create formal and informal spaces where civil society can exchange information, present demands, receive responses from actors responsible for human rights in the country, as well as communication and listening channels available to people affected by violations.



IV. Pluralist representation

States should promote broad representation of issues, regions, and profiles of organizations and representatives to ensure that the multiple voices of civil society are heard and included.



V. Formal instruments of participation

States should create institutionalized mechanisms that organize and establish clear rules of operation and predictability regarding the role of civil society in the process of monitoring and implementing international obligations



04

PROPOSAL FOR EFFECTIVE

social participation in NMIRFs

The proposal below presents possibilities for social participation in NMIRFs. It is organized into three areas — Reporting, Follow-up, and Implementation — in accordance with the name of these mechanisms as defined in [Resolution 42/30](#) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

REPORTING

The preparation of reports reinforces the commitment of States to international mechanisms and formalizes processes for collecting and organizing data necessary to ensure the implementation and monitoring of international obligations.

In addition to compiling policies that demonstrate progress in the implementation of recommendations, States must include in their records a perspective on the future, signaling challenges and proposals to overcome them.

To this end, civil society can contribute both by providing data from the affected territories and by offering a critical view of the future and challenges until the next reporting period.

I. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The main form of participation in the reporting stage so far has been through **public consultations**, which vary according to at least a few modalities:

Types of public consultations:

- **in person**

ensure greater engagement in the locations where the sessions are held, but on the other hand, they can centralize the dialogue with specific organizations that have greater access to certain spaces, such as capitals

- **online**

enable organizations from different regions of a country to participate in consultations, but offer difficulties in terms of access to the resources necessary to enable broad participation by affected and more distant groups

- **through forms or a digital platform**

enable greater organization for the State to receive information and can be disseminated among sectors of interest to civil society, but need to be carried out with care regarding user privacy

Regardless of the type of consultation to be carried out, each has potential and points that require attention and should be used in a complementary manner.

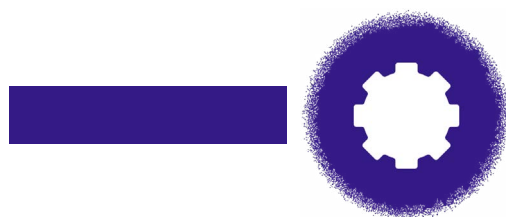
Therefore, States should propose a **specific methodology to improve participation in consultation processes**, which could include:

- specific guidelines on how to submit information for reports (whether through an online form, written submissions, or sending information through a digital platform) and what type of information the State is seeking;
- means and resources to enable the participation of isolated communities; transparency regarding how the information submitted by civil society will be used and published in State reports or other possible consultation outcomes;
- ensuring the variety of information sources used for data collection to guarantee an accurate understanding of the human rights situation in the territories and, when necessary, testing the evidence or seeking to triangulate it⁶ ;

...

⁶ Use of alternative sources to verify the accuracy of information in this context.

- with regard to consultations on draft State reports, States should ensure that sufficient time is provided for broad dissemination, thorough review of the draft, and the submission of information and comments by stakeholders; dissemination of information regarding upcoming international reviews to enable the preparation of information for the qualified engagement of CSOs and civil society in general.



FOLLOW UP

Follow-up means the continuity and monitoring of human rights and serves to help assess compliance with international, national, and regional standards. In all follow-up activities, civil society must have guaranteed its right to conduct independent scrutiny and contribute to compliance assessments and what needs to be taken into account in this type of assessment from the perspective of the affected groups.

Some instruments and activities that can encourage greater social participation in following up international obligations through NMIRFs are:

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The hearings are opportunities to bring together various actors responsible for implementing and monitoring the State's international obligations, such as ministries of the executive branch, local governments, representatives of the judiciary and legislative, and even NHRIs.

If held on a regular basis, hearings can also be fruitful spaces for discussing, as a permanent agenda item, the creation or revision of a **methodology for monitoring with indicators and an evaluation system in the State**.

