

Maat for Peace' Report submitted to the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism concerning The United States of America

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights submits this report concerning the fourth-cycle review of the United States of America under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Maat affirms that the second term of the U.S. President has been characterized from its outset by contempt for fundamental rights within the United States and by the commission of grave human rights violations. The United States has witnessed a marked regression in matters of respect for the right to life, freedom of peaceful assembly, abolition of the death penalty, trafficking in persons, racism and non-discrimination, and the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

1. Right to life

Estimates indicate that a principal factor contributing to violations of the right to life within the United States is the authorities' inability to control the proliferation of firearms, especially small arms, and the weakness or absence of legislation to restrict their circulation, which leads to an increase in killings and their wider spread across all states. Although firearm injury incidents in the United States decreased to 26,237 in 2025, a drop of approximately 18% compared with 31,810 incidents recorded in 2024, estimated figures appear lower than the true number because tracking firearm injuries faces many obstacles. Over the past two decades, annual firearm production in the United States has nearly tripled, to the point that it is said that the number of firearms now exceeds the number of people in the country. This situation conflicts with guarantees of the right to life contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Some reports indicate that the growth of such incidents has led to weak oversight and accountability of law enforcement personnel in the United States and to the obfuscation of those crimes by classifying them as mass killings or suicides in an effort to exonerate perpetrators. Consistent with this, data show that of more than 1,000 killings committed by police officers each year, those involved are charged in only 1% or fewer of cases. In the context of violations of the right to life, 23 migrants and refugees have died while detained by U.S. Migration and Customs Enforcement since the beginning of



the current U.S. administration's second term.¹

2. Death Penalty

In the third-cycle Universal Periodic Review, the United States received 35 recommendations related to abolishing the death penalty and providing legal assistance to persons sentenced to death. Nevertheless, the death penalty remains in force in the United States.² At the outset of the current U.S. President's second term, governmental rhetoric calling for a broader application of the death penalty has intensified.

Maat observed an increase in executions in the United States during 2025, reaching 47 executions, an amount that exceeds executions in the years following the United States' third-cycle review, approximately double those of earlier years. Those executed included people with disabilities, persons with strong claims of innocence, and individuals who did not receive fair-trial guarantees. The rise in executions coincides with presidential rhetoric indicating a determination to re-energize use of the death penalty,³ and the Governor of Florida moved quickly to adopt the President's call to increase executions.⁴ After ordering only one execution in 2023, that state carried out 19 executions in 2025. In a related development, the President sought to expand the use of the death penalty in the District of Columbia, where capital punishment has been abolished for more than 47 years, by asking the federal prosecutor to pursue the imposition of the death penalty in the capital.

3. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

The United States has used anti-riot laws to suppress peaceful demonstrations protesting the policies of the current U.S. administration. In San Francisco, a district attorney brought conspiracy charges against 26 people who demonstrated on the Golden Gate Bridge to protest the war in Gaza. In another case, Stanford University students faced conspiracy and vandalism charges after protesters took refuge inside a campus building.

¹ Daily State of Play: Trump's Indefinite Refugee Ban and Funding Halt, <https://shorturl.at/TejVx>

² Two years after the Universal Periodic Review... To What Extent Did America Implement its Commitments? <https://shorturl.at/VRbgW>

³ Executions Spiked in 2025, but the Death Penalty Is Still Losing Ground, <https://shorturl.at/kRzOY>

⁴ Florida Continues Its Execution Spree Despite Problematic Track Record, <https://shorturl.at/JbXVC>



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In a related context, on 18 October 2025, millions of Americans staged demonstrations under the slogan “No Kings.” The protests reportedly involved more than seven million people across all fifty U.S. states and over 2,700 events.⁵ Following these demonstrations, U.S. authorities arrested 12 participants and two minors in Los Angeles.⁶ Maat notes that the U.S. President responded to these protests with wide ridicule that verged on mockery, diminishing the value of the right to peaceful assembly. After the protests, the President posted an AI-generated video on social media portraying him wearing a crown and labeled “The King,” in which a plane drops a brown liquid resembling excrement onto the protesters. This conduct demeans the practice of peaceful expression and fosters a hostile culture toward civic gatherings.⁷

Separately, the United States has targeted Black activists who call for civil rights and legal accountability. In January 2026, U.S. authorities arrested the activist and human-rights lawyer of African descent, N.L.A., following anti-enforcement-of-migration-laws protests inside a church in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where demonstrators chanted slogans against interventions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.⁸ The incident raises concerns about the criminalization of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly led by activists from African-descended communities, thereby weakening constitutional protections for the rights to free expression and peaceful assembly in the United States. All of the above practices are inconsistent with the guarantees of the right to peaceful assembly contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the United States is a party.

