

# THE PEOPLE'S UPR

Press Kit

For Immediate Release

October 2025



## EVENT INFORMATION

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The **People's UPR** is set to take place in New York City on Thursday, October 23, 2025, from 12:00-2:30pm EST, at the Church Center of the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. The People's UPR has continued to gain force and grow in numbers with the decline of the United States' participation in United Nations human rights mechanisms. The People's UPR will be co-hosted by the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law's International Human Rights Clinic and Saint Louis University School of Law's Human Rights at Home Litigation Clinic, with the support of a joint planning committee made up of additional collaborators. This event is a people-led event in relation to the Universal Periodic Review that was supposed to take place in November 2025 at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. At the People's UPR, more than 30 directly-impacted persons will provide testimony of their lived experiences that represent human rights violations. Following the event, there will be a press conference highlighting the most significant points, urging the United Nations to press the United States to abide by its international commitments, and an opportunity for the press to ask questions. The event will be livestreamed for those at t

he United Nations in Geneva and the public around the United States. The exact timeline of the event is as follows:

- 12-2pm, Directly-impacted Persons' Testimony
- 2-2:30pm, Q&A
- 4pm, Press Conference

## UNITED STATES PULLING BACK FROM UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

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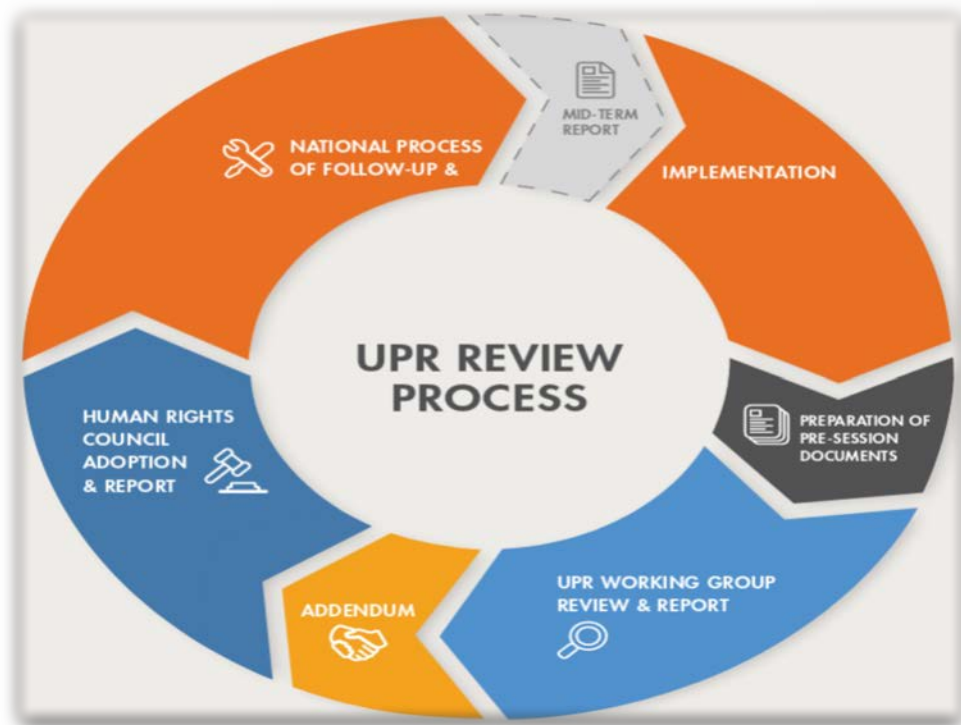
The United States has just announced on August 29, 2025, that it will not participate in the Universal Periodic Review for this fourth cycle, nor submit its report, which would be due in November. The announcement was made during the UPR's Info Pre-Session by Juliette de Rivero, Chief of the UPR Branch of the United Nations High Commissioner Rights. This would mark the first time in UPR history that a UN Member State does not participate. The withdrawal from the UPR is still under consideration within the Bureau of the Human Rights Council. Although the government has decided on its own that participation in the UPR is not necessary, the People's UPR will ensure that civil society voices are [illuminated](#). This also follows an executive order by President Trump on February 4, 2025, to withdraw from international organizations, including the United Nations Human Rights Council.

# UPR PROCESS

The [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) is a United Nations process that reviews the human rights records of all 193 [UN Member States](#). The UPR ensures equal treatment for every country and offers governments the opportunity to report on the steps they have taken to protect and promote human rights, as well as the challenges they face in doing so. The UPR also encourages global dialogue and puts pressure on governments to follow through on their promises. Ultimately, the UPR promotes accountability and the spread of effective human rights practices across all regions.

