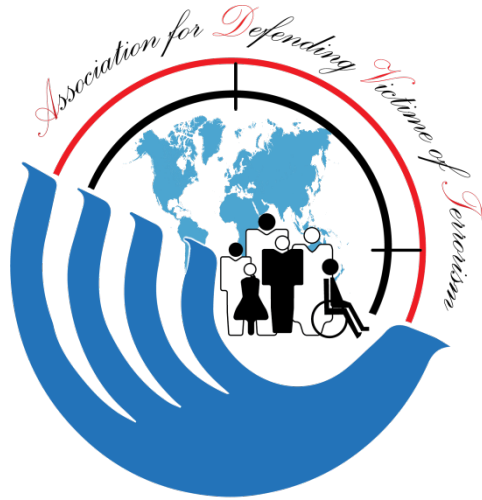




**Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations
Human Rights Council**

4th Cycle - 50th Session

**Country Review:
United States of America**

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1. Introduction

The Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism (ADVT) is a non-governmental organization which is in Consultative Status with ECOSOC since 2014 and founded by the families of the victims of terrorism in Iran. ADVT has a civic approach to humanitarian efforts in order to create discourse for the human rights of the victims.

2. Human Rights Violations by the United States

This submission outlines serious and ongoing failures by the United States to uphold its international legal obligations under international human rights law (IHRL), international humanitarian law (IHL), and core international treaties, including the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The report focuses on both extraterritorial and domestic dimensions of U.S. conduct, with particular attention to the following areas:

Complicity in International Crimes in Gaza: The United States has continued to provide political, military, and financial support to Israel amid its large-scale military operations in Gaza since October 2023. These operations have involved credible allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts plausibly amounting to genocide. Despite growing international consensus on the severity of these violations, the U.S. has used its veto power to obstruct ceasefire resolutions and has failed to take meaningful action to prevent further atrocities.

Direct Military Action in Yemen: The United States has conducted unilateral military strikes in Yemen without clear legal justification, resulting in civilian casualties and destruction of infrastructure. These operations violate the UN Charter and the principles of international humanitarian law, and are carried out in a context of near-total impunity.

Systemic Racism and Police Violence: Domestically, the United States continues to fail in addressing institutional racism, particularly in law enforcement. Police brutality, racial profiling, and the militarization of police disproportionately affect African American, Indigenous, and minority communities, in contravention of obligations under the ICCPR, CERD, and CAT.



In 2024, the total number of gun-related deaths in the United States was reported to be 40,846. This figure includes homicides, suicides, accidental shootings, and other gun-related deaths, indicating a severe public health crisis in America. This statistic means that, on average, over 110 people die daily due to gun violence. This crisis is more severe in some states than others, and varying control policies applied in different states significantly impact the mortality rate.

Immigration and Asylum Violations: The U.S. has adopted punitive immigration policies that subject asylum seekers to arbitrary detention, family separation, and deportation without due process. These practices often amount to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Mass Incarceration and Prison Conditions: The U.S. maintains one of the highest incarceration rates globally, with stark racial disparities. Conditions in many detention facilities violate international standards, including through the use of prolonged solitary confinement, overcrowding, and denial of healthcare.

Economic and Social Rights: The U.S. continues to neglect its obligations—both moral and customary—to fulfill economic, social, and cultural rights. Widespread homelessness, lack of universal healthcare, food insecurity, and labor rights violations underscore its failure to ensure an adequate standard of living for all.

Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women: Despite some progress, significant gaps remain in the protection of women's rights. These include lack of access to reproductive healthcare, weak protections against gender-based violence, and the continued refusal to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Surveillance and Violations of Privacy: U.S. surveillance practices—both domestic and extraterritorial—undermine the right to privacy and have chilling effects on freedom of expression and association.

Failure to Ratify Core Human Rights Treaties: The U.S. remains one of the few countries that has not ratified key international human rights instruments, including the CRC, CEDAW, ICESCR, and CRPD, thereby weakening its accountability and global leadership on human rights.

Unilateral Coercive Measures (Sanctions): The imposition of unilateral sanctions by the U.S. on countries such as Iran, Venezuela, Syria, and Cuba have caused severe humanitarian harm, limiting access to food, medicine, and essential services. These sanctions violate the UN Charter and international legal principles on sovereignty, non-intervention, and the right to development.



Erosion of Academic Freedom and the Right to Scientific Progress: U.S. sanctions, discriminatory visa policies, and political pressure on universities have severely restricted the academic rights of scholars and students from the Global South. These measures undermine the right to education, access to scientific advancement, and international academic cooperation.

Suppression of Free Expression on Palestine: Since October 2023, the U.S. government and academic institutions have increasingly targeted students, faculty, and researchers who express support for Palestinian rights or criticize U.S. and Israeli policies. This suppression violates fundamental rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and academic freedom.

Taken together, these issues reflect a pattern of systemic violations, structural inequality, and selective adherence to international law. The U.S. not only fails to meet its human rights obligations at home, but also actively contributes to violations abroad through its foreign policy, military actions, and use of economic coercion.

