

## Human Rights Record of the United States in 2015

### State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China

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#### Foreword

On April 13 local time, the State Department of the United States released its country reports on human rights practices. It made comments on the human rights situation in many countries once again while being tight-lipped about its own terrible human rights record and showing not a bit of intention to reflect on it. In 2015, the United States saw no improvement in its existent human rights issues, but reported numerous new problems. Since the U.S. government refuses to hold up a mirror to look at itself, it has to be done with other people's help.

The following facts about the U.S. human rights situation in 2015 are supported by irrefutable records.

-- The use of guns was out of control in the United States, which severely threatened citizens' right of life. The frequent occurrence of shooting incidents was the deepest impression left to the world concerning the United States in 2015. There were a total of 51,675 gun violence incidents in the United States in 2015 as of December 28, leaving 13,136 killed and 26,493 injured.

-- Citizens' personal security could not be guaranteed with the excessive use of violence by police. Police shot dead 965 people last year as of December 24, and the abuse of power by the police did not result in discipline. "Justice for Freddie" protests were staged in Baltimore, demonstrators in Chicago took to the street to demand justice in the death of Laquan MacDonald, and protesters in Minneapolis camped outside a police precinct after Jamar Clark was shot dead by police.

-- The prison system in the United States was plagued by corruption and severely violated inmates' human rights. The guards in a prison in Florida scalded a mentally-ill inmate Darren Rainey to death in hot shower. The guards in Lowell Correctional Institution, the nation's largest women's prison, pressured hundreds of female inmates to barter sex for basic necessities and a shield from abuse, and 57 inmates have died in this prison over the past 10 years.

-- Money politics and clan politics were prevailing and the political rights of the citizens were not safeguarded effectively. Companies and individuals were able to donate an unlimited size to super Political Action Committees (super PACs) to influence the presidential election. In this way, corporations could use money to sway politics and reap tremendous returns. There were comments that the political system of the United States had been subverted to be a tool that provided returns to major political donors. Family pedigree had become a primary factor for U.S. politics, with a few families and behind-the-scenes interest groups influencing the election using funds. The popular will was abducted by factionalism in the United States, because the interests involved in election made it unable for the Democratic Party and the Republican Party to coordinate on and work out policies that were in line with the popular will.

-- The lingering problems in U.S. society posed challenges for the country to fulfill its duty of safeguarding the economic and social rights of U.S. citizens. In 2014, there were 46.7 million people in poverty in the United States. Every year, at least 48.1 million people were classed as "food insecure." In 2015, more than 560,000 people nationwide were homeless. Seventy-nine percent of Americans believed it was more common for people to fall out of the middle class than rise up to it. There were still 33 million people in the United States with no healthcare insurance, and 44 million private-sector workers, about 40 percent of the total, did not have access to paid sick leaves.

-- Racial conflict was severe in the United States, with race relations at their worst in nearly two decades. Sixty-one percent of Americans characterized race relations in the United States as "bad." Law enforcement and justice fields were heavily affected by racial discrimination, with 88 percent of African-Americans believing they were treated unfairly by police, and 68 percent of African-Americans believing the American criminal justice system was racially biased. Whites had 12 times the wealth of blacks and nearly 10 times more than Hispanics. It was said that the American Dream remained out of reach for many African-American and Hispanic families.

-- The situation for American women was deteriorating and children were living in worrisome environment. In 2014, women in the United States were paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to men. The percentage of women in poverty increased from

12.1 percent to 14.5 percent over the past decade. The United Nations' International Labor Organization said that the United States was the only industrialized nation with no overall law for cash benefits provided to women during maternity leave. A total of 23 percent of undergraduate women said they were victims of non-consensual sexual contact. There were at least two school shootings a month in 2015 and almost two children were killed every week in unintentional shootings. About a quarter of the teenagers above 15 years old who died of injuries in the United States were killed in gun-related incidents. About 17.4 million children under the age of 18 were being raised without a father and 45 percent lived below the poverty line. About one fifth of all U.S. children lived in food-insecure households.

-- The United States still brazenly and brutally violated human rights in other countries, treating citizens from other countries like dirt. Air strikes launched by the United States in Iraq and Syria killed thousands of civilians. The United States also conducted drone attacks in Pakistan and Yemen indiscriminately, causing hundreds of civilian deaths. On October 3, 2015, the U.S. military bombed a hospital operated by "Doctors Without Borders" in the city of Kunduz in Afghanistan, in which 42 people were killed. Defying international condemnation, the United States still did not close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, which had been running for 14 years and still locked up nearly 100 people who had been under arbitrary detention for years without trial.

