

UPR Joint Submission

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The United States of America

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About ODVV

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political organization in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC. ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.
2. ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC), a member of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO). ODVV has cooperated with international organizations in a variety of issues and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.
3. ODVV is focused on promoting human rights, supporting victims of violence, empowering Iranian civil society, and offering human rights consultations to the Iranian institutions and organizations. ODVV is actively involved in running various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Other activities include:
 - Participation in the Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva;
 - Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Unilateral Coercive Measures (Economic Sanctions), Racism, Racial Discrimination, Islamophobia and Xenophobia;
 - Publishing *Defenders Quarterly* (in English), human rights news and developments *Weekly* (in Farsi), updating ODVV websites in English, Farsi and Arabic;
 - Posting Human Rights Council developments for Iranian audience on social media.

About MSAUIP

4. The Medical Support Association for Underprivileged Iranian Patients began its activities in 2016 with the aim of information dissemination, awareness raising, prevention, diagnostic-treatment equipment, and support for patients with low income. At the international level, stressing the provision of services to needy and impoverished patients in Iran, this Association supports conducting treatment and medical services and has set its objective on “diagnostic-treatment and care services for patients who should not be delayed services because of poverty.”
5. This Association is non-political, non-governmental, and non-profit, run through the valued efforts of charitable individuals and with reliance on the participation and support of various groups of society through moral and

financial support. It has been in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 2021.

6. In this path, activities of the Association in various areas of treatment, research, education, and prevention include:
 - Providing timely treatment, as well as financial, and psychological support for needy cancer patients and their families at different levels
 - Reducing the cancer growth rate through public awareness and education on various cancer types prevention
 - Providing medical and psychological consultations to incurable disease patients and their families throughout the treatment period
 - Cooperating and linking with relevant international organizations to utilize their expertise and financial assistance toward the objectives of the Association and the eradication of cancer in Iran and deprived countries
 - Supervising the implementation of hospital and treatment center constructions, providing medical equipment domestically and internationally, preparing and distributing medicines, and also treating cancer patients with the assistance of the Health, Treatment, and Medical Training Ministry.
7. We are submitting the following report on the human rights situation in the United States of America to contribute to the improvement of human rights in the country.

I. Economic Social and Cultural Rights

A. Equality and non-discrimination

Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia

8. The minorities and people of colour have been historically struggling with systemic racial discrimination and xenophobia. Reports, including a 2024 report, indicate 7.4% increase in the rate of complaints regarding anti-Muslim incidents in comparison to the previous year, recording 8,658 cases of hate hits, which is considered as the highest number since 1996. There has also been %15.4 complaints about discrimination in employment¹.

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/11/anti-muslim-hate-hits-new-high-in-us-advocacy-group>;
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/11/02/more-people-globally-see-racial-ethnic-discrimination-as-a-serious-problem-in-the-u-s-than-in-their-own-society/>

9. This is while the country received 10 recommendations² to address racism and xenophobia and three recommendations to specifically end islamophobia³, in the previous UPR Cycle.

B. The Right to a Healthy Environment

Greenhouse Emissions

10. Historically, the US has been one of the largest producers of fossil fuels and greenhouse emissions, making the country responsible for climate change. The country's unilateral withdrawal from international climate agreements, most notably the Paris agreement, violates the country's climate obligations (reduction of emissions and funding resilience against climate impacts) and leaves negative impacts on the right to life, health, and a clean environment for people, especially the marginalized communities, while documents such as the UN General Assembly's 2022 resolution affirm the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Environmental Pollution

11. The country has also been one of the main producers of Plastic products from fossil fuels while the frontline communities bore the brunt of the impact on their human rights. According to a 2021 report most of the people living near petrochemical clusters (87% in some areas) are Black, Indigenous and racialized groups. For them, exposure to pollutants emitted in the production of petrochemicals is linked to several health issues commonly reported by frontline communities, especially among children, including high cancer rates, asthma and respiratory complications⁴.

C. Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

12. As a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the United States is legally bound to uphold the rights of refugees and migrants, including the principle of non-refoulement and access to fair asylum procedures. Nevertheless, recent years have seen systemic violations against these groups. Currently, the asylum seekers encounter serious issues such as prolonged detention; expedited deportations; denial of services and discrimination.

² Recommendations No. 26.112; 26.117; 26.118; 26.119; 26.121; 26.126; 26.127; 26.131; 26.145; 26.257.

³ Recommendations No. 26.128; 26.134; 26.135.

