



**Submission of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of the United States of America**

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The American Civil Liberties Union (“ACLU”) contributes this updated submission on the United States’ human rights record as part of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (“UPR”). This submission expands on our previous submission from April 2025, where we outlined the ongoing attacks against sanctuary cities in the United States, including the federal government’s attempts to coerce state and local governments to cooperate with their abusive enforcement measures.<sup>1</sup> In this updated submission, we detail new and disturbing developments in the Trump administration’s violations of U.S. human rights commitments and international standards – including the federal government’s abusive and violent immigration crackdowns and illegal lethal military strikes against vessels in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific region.

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## **The Trump Administration’s Abusive Immigration Agenda: Updates Since April 2025**

The Trump administration began its second term with a range of actions to expand immigration detention and accelerate deportations, including through nationwide expedited removal,<sup>2</sup> expanding use of the military,<sup>3</sup> resuming family detention policies,<sup>4</sup> and invoking the Alien Enemies Act to allow for even more rapid removals without adequate judicial process. President Trump also attempted to end birthright citizenship as a move to further marginalize immigrant communities,<sup>5</sup> blatantly unconstitutional action that could deny certain newborns of their U.S. citizenship and create a permanent subclass of people in the U.S.<sup>6</sup>

In January 2026, the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) announced Operation Metro Surge<sup>7</sup> and launched the “largest immigration operation ever,” sending thousands of federal immigration officers into cities nationwide – including over 2,000 agents into the Minneapolis area.<sup>8</sup> On January 7<sup>th</sup>, agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) shot and killed an unarmed mother and veteran, Renee Nicole Good, in her vehicle as she encountered the agents after dropping her 6-year-old son off at school.<sup>9</sup> On January 24<sup>th</sup>, ICE agents again fatally shot an unarmed intensive care unit nurse, Alex Pretti, after beating Pretti as he was helping an injured woman.<sup>10</sup> Beyond Minnesota, ICE agents running rampant in U.S. cities have ripped away the lives of civilians from their loved ones: from Keith Porter, Jr. in Los Angeles,<sup>11</sup> Dr. Linda Davis in Savannah,<sup>12</sup> Ruben Ray Martinez in South Padre Island,<sup>13</sup> and more,<sup>14</sup> the federal government has given immigration officials unchecked and unprecedented authority to wreak havoc on communities.

To heighten its immigration agenda of detaining, deporting, and dehumanizing noncitizens residing in the U.S., the Trump administration has accelerated its removal proceedings by sending noncitizens to countries in which they have no prior relationship, including through citizenship or familial or personal connections.<sup>15</sup> Historically, the federal government has rarely conducted third-country deportations outside of individual circumstances,<sup>16</sup> though the Trump administration has made sweeping efforts to remove people without adequate due process,<sup>17</sup> advance notice of removal, or opportunity to contact their lawyers.<sup>18</sup> The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (“OHCHR”) has warned against the Trump administration’s third-country deportation policy, affirming that international law does not permit individuals being sent to countries with which they have no relationship and could be at risk of torture, enforced disappearance, or arbitrary deprivation of life.<sup>19</sup> In February 2026, a district court ruled that the third-country removal policy adopted by DHS is unlawful.<sup>20</sup>

## **The 2026 FIFA World Cup and Trump’s Stage of Authoritarianism**

With the deteriorating human rights situation in the United States and in the absence of meaningful action from the International Federation of Association Football (“FIFA”), host cities, or the U.S. government, a coalition of several organizations issued a travel advisory for fans, players, journalists, and other visitors traveling to and within the United States for the 2026 FIFA Men’s World Cup. This June, World Cup games will be played in 11 different cities across the country, many of which already been the target of the Trump administration’s violent immigration crackdowns.<sup>21</sup>

While the Trump administration's rising authoritarianism poses serious risks to all, people from immigrant communities, racial and ethnic minority groups, and LGBTQ+ individuals have been, and continue to be, disproportionately targeted by the administration's policies: and, consequently, are most vulnerable to severe harm for travel concerning the U.S. A recent travel advisory calls on fans, players, journalists, and other visitors to exercise caution and have an emergency contingency plan when traveling to and within the United States. The advisory warns individuals that they may encounter or be subjected to the following risks and harms, in breach of the United States' human rights obligations under domestic and international law:

- **Arbitrary denial of entry and risk of arrest, detention and/or deportation of non-U.S. nationals, even those with prior authorization from the U.S. government.** A visa does not guarantee admission, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers have broad discretion to admit, detain, or deny entry at ports of entry.
- **Expanded restrictions and limitations on travel and entry into the United States.** As of January 2026, Trump administration has fully restricted and limited the entry of nationals from 19 countries: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Full restrictions and limitations also extend to individuals with identification documents issued by the Palestinian Authority. Partial restrictions exist for nationals from 20 countries: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Gabon, the Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Venezuela, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- **Invasive social media screening and searches of electronic devices as part of admission to the United States.** The Trump administration has instituted social media screenings for certain categories of visa applications, including nonimmigrant work and student visas, requiring individuals to make their accounts public for review by the State Department. The new policy specifically polices for content that the Trump administration has deemed "anti-American" or "antisemitic." Generally speaking, the Department of Homeland Security claims broad powers to conduct searches of visitors' electronic devices at ports of entry.
- **Violent and unconstitutional immigration enforcement, including racial profiling and other discrimination by law enforcement.** In the last year, the Trump administration has deployed federal immigration agents to cities across the country, with large militarized federal forces deployed in Los Angeles, California; Portland, Oregon; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, Illinois; Charlotte, North Carolina; and, most recently, the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area of Minnesota, sowing uncertainty, fear, and trauma across communities. In Minnesota, masked and armed federal agents have engaged in widespread unlawful stops and arrests based on race, ethnicity, and national origin, targeting Somali and Latino individuals and those perceived to be, without any relevant information about the individuals' citizenship or immigration status. In many jurisdictions nationwide, local and state law enforcement agencies have been deputized to engage in civil immigration enforcement through 287(g) agreements, which allow ICE to delegate certain immigration enforcement duties to state and local law enforcement

agencies. As of March 2026, the Trump administration has also [deployed ICE agents to airports](#) across the United States.

- **Suppression of speech and protest and increased surveillance.** [Law enforcement officers have intimidated, harassed, and used force against protesters](#) in retaliation for their protected speech activity, including against protesters observing unlawful immigration enforcement. Violence at the hands of law enforcement escalated when federal [officers used lethal force and killed Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minnesota](#). [Journalists have been arrested](#) for reporting on protests. Additionally, as highlighted by over 90 civil society organizations in a [July 2025 letter](#) to FIFA, individuals who express political opinions that diverge from those of the current administration, including activism in support of Palestinian rights, [continue to be at risk of arbitrary detention and deportation](#). Lastly, law enforcement officers have deployed and continue to deploy various surveillance strategies, including drones, facial recognition software, and phone surveillance, as part of their policing of protests.
- **Serious risk of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and in some cases, death, while in immigration detention facilities or custody.** Recent data, as February 2026, indicates that [68,289 people are currently being held in ICE detention](#). Since the start of 2026, [14 people have died in ICE custody](#). In 2025, [32 people died in ICE custody](#). Those being held in ICE detention have reported limited and/or inadequate access to legal services and essential medical care.

United Nations human rights bodies and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) have expressed concerns with the federal government's human rights record as it concerns the United States' abusive immigration and asylum policies, with both the IACHR and OHCHR issuing statements in February 2025 to urge the United States recommit to human rights and fundamental freedoms on both a domestic and international scale.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, in March 2026, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination ("CERD") used its early warning and urgent action procedures to issue a decision regarding the Trump administration's deadly and abusive immigration enforcement in Minnesota and across the country.<sup>23</sup>

### **Lethal Strikes Against Vessels in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific Region**

In a continued escalation of its disregard for domestic and international law, since September 2025, the Trump administration has conducted ongoing lethal strikes against vessels in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific region, under the claim of curtailing suspected drug trafficking. As of March 25, 2026, over 160 people have been killed in 47 attacks by the U.S. military on small boats. There are only 3 known survivors of these attacks; 11 others are reportedly missing.<sup>24</sup> The identities of most victims remain unknown, and there is no evidence that they posed any imminent threat to the United States.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, the Trump administration has signaled that these unlawful attacks will continue and even escalate, including through land strikes.<sup>26</sup>