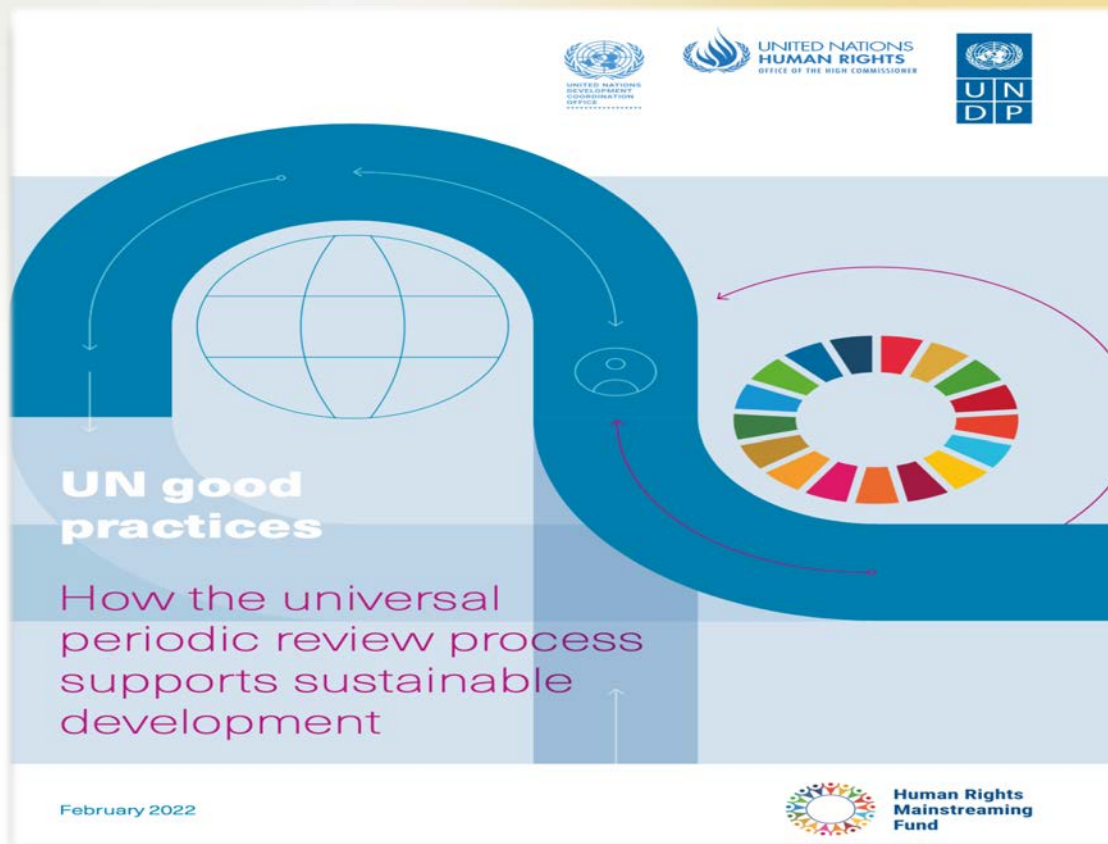
## How was the UPR created?

In 2006, the [United Nations General Assembly](#) created the United Nations Human Rights Council and established the UPR as one of its key mechanisms. [The United Nations Human Rights Council](#) is an international body composed of UN member states, tasked with promoting and protecting human rights around the world. As part of its work, the Council conducts regular reviews of the human rights records of all member states. Over time, the United Nations Human Rights Council has strengthened the UPR process by improving the quality and clarity of reports and ensuring meaningful participation by governments, civil society organizations, and national human rights institutions.



## The Goals of the UPR:

The primary purpose of the UPR is to improve human rights protection worldwide, including: (1) improving human rights conditions in each country, (2) identifying human rights challenges and violations, (3) providing future recommendations, and (4) sharing technical assistance with States and improving their capacity to deal effectively with human rights challenges.



## How the UPR Review Works:

The UPR is conducted by a Working Group comprising of all UN member states. This group meets three times a year in meetings called ‘sessions’ in Geneva, Switzerland, to review the human rights situation in different states. Reviews are conducted through interactive sessions between the State under review and other UN member states. On average, the working group reviews 14 states per session. Each review is based on three main documents: (1) the national report submitted by the State under review, (2) a compilation report containing information from UN bodies and special procedures, and (3) stakeholders’ reports from national human rights institutions and NGOs. During the sessions, UN members can ask questions, give comments, and make recommendations.