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/01/25/were-dying-here/fight-life-louisiana-fossil-fuel-sacrifice-zone>

13. *Prolonged Detention*: Asylum seekers, including children and families, are detained for extended periods without timely processing, in violation of due process and international norms concerning the rights of the child.
14. *Expedited Deportations*: Under policies such as Title 42, tens of thousands have been deported without the opportunity to seek asylum, violating non-refoulement obligations.
15. *Denial of Services*: Undocumented migrants often lack access to services such as emergency healthcare, education, and housing.
16. *Discrimination*: Evidence indicates the existence of racial and ethnic bias, particularly targeting Latino and African-American migrants, within enforcement and adjudication systems.
17. Refugees and asylum seekers are suffering violations of their rights while the recommendations of the previous UPR Cycle (26.127, 26.327, 26.342, and 25.346) called on the country to align its immigration and asylum policies with international human rights obligations.

D. Detention Conditions

18. The United States has one of the highest incarceration rates globally, as of 2021, the rate was approximately 629 per 100,000⁵ with racial and ethnic minorities being disproportionately affected. People of color make up about 30% of the total U.S. population, while 60% of the prison population belongs to minorities and marginalized groups.
19. Issues such as overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, and limited rehabilitation programs remain significant challenges. In 2023, the Alabama Department of Corrections was housing around 8,000 inmates over its capacity⁶, and a study published in 2025⁷, found higher jail rates to be associated with higher death rates, especially for Black people and women. People in jails are disproportionately likely to have chronic health problems including diabetes, high blood pressure, and HIV, as well as substance use and mental health issues⁸.
20. The challenges in the situation of detention conditions continue while in Dec 2020, the country received recommendations to improve the human rights of detainees across the country⁹.

⁵ <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/united-states-america>

⁶ <https://www.alreporter.com/2025/01/02/alabama-incarceration-rates-rose-in-2023-amid-overcrowding/>

⁷ https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/01/30/county_mortality_jails/

⁸ <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/health.html>.

⁹ Including recommendations No. 26.346; 26.347.

E. The Right to Peaceful Assembly

21. As a country committed to upholding rights such as freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly, and academic freedom, the United States showed a marked increase in the repression of student protests across multiple universities, since April 17, 2024, particularly in response to demonstrations against Gaza war, and racial discrimination, and in solidarity with Palestinian rights.
22. A key flashpoint occurred at Columbia University, where the New York City Police Department conducted mass arrests during a peaceful student protest demanding the university's financial divestment from Israeli-linked entities. The protest triggered a national wave of campus activism, met with widespread institutional suppression.
23. During the peaceful protests, the students experienced *suppression; administrative sanctions; limitations to freedom of expression and academic retaliation*
24. In 2024, universities such as Columbia, Harvard, and UCLA witnessed arbitrary arrests and disciplinary actions following peaceful demonstrations. Students faced suspensions, expulsions, and threats to scholarships for participation in protests. In addition, the establishment of “free speech zones” curtailed open discourse and limited the physical space for protest activity and faculty and students were reportedly threatened for expressing support for protesters or criticizing university policies. All these actions collectively violate internationally recognized rights and jeopardize the democratic and educational role of universities.
25. The United States is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Under Article 19, the right to freedom of expression is protected, while Article 21 upholds the right to peaceful assembly. Additionally, the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials emphasize that force must be used only when strictly necessary and in proportion to the threat posed.

II. International Peace and Security

26. The United States policies in the Middle East has led to the unfolding of one the deadliest genocides in modern history. As Israel’s principal supporter, the US has played a critical role in human rights violations and breaches of

international law in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) through military, financial, and diplomatic support. Since October 2023, this involvement has been thoroughly documented by credible sources, revealing a troubling pattern of complicity that demands scrutiny.

27. The U.S. has supplied Israel with extensive military aid, including at least 5,000 dumb bombs since October 7, 2023¹⁰. Within the first 45 days of the conflict, Israel deployed over 22,000 U.S.-origin munitions on Gaza, half of which lacked precision guidance, resulting in devastating civilian tolls¹¹. Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the OPT, argued there is "reasonable evidence" that Israel has committed "genocide" with these weapons, as part of a deliberate "forced and systematic displacement" of Palestinians¹².
28. A stark example is the November 3, 2023, strike on a marked ambulance near Al-Shifa Hospital, which killed 15 people and injured 60, with Human Rights Watch finding no evidence of military use—an apparent violation of international humanitarian law protecting civilian objects.¹³ Similarly, on October 11, 2023, U.S.-manufactured white phosphorus was used in densely populated Gaza areas, injuring nine civilians and prompting accusations of war crimes for failing to take feasible precautions to protect non-combatants,¹⁴ deliberating superfluous injury, violating international humanitarian law.
29. Amnesty International has identified U.S.-made munitions, such as 155mm rounds from Arkansas and Louisiana, in repeated unlawful attacks, including strikes on protected sites like the Indonesian Hospital, which contravene the Fourth Geneva Convention with no military justification provided.¹⁵
30. Despite the National Security Memorandum (NSM-20) requiring assurances of lawful weapon use,¹⁶ the Biden administration continued arms transfers even

