CONCERNS OVER USA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL'S UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Joint Statement of the UPR Project at BCU and UPR Academic Network regarding the United States of America's Fourth Cycle Universal Periodic Review

12th August 2025

On 4th August 2025, the United States of America (USA) was scheduled to submit its National Report in preparation for the USA's Fourth Cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which is set to take place in November 2025. However, the US government failed to meet this deadline and its official engagement with the UPR has declined since January 2025.

The USA participated in its previous three cycles of UPR in 2010, 2015, and 2020 and engaged as a recommending UN Member State from the UPR's inception in 2008 until recently. The UPR is a non-confrontational, cooperative mechanism which enables constructive dialogue between states on human rights. It is also a method of national self-reflection involving dialogue between civil society and the state.

Should the USA not take part in its Fourth Cycle UPR, this could have a wider impact on the protection and promotion of human rights domestically in the USA. It could also affect other Member States' engagement with the UPR and, in turn, negatively impact upon global human rights protection and promotion.

We, the undersigned:

1. Affirm that the UPR remains an essential tool for advancing human rights for all.

2. Call upon the government of the United States of America to:

    - Immediately resume its cooperation with the Universal Periodic Review.
    - Undertake a broad consultation with relevant stakeholders.
    - Submit its National Report at the earliest opportunity, in line with UNHRC Resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007 and 16/21 of 25 March 2011.
    - Attend and engage with its Pre-session, due to take place w/c 25th August 2025.
    - Resume its role as a recommending Member State at the UPR.

3. Call upon United Nations Member States, the UNHRC President, and the wider international community to take appropriate steps and measures to encourage the USA to reengage with the Universal Periodic Review.

Signed, 12th August 2025

1. Dr Alice Storey, Associate Professor of Human Rights, Birmingham City University, UK
2. Dr Amna Nazir, Associate Professor in International Human Rights, Birmingham City University, UK
3. Professor Jon Yorke, Professor of Human Rights, Birmingham City University, UK
4. Dr Damian Etone, Senior Lecturer in International Human Rights Law, University of Stirling, UK
5. Dr Michael Lane, Lecturer in Law, University of Worcester, UK

Co-sign the statement using this link: https://forms.gle/RspstzuhDvJTaYxk7

Co-signatures

6. Maria Eduarda Loureiro Oliveira, PhD student at BCU, Birmingham
7. Dr Robin Ramcharan, Lecturer in International Relations, Mahidol University International College, Bangkok, Thailand
8. Joachim NTETMEN, Consultant, Cameroon
9. Hala Allaf, Human Rights Lawyer, Lebanon
10. Dr Kyle Reed, Assistant Professor of International Relations, University of Amsterdam, NL
11. Jane Gitau, ADK, Kenya
12. Prof. Stuart Russell, Macquarie University School of Law Sydney Australia (ret.)
13. Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers, International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL)
14. Dr. Charmaine Willis, Old Dominion University, USA
15. Sabah Athar, Lecturer of Law, Birmingham City University
16. Michael Kanyingi Kimuhu, UPR Stakeholders Kenya Coalition, Kenya
17. Edward R McMahon, UPR Academic Network, United States of America
18. Madi Jobarteh, Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice, The Gambia
19. Sheriff Mohammed Kijera, Accountability Project Gambia, Gambia
20. Dr Pilar Elizalde, Departmental Lecturer in Law and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
21. Dr Frederick Cowell, Reader in International Law, Birkbeck College, University of London, United Kingdom
22. Gilbert Onyango, UPR Kenya (c/o The East African Centre for Human Rights (EACHRights), Kenya
23. Katja Hannele Vuorensyrjä, PhD student at University of Eastern Finland, Finland

24. Dr Domenico Carolei, University of Stirling, United Kingdom
25. Laura Smillie, Lecturer in Law, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom
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27. Melanie SONHAYE KOMBATE, West African Human Rights Defenders' Network Secretariat, Togo
28. Aditia Taslim, International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), United Kingdom/Global
29. Alphonsus B M Gbanie, Human Rights Defenders Network-SL, Sierra Leone
30. Mr. Hans Gaasbeek, Foundation Day of the Endangered Lawyer, The Netherlands
31. Victorino Indeque, The Network of Human Rights Defender of Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Bissau
32. Thierry Valle , Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience ECOSOC Status since 2016, Brussels-EU
33. Dr. Stephen Bronner, International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue, United States of America
34. Edson Krenak, Vienna University , Austria
35. Jackie Smith, PhD, University of Pittsburgh and U.S.-Canada Human Rights Cities Alliance,United States
36. Essa Sanneh, Leadership Hub - Africa, The Gambia
37. Professor Natalie Baird, Faculty of Law, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
38. Dr Fiona McGaughey, Associate Professor of International Human Rights Law, UPR Academic Network, Australia
39. Raxona Khanum, Lecturer in Law, Birmingham City University, UK
40. ILGA WORLD, Geneva, Switzerland
41. Sarah Nasrallah, Lebanese Center for Human Rights, Lebanon
42. Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale ETS, Child Rights Connect, Italy
43. Leeretta Payne, Human Rights Alliance, Pittsburgh
44. AWOUMA Julienne, University of Yaounde 1 Cameroon, Cameroon
45. Dr. Jacqueline Garrick, Whistleblowers of America, United States of America
46. Hans Noot, Gerard Noodt Foundation for Freedom of Religion or Belief, The Netherlands
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48. Dr Philip Oamen, Lecturer in Law, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom
49. Catherine Morris, (Past) Executive Director, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Canada
50. Dr. Grace Li Xiu Woo, Director Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, author Ghost Dancing with Colonialism, UBC Press, Canada
51. Jean-Marie Kamatali, Director and founder of HRDAPROJECT.ORG, United States of America
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53. Gavin Magrath, Director, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Canada
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55. Melisa Oleschuk, UPR Academic Network, United Kingdom
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57. Rebecca Landy, Human Rights Cities Alliance Steering Committee, Brooklyn, New York, United States of America
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