4. Prison Conditions

Maat observed multiple indications that labor practices amounting to exploitation continue to prevail in U.S. prisons. In this context, Maat notes that among more than 2 million people incarcerated in the United States, the highest number of criminal prisoners in the world, two out of three incarcerated persons perform work.⁹ These practices do not stop at treating prison

⁵ Seven Million People Unite at Peaceful No Kings Protests to Defend Our First Amendment Rights, ACLU, 22 October, 2025,

<https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/seven-million-people-unite-at-peaceful-no-kings-protests-to-defend-our-first-amendment-rights>

⁶ 14 arrested after 'No Kings Day' protest in downtown Los Angeles, police say, ABC7, 20 October, 2025, <https://abc7.com/post/14-arrested-no-kings-day-protest-downtown-los-angeles-police-say/18043801/>

⁷ Donald Trump hilariously mocks 'No Kings' protesters by dropping manure on them in AI video, <https://shorturl.at/r71ix>

⁸ Attorney general announces the arrest of at least 2 people involved in a Minnesota church protest, 14 News, 22 January 2026,

<https://www.14news.com/2026/01/22/woman-who-led-protest-minnesota-church-service-has-been-arrested-bondi-says/>

⁹ Two-thirds of people in US prisons are forced to work, ACLU report finds, Available at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/zc4xt45j>



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labor as legally permissible; according to reliable reports, these workers are subjected to labor exploitation and mistreatment while performing prison work.¹⁰ Prisoners in the United States often work for very low wages or for no wages at all. For example, states such as Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Texas do not pay most incarcerated workers for their labor. In South Carolina, more than 90% of incarcerated workers in the state received no pay for their work. In Colorado, although the state banned forced labor in prisons in 2018, testimony from some prisoners indicates that the practice persists in reality.¹¹ Maat considers the continuation of these practices to constitute violations of the rights of prisoners in the United States, who produce approximately \$11 billion worth of goods annually while receiving meager or no compensation at times.¹² This calls for additional steps by the United States to end these practices and improve detention conditions. On another note, Maat observed abusive conditions inside newly opened detention centers, particularly in Florida, including overcrowding, medical neglect and lack of health care, and limited availability of personal hygiene supplies.

5. Ending Police Violence and Excessive Use of Force

The United States received 30 recommendations in the third-cycle Universal Periodic Review concerning ending violence and the excessive use of force by police and law-enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, U.S. law enforcement behavior has continued to involve violence and excessive force, particularly against migrants, U.S. citizens who support them, and people of African descent. Maat documented several incidents, including:

- On 24 January 2026, “A. B.”, a 37-year-old intensive-care nurse at a Veterans Affairs hospital, was shot dead by federal agents in Minneapolis, United States.
- On 7 January 2026, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer fatally shot Renée Nicole Gaud, a 37-year-old mother of three, an award-winning poet and a guitarist. Witnesses in the city said the deceased was present in the capacity of a legal observer

¹⁰ Captive Labor: Exploitation of Incarcerated Workers, <https://www.aclu.org/publications/captive-labor-exploitation-incarcerated-workers>

¹¹ Colorado banned forced prison labor 5 years ago. Prisoners say it's still happening, <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/13/1210564359/slavery-prison-forced-labor-movement>

¹² The Guardian Highlights Findings from GHRC Report, The University of Chicago Law School, <https://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/guardian-highlights-findings-ghrc-report>



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monitoring ICE activities.¹³

- Maat’s data indicate that from the start of the President’s second term in January 2025 through January 2027, migration officers discharged live ammunition on at least 17 occasions, resulting in four deaths and eight injuries.¹⁴

6. Trafficking in Persons

In February 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice released what are known as the “Epstein files,” documents containing credible evidence of systematic sexual abuse as well as trafficking practices and exploitation of women and girls.¹⁵ Maat is particularly concerned about the ages of the girls targeted in Epstein’s trafficking network. Many were under eighteen and were lured with promises of safety, money, or opportunities for a better life. Those promises apparently enticed a significant number of girls to the island.

7. Racism and Non-Discrimination

In the third-cycle UPR in November 2020, the United States accepted about 38 recommendations related to preventing discrimination and combating racial discrimination. However, since the current President assumed office, practices of racism and discrimination have spread significantly.