## **I. Wanton Infringement on Civil Rights**

Civil rights were wantonly infringed upon in the United States in 2015 with rampant gun-related crimes, excessive use of force by police, severe corruption in prisons and frequent occurrence of illegal eavesdropping on personal information.

Citizen's life and property security were threatened by violent crimes. According to the report "Crime in the United States" released by the FBI in 2015, an estimated 1,165,383 violent crimes occurred nationwide in 2014, of which 14,249 were murders, 84,041 were rapes, 325,802 robberies and 741,291 aggravated assaults. Nationwide, there were an estimated 8,277,829 property crimes, with the victims of such crimes suffering losses calculated at an estimated 14.3 billion U.S. dollars. The statistics showed the estimated rate of violent crime was 365.5 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants, and the property crime rate was 2,596.1 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants ([www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)). Many cities in the United States saw large

jumps in crime during the first half of 2015: the murder rate rose 48 percent and 59 percent compared to the same period of the previous year in Baltimore and St. Louis, respectively, said an article carried by the Economist website on December 1, 2015 ([www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com), December 1, 2015). James Howell of the U.S. National Gang Center pointed out that in the past five years the United States had seen an 8 percent increase in the number of gangs, an 11 percent increase in members and a 23 percent increase in gang-related homicides ([www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com), March 6, 2015).

Citizen's right of life could not be guaranteed with the rampant use of guns. Statistics showed that there were more than 300 million guns in the United States which had a population of more than 300 million. Over the past decade, more than 4 million U.S. citizens became victims of assaults, robberies and other gun-related crimes. According to a toll report by the Gun Violence Archive, there were a total of 51,675 gun violence incidents in the United States last year as of December 28, including 329 mass shootings. Altogether 13,136 were killed and 26,493 injured ([www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org), December 28, 2015). According to the report "Crime in the United States" released by the FBI in 2015, firearms were used in 67.9 percent of the nation's murders, 40.3 percent of robberies, and 22.5 percent of aggravated assaults in 2014 ([www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)).

Excessive use of violence by police gravely violated human rights. Excessive use of violence by police during law enforcement had resulted in a large number of civilian casualties. Police shot dead 965 people last year as of December 24, according to data posted on The Washington Post website ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), December 24, 2015). Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African-American man, died while in police custody in Baltimore. His death, reportedly a result of violence by the police, sparked "Justice for Freddie" protests ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), December 22, 2015). Outraged that it took too long to charge a Chicago police officer in African-American Laquan MacDonald's shooting death, demonstrators took to the street to demand justice in his death. The police officer had a history of 20 complaints before he gunned down the 17-year-old, but none resulted in discipline ([edition.cnn.com](http://edition.cnn.com), November 26, 2015). According to a report by the NBC News on November 19, 2015, protestors camped outside a police precinct in Minneapolis after African-American Jamar Clark, 24, was shot dead when he was already under police control. The demonstrations turned violent later ([www.nbc.com](http://www.nbc.com), November 19, 2015).

The government infringed on citizens' privacy by illegally eavesdropping personal information. According to a report carried by the website of The Washington Post on December 1, 2015, the FBI used special authority to compel Internet firms to hand over user information, including full browsing histories, without court approvals ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), December 1, 2015). According to a report released by the Pew Research Center on May 29, 2015, a majority of Americans opposed the government collecting bulk data on its citizens, two-thirds believed there weren't adequate limits on what types of data could be collected, 61 percent said they had become less confident that the programs were serving the public interests, 54 percent of Americans disapproved of the U.S. government's collection of telephone and Internet data as part of anti-terrorism efforts, and 74 percent said they should not give up privacy and freedom for the sake of safety. Most said it was important to control who could get their information (93 percent), as well as what information about them was collected (90 percent) ([www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org), May 29, 2015).