Legal experts, human rights groups, former U.S. government lawyers, and both current and former U.S. servicemembers agree: the U.S. is committing extrajudicial killings, and possibly crimes against humanity, under international law. These strikes – conducted outside of armed

conflict, without a charge or trial, and against individuals merely accused of engaging in drug trafficking,<sup>27</sup> which does not constitute an imminent threat or armed attack – amount to clear violations of the right to life and due process.

Third States can incur legal responsibility for aiding another State in their commission of internationally wrongful acts, including extrajudicial killings and crimes against humanity.<sup>28</sup> Forms of cooperation such as intelligence sharing,<sup>29</sup> access to military bases, and the provision of logistical support may meet the threshold for aiding and assisting where they facilitate the identification, tracking, and targeting of vessels. Given the public nature of these strikes and the glaring lack of lawful justification,<sup>30</sup> States cannot plausibly claim ignorance of the risks associated with their support.

The consequences of the United States’ extrajudicial killings are being felt in communities across the region.<sup>31</sup> Families awaiting the return of their loved ones may never learn their fates, and have no access to recourse. Coastal communities have witnessed human remains washing up on shore and fear for their lives when trading and fishing, sowing psychological trauma and undermining livelihoods.<sup>32</sup>

In January 2026, the ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a lawsuit on behalf of two of the strikes victims’ family members, seeking redress and accountability for these extrajudicial killings.<sup>33</sup> In March 2026, the ACLU and other legal and human rights experts presented at a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (“IACHR”) regarding the illegality of these strikes under both domestic and international law and made concrete recommendations.<sup>34</sup> (See ACLU opening remarks as *Annex I* and UN expert Ben Saul’s written statement as *Annex II*).

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<sup>1</sup> Our original submission can be found on our website: American Civil Liberties Union. (2025, Apr. 7). *ACLU Submission to the 2025 Universal Periodic Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.aclu.org/documents/aclu-upr-2025>.

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<sup>4</sup> Lamothe, D. (2025, March 19). Trump team makes plans for military to hold migrants at border. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/03/19/trump-border-military-bufferzone/>.

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<sup>5</sup> Yang, J., Popat, S., & Bowie, T. (2025, April 3). Trump administration resumes family detention in immigration crackdown. *PBS News*. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/trump-administration-resumes-family-detention-in-immigration-crackdown>.

<sup>6</sup> Exec. Order No. 14160 (2025). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/protecting-the-meaning-and-value-of-american-citizenship/>.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Homeland Security. (2026, Jan. 15). *DHS Highlights Worst of the Worst Criminal Illegal Aliens Arrested in Minnesota Including Perpetrators of Fraud, Thieves, and Drug Traffickers* [Press release]. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/01/15/dhs-highlights-worst-worst-criminal-illegal-aliens-arrested-minnesota-including>.

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<sup>21</sup> FIFA. (2026). USA. <https://www.fifa.com/en/tournaments/mens/worldcup/canadamexicousa2026/usa>.

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*See also*: the UN Human Rights Committee, which in October 2023 reviewed United States’ periodic report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), concluded that the U.S. must “review its overall immigration policy and legislation with a view to bringing them into line with international human rights and humanitarian standards, withdraw measures that do not allow for an adequate assessment of individual protection needs and that increase the risk of refoulement, and ensure effective access to fair and efficient asylum procedures that provide adequate protection against refoulement.” International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (2023, Dec. 7). Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the United States of America (CCPR/C/USA/CO/5).

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<sup>27</sup> Garcia Cano, R. (2025, Nov. 7). Trump has accused boat strike targets of being narco-terrorists. The truth is more nuanced, AP investigation finds. *PBS News*. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/trump-has-accused-boat-strike-targets-of-being-narco-terrorists-the-truth-is-more-nuanced-ap-investigation-finds>.

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