Weakening of the federal Department of Education’s role has coincided with increased racially discriminatory practices in the U.S. Black children have repeatedly been subjected to racial slurs. White classmates reportedly directed insults such as “slave,” “monkey,” or worse at them, often without disciplinary consequences. For example, in Pennsylvania the Department of Education had more than 300 open investigations into racial discrimination against children as of January 2025, according to the latest federal data. Staff reductions at the Department have weakened follow-up on these complaints.¹⁶

¹³ The ICE Killing of Renee Nicole Good is a Watershed Moment for Trump. <https://shorturl.at/eZzuz>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ 4 takeaways from the Epstein files about the FBI investigation of possible sex trafficking, <https://tinyurl.com/56fhk26m>

¹⁶ Families turn to states for civil rights support as Trump dismantles the Education Department, <https://shorturl.at/Zj9K5>



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Other practices include the dismissal of a Black appointee, “J. W.,” from a seat on the National Labor Relations Board without justification. This dismissal occurred amid deliberate administrative actions that appear aimed at weakening complaint mechanisms for discriminatory practices. Anti-discrimination mechanisms have faced threats of closure and targeted attacks on local field offices responsible for community outreach, complaint investigations, and assisting victims of discrimination in seeking justice and redress. These government actions appear intended to shut down those local offices. All of the above developments indicate backsliding on non-discrimination commitments and raise serious concerns about the United States’ compliance with its obligations to prevent racial discrimination and ensure effective remedies.

8. Right to Health

The policies of the U.S. administration have affected the guarantee of the right to health. On 20 January 2025, just hours after taking the oath of office, the U.S. President issued his first executive order.¹⁷ That order directed agencies under his authority to “waive any provision” of the Affordable Care Act. The Congressional Budget Office reported that if the law were repealed without a replacement, 32 million people could lose health insurance, and premiums could double over the next ten years.

In a related development, the President issued an executive order to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization; that withdrawal took effect in January 2026. The decision is likely to affect the public health of millions of people both inside and outside the United States. The United States also revoked a 2009 finding that greenhouse gases pose a threat to public health, the so-called “endangerment finding”, which had served as the legal foundation for federal efforts to reduce emissions.¹⁸ Environmental advocacy groups estimate that this action could result in up to 58,000 additional premature deaths and 37 million additional asthma attacks.¹⁹ It is estimated that 26 states could face health-related costs exceeding 5 billion by 2055 because of this measure; five states could suffer damages exceeding 5 billion, and five states could suffer damages exceeding 20 billion. Independent analyses

¹⁷ President Trump Issues Executive Order to Roll Back ACA, <https://shorturl.at/ebZZV>

¹⁸ President Trump and Administrator Zeldin Deliver Single Largest Deregulatory Action in U.S. History, <https://shorturl.at/I9YNg>

¹⁹ Weakening Climate Protections Will Increase Pollution, Cost Americans More than a Trillion Dollars, <https://shorturl.at/rTK7S>



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indicate that climate change already affects every state in the Union, and repealing the endangerment finding will only worsen the impacts experienced by communities. This action is also expected to increase climate pollution by between 7.5 and 18 billion metric tons.²⁰

9. Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers

During its third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, the United States received 23 recommendations concerning the rights of migrants and refugees. The United States hosted roughly 20% of the world's migrants, but those numbers began to decline at the start of the President's second term in January 2025. Upon assuming office, the President immediately issued a ban on entry by nationals of several countries; that ban remains in effect at the time of this report. On 3 December 2025, the U.S. administration suspended all immigration applications, including consideration of green card (lawful permanent residence) and naturalization applications, for migrants from 19 non-European countries, citing national security and public safety concerns.

In a related context, millions of migrants and people seeking safety face heightened risk because of the mass-deportation campaign led by the President. These measures deprive asylum seekers and migrants of the opportunity to seek protection, subject them to arbitrary detention, return them to places where they may face serious dangers, and separate families. Similarly, the President issued an executive order titled "Protecting the American People from Invasion," which, among other measures, calls for a substantial expansion of expedited removal within the United States. The Secretary of Homeland Security may broaden the scope of expedited removal without formal rulemaking procedures that include notice and public comment.²¹ Expedited removal allows officials of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deport noncitizens at an accelerated pace; under this procedure, some noncitizens can be removed within one day without a hearing before an immigration judge.²² U.S. policy has also included large-scale detention of migrants: as of 7 February 2026, 68,289 people were detained in immigrant-detention facilities, including more than 6,000 people in family units. Ninety-one percent of detainees are held in facilities

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Fact Sheet: Expanded Expedited Removal, National Immigration Forum, <https://shorturl.at/wtbuk>

²² Ibid



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operated by private companies.²³

Maat recommends the following:

- Take serious steps by the U.S. administration to investigate current and former officials and the individuals named in the Epstein files, to ensure accountability for the crimes documented in those files.
- Reconsider the decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization and restore funding.
- Consider proposing federal legislation to provide for a voluntary moratorium on application of the death penalty.
- Ensure compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) when opening new detention centers.
- Reconsider the ban on entry by migrants and refugees to the United States and immediately release migrants detained in migration detention centers.
- Guarantee the freedom of peaceful assembly for the “No Kings” demonstrations in the United States and cease incitement against those who call for these peaceful protests.

²³ Daily State of Play: Trump’s Indefinite Refugee Ban and Funding Halt, <https://shorturl.at/qBwJr>



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