Types of hearings:

- to **monitor a specific category of rights**, such as the sessions held by [the Parliamentary Observatory of the UPR](#) — the first initiative of its kind within the legislative branch worldwide. These hearings have the potential to bring together a specialized audience in the topics under discussion and can contribute to raising awareness of international obligations among local CSOs;
- **annual follow-up hearings**, which can be based on a periodic report prepared by the State or even the NHRI annual report. If held biannually, this approach brings States closer to the established UPR calendar, which allows for comprehensive monitoring of all commitments made in international human rights systems.

II. DIGITAL HUMAN RIGHTS PLATFORMS

To promote greater participation in monitoring, States with public digital human rights platforms should use these tools to promote greater accountability for what has already been done in terms of implementation and to facilitate the prioritization of thematic clusters to be prioritized in monitoring.

Some existing tools, such as Paraguay's SIMORE Plus, have a space for civil society to submit information on the monitoring of specific recommendations. For this type of participation, we recommend that States offer the necessary protections to users registered on the platform and filter information according to well-defined criteria.





In implementation, the State should promote concrete changes in legislation, public policies, and institutional practices to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in accordance with international obligations.

Implementation requires that NMIRFs and other competent bodies engage all ministries and public agencies to fulfill their role in realizing international commitments.

Social participation in this stage should include dialogue for the formulation of national strategies, action plans, and specific public policies, with targets, deadlines, and budgets aimed at fulfilling international human rights obligations.

I. NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION PLANS

The National Human Rights Action Plans (NHRAP) encouraged by [the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action](#) can be useful tools for NMIRFs during the implementation stage, as they structure lines of action and define priorities, targets, deadlines, and responsibilities for the different state agencies involved in human rights.

Regardless of the format adopted, it is essential that the plan includes a monitoring system and periodic reports to assess its implementation over time and ensure accountability to civil society and international mechanisms, linked to the other stages of reporting and follow-up.

The NHRAP can be structured in various ways, such as:

- in an **integrated and intersectoral manner**, to cover all human rights issues and groups
- following a **thematic approach** and involving only actors related to that agenda or those agendas
- specifically for the fulfillment of recommendations received by an **international mechanism**, such as regional court rulings, recommendations from thematic mandates of Special Procedures or Treaty Bodies
- for **specific periods**, such as annually or biannually
- **geographically**, oriented towards a specific region or affected territory

II. CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE COMMITTEES

To facilitate dialogue on the development of action plans, WGs or standing committees may be an alternative for continuing systematic discussion and ensuring a qualified debate that is aligned with the country's reality, with the participation of civil society.

To facilitate this ongoing process of dialogue with civil society, some alternatives are possible and can be chosen according to the reality of each country:

- These may be permanent dialogue committees, such as Uruguay's System for Dialogue and Consultation (SDC)⁷, or the designation of a focal point within the NMIRF
- Or they may take the form of *ad hoc* WGs to establish a dialogue on a specific or thematic review of human rights

⁷ URG, 2024, p. 84.

In general terms, it is also expected that States observe the parameters suggested earlier at all activities and bear in mind that the potential contribution of civil society to exchanging experiences and advancing public policies on human rights goes beyond the role of scrutiny that sometimes distances public policy makers from interaction with CSOs.



05

POINTS OF ATTENTION

regarding NMIRFs

05 POINTS OF ATTENTION REGARDING NMIRFS

Finally, we believe it is important to highlight some points that LAC civil society has been bringing to the attention of States and international organizations regarding the establishment and functioning of NMIRFs, as well as their dissemination among State institutions and civil society.

We hope that they will serve to foster reflection on existing NMIRFs or those in the process of being created and promote active and qualified social participation in the monitoring of human rights and international obligations in States.

RISK OF DUPLICATION AND FRAGMENTATION OF EFFORTS

In several countries, there is an overlap of national structures with similar functions: mechanisms focused exclusively on specific treaties, on the 2030 Agenda, on monitoring decisions emanating from regional systems, among others. This fragmentation leads to duplication of efforts, waste of resources, and coordination failures.