¹⁰ The New York Times, "Israel Used U.S. Bombs in Strike That Killed Dozens in Gaza, Analysis Shows", December 21, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/21/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-bomb-investigation.html>

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, "Israeli Forces' Conduct in Gaza", March 19, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>; The Washington Post, December 9, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/12/09/us-weapons-israel-gaza/>; The Washington Post, "Israel Using Unguided Bombs in Gaza", December 14, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/12/14/israel-unguided-dumb-bombs-gaza>

¹² Albanese, F., 2024, A/79/384, paras. 1, p. 3; 9, p. 5, <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

¹³ Human Rights Watch, November 7, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/07/gaza-israeli-ambulance-strike-apparently-unlawful>

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, March 19, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>; The Washington Post, December 11, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2023/12/11/israel-us-white-phosphorus-lebanon/>

¹⁵ Amnesty International USA, 2024, NSM-20 Submission, p. 6, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/NSM-20-submission.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, November 14, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/14/gaza-unlawful-israeli-hospital-strikes-worsen-health-crisis>

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/NSM-20-submission.pdf>

after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel on January 26, 2024, to prevent genocide and ensure humanitarian access¹⁷. Human Rights Watch documented additional strikes, such as the October 13, 2023, attack in southern Lebanon that killed a journalist and injured six others, including a U.S. citizen, deeming it an "apparently deliberate" war crime based on video evidence and witness accounts showing no military target.¹⁸ Another incident on November 5, 2023, involved a strike on a civilian car in Lebanon, killing three girls aged 10, 12, and 14, and their grandmother, with no evidence of a military objective nearby—a reckless disregard for the obligation to distinguish civilians.¹⁹

31. Financially, U.S. support has directly contributed to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza by funding Israel's military operations that have systematically destroyed civilian infrastructure. Funds for precision-guided munitions and bunker-buster bombs used to demolish residential areas, water systems, and hospitals, actions that Human Rights Watch and the UN Special Rapporteur identify as violations of international humanitarian law exacerbating famine and displacement.²⁰
32. Albanese highlighted systematic assaults on Gaza's food sovereignty, noting that 83% of food aid was blocked and agricultural lands destroyed, breaching the Geneva Conventions' prohibition on depriving civilians of survival essentials.²¹ But still, US ammunition continue to flow to Israel.
33. Diplomatically, the U.S. has shielded Israel in the UN Security Council, vetoing resolutions that could halt these violations, thus sustaining Israel's "longstanding impunity."²² This stance disregards Albanese's recommendation for a "complete arms embargo" and undermines the UN Organs' commitment to peace and fundamental human rights.²³ Given Israel's documented pattern of widespread violations, assurances of lawful weapon use under NSM-20 appear questionable—yet U.S. military support continues, prompting serious concerns about potential complicity under the Genocide Convention.

¹⁷ Albanese, F., 2024, A/79/384, para. 80, p. 28, <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, December 7, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/07/israel-strikes-journalists-lebanon-apparently-deliberate>

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, November 14, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/14/lebanon-israeli-strike-apparent-war-crime>

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, March 19, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>; Albanese, F., 2024, A/79/384, paras. 14, p. 6; 20-21, p. 9, <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

²¹ Albanese, F., 2024, A/79/384, <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

²² Ibid., para. 81, <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

²³ Ibid., para. 91[a], <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

34. The Gaza toll—over 42,000 killed and 96,000 injured by March 2024²⁴, underscores the U.S.’s legal accountability. This military, financial, and diplomatic backing not only facilitated and continues to facilitate breaches of international law but also clashes with America’s own policies under NSM-20, demanding immediate scrutiny and corrective action to align with its legal and moral obligations.

II. Unilateralism and Unilateral Sanctions

35. The United States has, in recent years, reinforced its unilateral approach in foreign policy, leading to human rights violations and the undermining global cooperation. Withdrawals from treaties and bodies as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Paris Agreement, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and the Open Skies Treaty occurred previously, but the continuation of these policies have widespread negative impacts on human rights. The U.S. has also withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council in 2018 and 2025.

36. U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran in the past four years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, have restricted access to medicine and medical equipment. The special rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Ms. Alena Douhan, stated that these sanctions have violated the right to health of millions, exacerbated by corporate over-compliance²⁵. These measures contravene international law principles and have imposed severe economic pressure on the Iranian people²⁶.

37. Unilateral Sanctions against Venezuela in recent years have led to a \$40 billion reduction in the country’s revenue, contributing to over 40,000 deaths due to shortages of food and medicine. A study cited by the UN Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures confirms that these sanctions have violated economic and social rights²⁷.