3. U.S. Support for Violations of Human Rights and IHL in Gaza

Since October 2023, the Israeli military's operations in Gaza have resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, the destruction of essential infrastructure, and the deliberate targeting of medical facilities, schools, and shelters. The United States has continued its political, financial, and military support for Israel throughout these operations, including by:

- Supplying weapons and ammunition used in attacks on civilian infrastructure and densely populated areas;

- Using its veto power at the UN Security Council to block ceasefire resolutions and investigations into war crimes;

- Refusing to suspend arms transfers despite mounting evidence of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity.

Legal Analysis:

Under Article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, all States must ensure respect for IHL, including by other parties.

Under the Arms Trade Treaty, States must not authorize arms transfers when they know the arms would be used to commit serious violations of IHL.



The U.S. is thus complicit in violations of IHL and IHRL by knowingly enabling Israel's unlawful attacks.

3. Failure to Prevent Genocide in Gaza

Multiple experts and international bodies, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ), have recognized the plausibility of genocide being committed against the Palestinian population in Gaza.

The United States, as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), has a binding obligation to prevent genocide, not merely punish it after the fact.

Despite credible evidence, the U.S. has actively undermined international efforts to halt hostilities and investigate genocidal acts, thereby violating its duty of prevention under international law.

4. U.S. Military Attacks in Yemen

In recent months, the United States has launched direct military operations in Yemen, targeting groups allegedly linked to regional tensions. These operations have:

Occurred without transparent legal justification, violating the UN Charter's prohibition on the use of force;

Resulted in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, raising serious concerns under IHL;

Been conducted in a context where accountability and independent investigations are absent, perpetuating a culture of impunity.

Legal Concerns:

Violations of Article 51 of the UN Charter concerning the unlawful use of force;

Breaches of the principles of distinction, proportionality, and necessity under IHL.

5. Recommendations

The United States must:

- a) Immediately suspend arms transfers to Israel and condition all future support on full compliance with IHL and IHRL.
- b) Support independent international investigations into all alleged war crimes in Gaza and Yemen.
- c) Fulfill its obligations under the Genocide Convention, including by taking active steps to prevent further atrocities in Gaza.



- d) Cease unilateral military operations in Yemen and commit to multilateral frameworks in accordance with international law.
- e) Reaffirm its commitment to the UN Charter and ensure all use of force is lawful, proportionate, and accountable.
- f) Enacting Strict Gun Storage Laws: Many shootings and suicides result from easy access to firearms at home. Supporting the enactment of laws requiring gun owners to lock up their firearms can prevent such incidents, especially among children and teenagers.

6. Systemic Racism and Police Brutality

Despite repeated recommendations from previous UPR cycles, the United States continues to face endemic problems of racial discrimination and excessive use of force by law enforcement, particularly against African Americans, Indigenous peoples, and other minorities.

Violations of: ICCPR (Articles 2, 6, 7, 26), CERD, CAT

Key concerns: Police killings, racial profiling, impunity, militarization of police

7. Immigration and Asylum Violations

The U.S. has implemented restrictive and punitive immigration policies, including mass detention, family separation, and deportation without due process. Asylum seekers have been exposed to inhumane treatment and refoulement.

Violations of: Refugee Convention, ICCPR, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC - although the U.S. is not a party), CAT

Key concerns: Inhumane detention conditions, arbitrary detention, denial of fair asylum proceedings

8. Mass Incarceration and Prison Conditions

The United States has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities. Prison conditions often amount to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Violations of: ICCPR (Articles 7, 10), CAT

Key concerns: Solitary confinement, overcrowding, lack of healthcare, racial disparities in sentencing



9. Economic and Social Rights Violations

The U.S. has failed to fully recognize or implement economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to health, education, housing, and an adequate standard of living.

Violations of: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 22–27), ICESCR (not ratified but binding as customary norms)

Key concerns: Homelessness, lack of universal healthcare, food insecurity, labor rights violations

10. Women's Rights and Gender-Based Violence

Despite progress, the U.S. faces significant gaps in protecting women's rights, particularly in access to reproductive health and in preventing violence against women.

Violations of: CEDAW (signed but not ratified), ICCPR, UDHR

Key concerns: Restrictive abortion laws, domestic violence, lack of ratification of CEDAW

11. Violations of Privacy and Surveillance

U.S. mass surveillance programs have infringed upon the right to privacy of individuals domestically and abroad, without adequate legal safeguards or transparency.

Violations of: ICCPR (Article 17)

Key concerns: NSA surveillance, data collection without consent, lack of remedy

12. Failure to Ratify Core Human Rights Treaties

The United States remains one of the few countries that has not ratified several core human rights treaties, weakening its international obligations and accountability.

Not ratified:

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

13. Unilateral Coercive Measures and Their Human Rights Impact

The United States continues to impose unilateral economic sanctions on several countries, including Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Syria, and others, outside



the framework of the United Nations Security Council. These measures violate international law and have devastating effects on the fundamental rights of civilian populations, including the rights to health, food, education, development, and life.

a. Legal Framework and Violations

Violation of the UN Charter (Article 2(4)), which prohibits the use of force or coercion in international relations.

