

# United States

The United States (U.S.) is a Member State of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of the United Nations (UN), and has human rights obligations at both the regional and universal levels.

## Regional: Inter-American System



As a Member of the OAS, the U.S. is held to the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and its human rights policies and practices are monitored by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Commission may decide [complaints](#) against the State and may also hold [hearings](#) or issue [reports](#) on the human rights situation there. The U.S. has not accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Individuals and groups have submitted complaints of human rights violations committed by the U.S. to the [Inter-American human rights system](#). For example, in *Felix Rocha Diaz*, the Commission found the U.S. responsible for multiple rights violations related to imposing the death sentence on Felix Rocha Diaz, a Mexican national. The Commission held that the failure to inform Mr. Rocha that he had the right to consular notification and assistance violated his right to due process and that keeping him in solitary confinement for almost 20 years constituted inhumane treatment. See IACHR, Report No. 11/15, Case - 12.833, [Felix Rocha Diaz](#) (U.S.), March 23, 2015.

Additionally, the Commission has issued [precautionary measures](#) to protect people in urgent situations of risk in the U.S.

The U.S. has not ratified any of the core regional human rights treaties.



## United Nations System

As a UN Member State, the U.S. is subject to the oversight of various [UN human rights bodies](#), including the [Human Rights Council](#) and its [Universal Periodic Review](#) and thematic [special procedures](#). As a party to specific universal human rights treaties, the United States' policies and practices are monitored by UN [treaty bodies](#). It has not accepted the complaints procedure of any treaty bodies.

The U.S. has ratified the following **UN human rights treaties**:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

The U.S. has submitted a reservation, declaration or understanding that modifies its obligations under the following treaties: [ICCPR](#), [CAT](#), and [CERD](#).

The U.S. has also ratified the optional protocols to the CRC addressing children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. The U.S. has a duty to submit **State reports** to each UN treaty body associated with the treaties the U.S. has ratified. These reports must be submitted on a periodic basis, and describe the steps the U.S. has taken to implement the treaty provisions.

The U.S. has not ratified any [optional protocols](#) or made any declarations allowing individuals to submit **complaints** against the State to a treaty body. Certain UN treaties include **inquiry procedures**, which allow the UN treaty body to consider allegations of grave or systematic human rights violations. The U.S. has accepted the inquiry procedures of the CAT.

The U.S. has not extended a **standing invitation** to UN special procedures, which means that any special rapporteurs or working groups must seek specific invitations from the U.S. to conduct a visit within the State. For example, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions went on a mission to the U.S. in June 2008 and published a [report](#) in May 2009.

For more information on United States' engagement with [UN human rights bodies](#), visit <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/LACRegion/Pages/USIndex.aspx>.

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