²⁴ Ibid., para. 14, p. 6, <https://undocs.org/A/79/384>

²⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/meeting-summaries/2023/09/human-rights-council-hears-unilateral-sanctions-and-over-compliance>

²⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/united-states-efforts-use-sanctions-expand-jurisdiction-abroad-violate-human>

²⁷ . <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/02/venezuela-unilateral-sanctions-aggravate-crisis-special-rapporteur>

38. Long-standing sanctions against Cuba in recent years have escalated economic damages to over \$150 billion. Amnesty International reports that these measures have restricted access to food and medicine, violating the rights to life and health²⁸. The UN General Assembly has repeatedly called for an end to these sanctions in multiple resolutions²⁹.
39. The U.S. cessation of aid to humanitarian entities like the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in recent years has worsened humanitarian conditions in crisis zones. UNRWA's annual report indicates that this decision has violated the right to life and access to essential services³⁰.
40. On February 6, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order sanctioning the ICC for targeting Israeli leaders Netanyahu and Gallant over Gaza war crimes.³¹ It freezes ICC officials' assets and bans their U.S. entry, rejecting the court's "alleged illegitimate" actions. This also reflects U.S. unilateralism, prioritizing national interest over international rule of law.
41. In the previous UPR cycle (December 2020), the United States received 12 recommendations³² from countries on unilateral sanctions and unilateralism. These included calls to lift illegal sanctions, respect human rights in sanction policies, and return to multilateral cooperation. However, the U.S. has not implemented these recommendations.

Recommendations:

On discrimination:

42. We call on the country to take meaningful steps to end racial discrimination, xenophobia and seriously combat the rising trends of religious intolerance and Islamophobia.

²⁸ https://www.un.org/en/ga/78/documents/cuba_report_2023.pdf

²⁹ . <https://www.un.org/en/ga/78/resolutions.shtml> (Resolution A/RES/78/7, November 2023)

³⁰ . <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-145-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

³¹ White House. (2025, February 6). *Imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court*. The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/imposing-sanctions-on-the-international-criminal-court>

³² . Recommendations No. 26.27; 26.28; 26.31; 26.34; 26.35; 26.43; 26.47; 26.52; 26.61; 26.65; 26.72; 26.81.

On the environment, we call on the United States to:

43. Strengthen efforts to develop legislative frameworks to address environmental challenges, including climate change mitigation policies.
44. Prioritize addressing the right to health, especially for frontline communities of fossil fuel industry, and take steps in tackling the global plastics pollution crisis.

On Refugees and Asylum Seekers, we call on the United States to:

45. End prolonged detention and adopt humane, community-based alternatives to detention.
46. Ensure non-discriminatory and timely access to the asylum process for all applicants, regardless of nationality or status.
47. Immediately halt deportations without due process and uphold the principle of non-refoulement.
48. Guarantee access to basic services, especially for children, families, and vulnerable individuals.
49. Address institutional racism in immigration enforcement through independent oversight, mandatory anti-bias training, and systemic reform.
50. Encourage structural reform and accountability to ensure that migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are treated with dignity and afforded their legal rights.

On Detention Facilities, we call on the United States to:

51. Ensure respect for the right to life, to physical and mental health, to dignity, to security and human rights of the people who are spending their lives in detention centres.
52. Adopt international standards, such as the "Nelson Mandela Rules," in prison management to uphold the rights and dignity of prisoners.

On Peaceful Assemblies, we call on the country to:

53. Review university and law enforcement policies to ensure compliance with human rights standards.
54. Safeguard freedom of expression and peaceful assembly across all states and institutions.
55. Establish independent investigation bodies—comprising civil society members—to review allegations of excessive force or repression, and publish findings.

56. Uphold academic freedom and prevent retaliation against faculty or students for expressing political or scientific views.
57. Develop transparent, human rights-aligned policies for managing peaceful protests on campuses.
58. Reassess and reverse disciplinary actions, visa revocations, and expulsions issued in response to peaceful protest activities.

On the International Peace and Security:

59. We call on the United States to stop sending any ammunitions to Israel. We strongly condemn this act and demand its immediate cessation.
60. We recall that the primary responsibility of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. In the face of blatant and ongoing violations of human rights and international law, the United States, as a permanent member of the Council, must not obstruct the passage of resolutions aimed at addressing these violations. We urge the United States to uphold and advance these resolutions in line with its moral and legal obligations.

On Unilateralism, we call on the United States to:

61. Lift sanctions on Iran to prevent violation of all human rights in the country.
62. Eliminate the unilateral sanctions imposed on other countries including Venezuela and Cuba.
63. Rejoin the Paris Agreement and WHO to strengthen global cooperation on climate and health.