Prison guards wantonly trampled on prisoners' human rights. According to a serial report on the website of the Miami Herald in December 2015, Lowell Correctional Institution, the nation's largest women's prison, was haunted by corruption, torment and sex abuse. The guards took hundreds of female inmates as whores and pressured them to barter sex for basic necessities, a shield from abuse or awards. In the past 10 years 57 inmates died in the prison, not accounting those who make it to hospital ([www.miamiherald.com](http://www.miamiherald.com), December 12, 13 and 16, 2015). The Washington Post reported on its website on May 13, 2015 that a guard in the Fairfax County jail killed a mentally ill woman, Natasha McKenna, with a Taser stun gun ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), May 13, 2015). The Fox News reported on its website on April 9, 2015 that guards in a prison in Florida was accused of abusing and even killing inmates. In one case, a mentally-ill inmate Darren Rainey was forced to take a shower for two hours with the water reportedly rigged to a scalding 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Despite his calls for help, no one came. He reportedly died after his skin was partially burned off his body ([www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com), April 9, 2015).

## **II. Political Rights Not Safeguarded**

In 2015, money politics and clan politics went from bad to worse in the nation where voters found it hard to express their real volition and there was discrimination against belief in political life. In addition, citizens' right to information

was further suppressed. Unsurprisingly, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said that "the U.S. is no longer a democracy" ([www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com), August 3, 2015).

Money politics revealed the hypocrisy in democracy. Although the laws of the United States put a lid on the size of individual donations to presidential candidates, there is no limit for such contributions to super PACs by individuals and corporations. The USA Today reported on April 10, 2015 that the allies of at least 11 White House hopefuls had launched committees to raise unlimited money to back their campaigns ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), April 10, 2015). The presidential candidates and the super PACs raised about 380 million U.S. dollars in only half a year. More than 60 donations were worth more than 1 million U.S. dollars each, accounting for about one third of the total contributions. Half of the amount came from those who donated more than 100,000 U.S. dollars and the combined fund of the top 67 donors was more than three times that of 508,000 donors with least contributions ([www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com), August 1; [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com), August 1). According to a report of the Zerohedge, between 2007 and 2012, 200 of America's most politically active corporations spent a combined 5.8 billion U.S. dollars on federal lobbying and campaign contributions. What they gave paled compared to what those same corporations got: 4.4 trillion U.S. dollars in federal business and support. Put that in context, the sum represented two thirds of what individual taxpayers paid into the federal treasury. For every dollar spent on influencing politics, the nation's most politically active corporations received 760 U.S. dollars from the government ([www.zerohedge.com](http://www.zerohedge.com), March 16, 2015). Jimmy Carter said that with unlimited political bribery being the essence of getting the nominations for president or being elected president, the U.S. political system was subverted to be a payoff to major contributors ([www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com), August 3, 2015). The role money played in politics was also indicated in the U.S. President's State of the Union Address for 2016, which said a handful of families and hidden interests were exercising influence on elections via their funds.

Clan politics was driving U.S. government elections. Among the candidates for the 2016 presidential election, more than one candidate was obviously related to clan politics. The New York Times concluded through big data analysis that advantages from father generation played a role in politics obviously. The chance for the son of a U.S. president to become president was 1.4 million times higher than his peers. Meanwhile the chance for a governor's son to be elected governor

was 6,000 times higher than ordinary people. In addition, the chance for the son of a senator to be a senator like his father was also 8,500 times higher than ordinary U.S. men ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), March 22, 2015). The Washington Post reported on January 16, 2015 that since the beginning of the Republic, 8.7 percent of its members of Congress were closely related to someone who had served in the body. The report continued to point out that a smell of heirship could be detected in the U.S. presidential election since the possible slate of candidates would include the son of a governor and presidential candidate, the son of a congressman and presidential candidate, the wife of a president and the brother of a president, son of a president and grandson of a senator ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), January 16, 2015).

Discrimination against beliefs led to unfairness in political life. Not believing in God could be the biggest disadvantage while running for a post in public office. It was difficult for those who were not Christians to win elections and for those who did not have a religious belief, the chance to win elections was slimmer. In a May 2014 Pew Research survey, atheism was the most disqualifying factor for a potential presidential candidate, according to a report posted on the website of The Washington Post on September 22, 2015. More than half of those surveyed said they would be less likely to vote for someone who did not believe in God. And another Pew poll in July 2014 found that of all religion-related groups, atheists and Muslims were viewed the most negatively by Americans ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), September 22, 2015).