The central purpose of NMIRFs is to avoid this dispersion, acting as a focal point for articulating and coordinating international commitments with national public policies. Without effective intersectoral coordination, especially in federal contexts, States will continue to face challenges in providing integrated and efficient responses to their international obligations.

ENSURING NMIRFS ARE ESTABLISHED AS PERMANENT STATE POLICIES

NMIRFs must be formally approved and established by the appropriate bodies, with defined powers, resources, and structure, ensuring legal certainty, institutional continuity, and independence from changes in government.

It is also essential that NMIRFs be recognized as State policies, with functions that go beyond reporting, contributing to the systematic monitoring of international human rights obligations throughout the implementation cycle.

DISSEMINATION AND TRAINING ON NMIRFS AMONG STATE INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

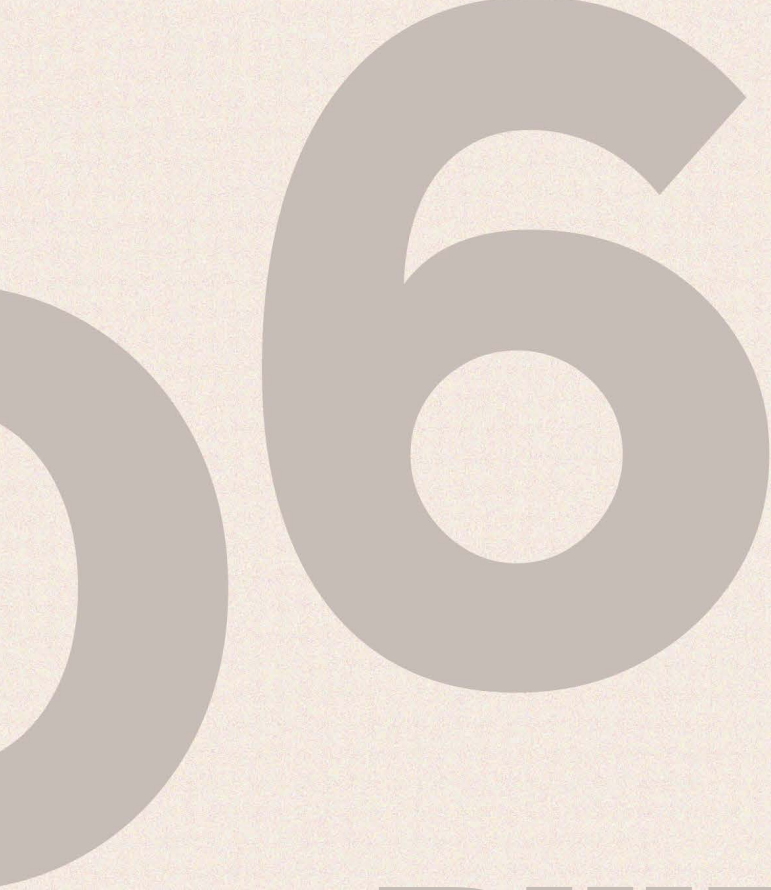
There is a lack of information and knowledge about what NMIRFs are, what they are for, and how to use them — both among State officials and civil society. Even in countries that claim to have active mechanisms, there is widespread ignorance on the part of society, which limits their effective use.

It is necessary to ensure greater public and accessible dissemination of NMIRFs, including their digital tools, and to promote training for both public officials and civil society organizations. The existence of formal, permanent, and participatory spaces is also essential to increase the engagement of different actors and strengthen coordination with international and regional human rights mechanisms.

STRENGTHEN QUALIFIED AND TRANSPARENT SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social participation in NMIRF is still limited, either due to the lack of participation instruments beyond consultations for reports or the low dissemination of these mechanisms nationally. However, the implementation of international obligations should be the central focus of an NMIRFs and must rely on active and structured participation, avoiding merely symbolic or instrumental forms of participation — with low representativeness or lack of transparency.

Thinking about the concrete implementation of international obligations without the participation of civil society is a mistake, and any mechanism of this nature, if created in this way, will unfortunately fail to fulfill what we believe to be its main objective: to advance the protection and promotion of human rights in the territories to which these recommendations are made.



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