



U.S. Failure to Participate in Scheduled Human Rights Review Betrays Nation's Values

Minneapolis, MN (November 7, 2025) -- The Advocates for Human Rights is outraged that the United States has failed to attend its scheduled Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council—the first country in the UPR's nearly 20-year history to refuse to participate. The U.S. first failed to submit its report, which was due on August 4, 2025, and has now failed to attend the review session scheduled for November 7, 2025. The UN has rescheduled the U.S. review for November 2026, providing additional time for the U.S. to submit its report and ensure compliance in the current UPR cycle. We call on the U.S. to fulfill its obligation to participate in this crucial process.

“The Advocates condemns the United States’ betrayal of this effective and important system. Human rights are not values to be discarded or promoted when convenient—they are safeguards that have helped ensure peace and human security for nearly a century. The UPR helps reinforce and improve human rights worldwide. The U.S. should help improve the system through engagement and investment rather than attempting to undermine or belittle the process,” said **Jennifer Prestholdt, Deputy Director at The Advocates for Human Rights.**

In the UPR, the United Nations conducts a public review of the human rights record of each and every UN Member State. During the UPR, UN Member States encourage the promotion and protection of human rights in countries under review, often prompting significant improvements. For example, after receiving recommendations from 22 countries, Sierra Leone abolished the death penalty just a few days after its last UPR. The UPR also provides an opportunity for countries and other stakeholders to share best practices in the field of human rights. The U.S. review on November 7 would have involved a “peer review” interactive discussion in which any UN Member State could pose questions, make comments, and offer recommendations on human rights in the U.S. The U.S. could have used the UPR as a platform to share its vision for human rights in the country and to highlight accomplishments and challenges.

All UPRs are based on a national report from the country under review, information from UN human rights experts and entities, and reports by other stakeholders including civil society. [The Advocates for Human Rights submitted five stakeholder reports for the 2025 UPR of the U.S.](#), providing recommendations on improving migrants rights, combating labor trafficking, protecting survivors of gender-based violence, limiting or abolishing the death penalty, and respecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. The current administration, however, undermined the process by failing to provide its own report.

Since the first UPR in 2008, the UN has reviewed all 193 UN Member States three times. No country has ever refused to participate in the UPR. The U.S. failure to participate threatens the integrity of the UPR, opening the door for other countries to stop participating in the process. Despite being an *initial* leader in recognizing and promoting universal human rights, the U.S. is losing its standing and legitimacy in the international community. This loss of U.S. credibility



and influence undermines the government’s ability to affect the human rights policies of other countries, to the potential harm of service members and U.S. citizens worldwide.

Although it has never had to do so before, the UN is empowered to go forward with the UPR of the U.S. in absentia. Today in Geneva, the UN rescheduled the U.S. review to November 2026. In refusing to participate today, the U.S. is not avoiding scrutiny, but it is forfeiting the ability to present and defend its human rights record. The current administration should commit to participating in the U.S. UPR no later than November 2026. Further, Congress must reinforce U.S. commitments to the international human rights framework and use all available means to ensure U.S. participation in the UPR process.

“The Advocates urges the U.S. to recommit to human rights and to engagement with the international community, starting with a commitment to engage in the UPR. The Advocates reminds the government that the U.S. has long-established obligations to uphold human rights that will not vanish even in the absence of a UPR. The Advocates and other human rights activists will continue to hold the U.S. accountable. Ensuring human rights for all requires nothing less,” **concluded Prestholdt.**

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