Citizens' electoral rights were further limited. According to an article on the website of the U.S. News and World Report on August 4, 2015, since 2010, a total of 21 states had adopted new laws to limit the exercise of suffrage. Some states shortened the time for early voting, while others limited the number of documents identifying one as a lawful voter. A total of 14 states will carry out fresh measures to limit the exercise of suffrage for the first time in 2016 presidential election. The voting rights were hit by the vicious competition between the two parties. One Democratic candidate accused GOP presidential candidates of having "systematically and deliberately" tried to keep millions of Americans from voting so as to win the election ([www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com), August 4, 2015). A USA Today report, which was published on its website on March 20, 2015, said the nation had its lowest midterm-election voter turnout in 2014 since the early 1940s. The average turnout across the United States was 37 percent, with a low of 28.8 percent recorded in Indiana (<http://www.usatoday.com>, March 20, 2015).

It was difficult for voters to express their real will. The Christian Science Monitor carried a report on its website on December 13, 2015 that the two-party system forced the voters to take side. Most voters cast ballots for a party not because they supported the party but out of fear and worry over the other one ([www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com), December 13, 2015). It was said in the U.S. President's State of the Union Address for 2016 that the practice of drawing congressional districts led to the situation where "politicians can pick their voters, and not the other way around." It went on to say that "the rancor and suspicion between parties has gotten worse instead of better."

Citizens' right to information was hampered by the government. According to a report by the Associated Press on March 13, 2015, authorities were undermining the laws that were supposed to guarantee citizens' right to information and the systems created to give citizens information about their government. In addition, it was getting harder to use public records to hold government officials accountable ([www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org), March 13, 2015). An article on the website of the CNN reported on February 13, 2015 that journalists and news supervision authorities had continually slammed the current U.S. administration as one of the least transparent. At least 15 journalists were arrested in Ferguson protests ([edition.cnn.com](http://edition.cnn.com), February 13, 2015).

### **III. Economic and Social Rights under Challenge**

In 2015, no substantial progress concerning the economic and social rights of U.S. citizens were made. Workers carried out mass strikes to claim their rights at work. Food-insecure and homeless populations remained huge. Many U.S. people suffered from poor health.

The rights of laborers at work were not effectively protected. On October 6, 2015, Al Jazeera America reported that about 40 percent of private-sector workers, or 44 million people in America, did not have access to paid sick leave. Large scale strikes in many industries were reported. In February 2015, workers at nine oil refineries in California, Texas, Kentucky and Washington states carried out strikes, protesting onerous overtime, unsafe staffing levels and dangerous conditions ([america.aljazeera.com](http://america.aljazeera.com), February 2, October 6, 2015). In April, the same year, fast food workers walked off the job in 230 cities, staging a strike aimed at a minimum wage of 15 U.S. dollars. In November, they walked out in hundreds of



cities for the same reason. About 2,000 workers at seven major U.S. airports went on strike in November to protest low wages (thinkprogress.org, April 15, 2015; www.usatoday.com, November 10, November 19, 2015).

There was huge income gap between the rich and the poor. In the United States, 3.1 percent of income earned annually went to the poorest 20 percent of people, while 51.4 percent was earned by the richest 20 percent (www.usatoday.com, October 10, 2015). Official data showed that 46.7 million people were living in poverty in 2014. (www.census.gov). In Delaware, the percentage of people living below the federal poverty line in 2014 was 12.5 percent, creeping up from 11.7 percent in 2013. Nearly a quarter of residents of Wilmington, Delaware lived below the poverty line. The poverty rate for children was around 20 percent. U.S. people were pessimistic about the prospects of social and economic instability. Seventy-nine percent of Americans believed it was more common for people to fall out of the middle class than rise up to it (www.usatoday.com, June 9, November 23, 2015).

There was a large food-insecure population in the United States. According to a report published on the Guardian website on November 26, 2015, government statistics suggested that between 2008 and 2014 at least 48.1 million people a year were classed as "food insecure", including 19.2 percent of all households with children, meaning they could not always afford to eat balanced meals (www.theguardian.com, November 26, 2015). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that each year, 48 million people suffered from a foodborne illness, resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths (www.pewtrusts.org, December 4, 2015). Approximately one fifth of all U.S. children lived in food-insecure households, according to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (america.aljazeera.com, October 8, 2015).