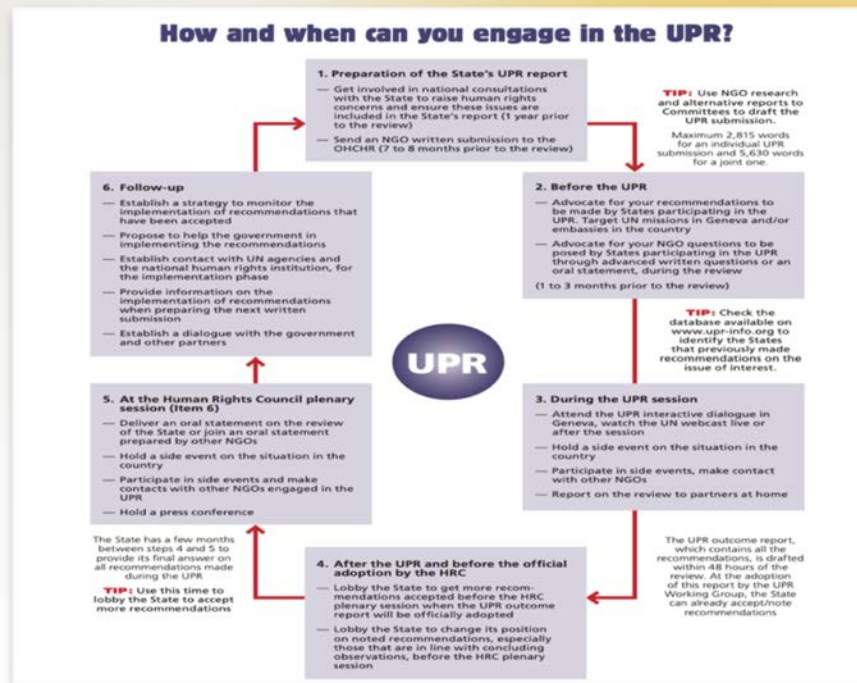


Each review is supported by a small team of three states, called a ‘troika’, selected from the member states of the Human Rights Council. The troika guides the process, helps the State under review prepare, collects and relays written questions from other states, and ensures the review runs smoothly. After the session, the troika helps prepare a report summarizing the findings and recommendations.



### **Reasons to Engage in the UPR**

The UPR holds governments accountable by reviewing their human rights record and highlighting violations. The process offers a great opportunity to raise awareness about human rights issues. This process also puts pressure on governments to respond publicly and take action on the issues raised. Media coverage and international attention make it harder for governments to ignore these concerns. NGOs, national human rights institutions, and community groups can use the UPR to bring key human rights issues to a global audience. The process also encourages collaboration to find solutions and [implement recommendations](#), which helps protect communities and prevent future violations.



## IMPORTANCE OF THE EVENT

Participation in the UPR is a bare minimum obligation as a member state of the United Nations. The U.S. withdrawal from the UPR could lead to a ripple effect that undermines global human rights efforts. While there are no direct consequences or repercussions for not submitting a UPR report and engaging in the UPR process, it would set a disastrous precedent for other UN member states to refuse to engage in the UPR. The U.S. is considered an influential UN member state, and thus, refusal to take part in the review process could potentially allow other member states with poor human rights records to avoid scrutiny of their own abuses.

On a domestic level, the UPR is a vital forum for directly-impacted persons and advocates to highlight domestic human rights concerns and collaborate with other UN member states. Sarah Dávila, said “It is critical that as academics and members of civil society, we continue to support connections between directly-impacted persons and United Nations mechanisms, to encouraging those most marginalized to be heard regarding their lived injustices.”

Withdrawing from this process eliminates a vital forum for advocacy and engagement. Civil Society submissions are integral to the UPR, enabling international inspection and peer pressure on the U.S. human rights record. Although they were still collected, a member state's withdrawal from the UPR severely reduces its impact, since the loss of international pressure weakens a significant incentive for the government to confront its own human rights inadequacies.

The People's UPR event is crucial to portray that the absence of a government from the UPR does not mean scrutiny avoidance. The event is held to trigger greater attention and ensure that accountability remains intact. Lauren Bartlett said, "despite the Trump Administration's refusal to participate in the Universal Periodic review of the United States this November, we will continue fighting to hold the government responsible for upholding human rights in the United States."

## ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

The event has many cosponsors including but not limited to: Northeastern University School of Law, The Advocates for Human Rights, American Friends Service Committee, Adoptee Mentoring Society, Ancient Song, Center for Constitutional Rights, Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, Children's Rights, HALTsolitary, Human Rights Cities Alliance, Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic at CUNY, University of Dayton Human Rights Center, Partners for Reproductive Justice, Jails Action Coalition, Jane's Due Process, JMAC for Families, Louisiana Abortion Fund, Leitner Center for International Law and Justice, UNC. Criminalized Survivor, Detention & Justice Clinic, Global Rights Advocacy, The Holy HOE Institute, National Homelessness Law Center, Repro Uncensored, National Right to Food Community of Practice, the SBCC, Santa Clara International School of Law, State Innovation Exchange, South Poverty Law Center, If When How, Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

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