Violation of ICESCR, UDHR, and customary international law protecting the rights to health, food, and development.

Violation of the principle of non-intervention and sovereign equality of states.

b. UN Findings and Expert Opinions

The UN Human Rights Council and its Special Rapporteurs have repeatedly emphasized that unilateral sanctions, when applied extraterritorially and outside the UN framework, violate international law and constitute a form of economic warfare.

The UN Special Rapporteur Alena Douhan has called for the lifting of all unilateral coercive measures that undermine the enjoyment of human rights.

Recommendations:

The United States must immediately lift all unilateral sanctions that negatively affect civilian populations, particularly those related to humanitarian sectors.

The U.S. must commit to complying with international law by using only multilateral measures approved by the United Nations.

The U.S. should establish an independent body to assess the humanitarian impact of its sanctions regime and provide effective remedies to affected individuals.

14. Violation of Academic Freedom and the Right to Development in the Global South

The United States continues to undermine freedom of academic expression and the right to scientific progress, especially for students and scholars from the Global South, through discriminatory visa regimes, unilateral sanctions, surveillance, and political pressure on universities and institutions.

a. Discriminatory Visa and Travel Policies



Students and researchers from sanctioned countries, particularly Iran, Syria, Venezuela, and Sudan, face arbitrary visa denials, revocations, and restrictions based on nationality, political affiliations, or mere association with public universities.

U.S. border officials have interrogated, detained, and deported several students and academics, sometimes without due process, violating their right to education and mobility.

b. Suppression of Research and Scientific Collaboration

Due to U.S. export control laws and sanctions, scholars from sanctioned countries are denied access to online academic platforms, journals, software, databases, and conferences, regardless of the content's civilian or educational nature.

Universities have self-censored collaborations with academics from the Global South for fear of federal funding cuts or political repercussions.

c. Alarming Effect on Academic Freedom

Professors and students in the U.S. who criticize U.S. foreign policy—particularly regarding Palestine, Israel, or Iran—face institutional repression, smear campaigns, job loss, or surveillance.

Many U.S. universities have terminated partnerships or censored scholars based on pressure from pro-government lobbies or political interests, undermining intellectual freedom and pluralism.

d. Legal and Ethical Violations

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 27): “Everyone has the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

ICESCR (Article 15): Guarantees the right to education, scientific progress, and protection of moral and material interests of scientific authors.

UN Declaration on the Right to Development (1986): Emphasizes the right of all peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The United States must end discriminatory visa practices targeting students and scholars from the Global South.



All academic sanctions and restrictions on knowledge-sharing must be lifted, especially those affecting civilian, educational, or cultural content.

The U.S. must guarantee the academic freedom of all individuals within its territory, and protect international collaborations free from political interference.

The U.S. should ratify and implement international instruments protecting the right to education, cultural exchange, and scientific development.

15. Suppression of Freedom of Expression: Targeting Academic and Student Support for Palestine

The United States has increasingly engaged in the suppression of freedom of speech—particularly within academic institutions—targeting students, faculty members, and researchers who express solidarity with the Palestinian people or criticize U.S. and Israeli policies in Gaza. This repression has escalated since October 2023, following the renewed conflict in Gaza.

a. Silencing of Academic Voices

University professors who have publicly condemned Israeli military actions or U.S. support for Israel have been suspended, dismissed, or investigated without due process.

Several universities and research institutions have come under political pressure from donors, lobby groups, or government officials to punish dissenting voices and shut down Palestine solidarity events.

Faculty advocating for Palestinian rights face defamation, professional retaliation, and public harassment, creating a chilling effect on academic discourse.



b. Repression of Student Activism

Pro-Palestinian student groups have been banned or defunded, their events canceled, and their members disciplined or arrested on vague grounds such as “inciting hate” or “endangering campus safety.”

In multiple cases, students have faced visa revocations, deportation threats, and FBI interrogation, particularly those of Arab, Muslim, or Global South backgrounds.

Peaceful protests, memorials for Palestinian victims, and awareness campaigns have been shut down or surveilled, undermining the right to assembly and expression.

c. State-Backed Censorship and Surveillance

U.S. officials at both state and federal levels have proposed or enacted legislation criminalizing criticism of Israel, branding it as antisemitism, in contradiction with international standards of free expression.

Academic institutions and individuals are increasingly subjected to state-backed digital surveillance and reporting mechanisms aimed at monitoring speech critical of U.S. foreign policy.

d. International Legal Violations

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds.

UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel: Guarantees the academic freedom of teaching staff, including freedom of thought, opinion, and expression.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19): Affirms the right to hold opinions without interference.

Recommendations

The United States must immediately cease political interference in academic freedom and ensure that universities are safe spaces for open debate, including criticism of U.S. or allied foreign policies.

Investigations and sanctions against students or faculty based on peaceful political speech or activism must be reversed and appropriate remedies and guarantees of non-repetition provided.

The U.S. must bring its domestic laws and practices into full compliance with its obligations under the ICCPR, including by rejecting the conflation of political critique with hate speech.