Hundreds of thousands of U.S. people were homeless. A report published on the USA Today website on June 9, 2015 said housing prices had skyrocketed in the United States in recent years, while income levels remained stagnant. Fifty-five percent of Americans had made more financial sacrifice to afford their housing. According to a report by the National Association of Realtors, the gap between rental costs and household income had been widening to unsustainable levels (www.usatoday.com, June 9, July 31, 2015). A study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that more than 560,000 people

were homeless in the United States as of November 18, 2015. About one fourth of them were children under the age of 18 ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)). In New York City, there were 59,568 homeless people, including 14,361 homeless families with 23,858 homeless children, sleeping each night in municipal shelters in October 2015, 86 percent higher than the number in 2005. People living on streets had no access to toilets or showers ([www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org), November 11, 2015). In recent years, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland and the state of Hawaii have all recently declared emergencies over the rise of homelessness ([www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir), November 20, 2015).

Human right to health of U.S. people was not fully protected. According to a report of the Institute for Policy Innovation released on September 18, 2015, there were still 33 million people in the United States uninsured, although U.S. Congress had passed the health care reform bill in 2010, promising to establish a universal healthcare system ([www.ipi.org](http://www.ipi.org), September 18, 2015). The United States was reported to have the worst medical care system and the highest number of infant mortalities out of 11 developed countries ([borgenproject.org](http://borgenproject.org), August 23, 2015). There were more than 6,200 places nationwide with a shortage of primary care physicians ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), December 12, 2015). Today, more than 1.2 million people in the United States were HIV-positive. About one in eight of those infected were unaware of their status ([edition.cnn.com](http://edition.cnn.com), December 9, 2015). There was a significant difference between the health conditions of the rich and the poor. According to an AFP report on October 14, 2015, in Brooklyn's poorest neighborhood of Brownsville, New York City, nearly 40 percent of its citizens lived below the federal poverty level. Brownsville suffered more than twice the rates of new HIV diagnoses in New York City. Its people died 11 years earlier than those living around Manhattan's financial district. (AFP, October 14, 2015).

Case fatality rate due to drug overdose set new record high. According to a CDC report, drug overdose was the leading cause of diseases in the United States. The death rate from drug overdose more than doubled from 6.0 per 100,000 population in 1999 to 13.8 in 2013. More than 47,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2014, an increase of 3,018 from 2013. Heroin poses the biggest issue among all forms of drug overdose. In 2013, deaths from heroin-related overdose exceeded 8,200, nearly quadrupling that of 2002. In 2014, the number surged to 10,574. Increasing number of young people and females took heroin. Compared with figures in the period from 2002 to 2004, the number of young heroin addicts aged between 18 and 25 in 2011-2013 period increased by 109

percent, while female users doubled ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), October 16, December 29, 2015; [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com), December 18, 2015).

#### IV. Racial Discrimination Worse Than Ever

In 2015, racial relations in the United States kept deteriorating. Law enforcement and justice fields were heavily influenced by racial discrimination, and race-based hate crimes occurred occasionally. Anti-Muslim remarks caused a great clamor, and minority races were unable to change their vulnerable status in economic and social lives.

Americans' view of race relations was at a two-decade low. A poll jointly released by the CBS News and The New York Times on May 4, 2015 showed that 61 percent of Americans characterized race relations in the United States as "bad," including a majority of white and black respondents. The figure was the highest since 1992 ([newyork.cbslocal.com](http://newyork.cbslocal.com), May 4, 2015). A Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll in December 2015 showed that only 34 percent of Americans believe race relations in the United States were fairly good or very good, down from a high of 77 percent in January 2009 ([blogs.wsj.com](http://blogs.wsj.com), December 16, 2015). A survey released in November 2015 by the Public Religion Research Institute in the United States showed that 35 percent of Americans believed racial tensions were a major concern in their own communities, jumping 18 percentage points from 2012 ([publicreligion.org](http://publicreligion.org), November 17, 2015). Figures released in August 2015 by Pew Research Center showed that 50 percent of Americans said that racism was a big problem in the U.S. society; 60 percent Americans said the country needed to continue making changes to achieve racial equality, up 14 percentage points from a year ago ([www.people-press.org](http://www.people-press.org), August 5, 2015).

Cases of African-Americans being killed by police occurred repeatedly. On November 15, 2015, the 24-year-old African-American Jamar Clark was shot dead by white police officers. The fatal shooting occurred when two police officers were trying to arrest him. Witnesses said that Clark was handcuffed when he was shot in the head. The civil rights organization "Black Lives Matter" organized protests in multiple cities across the country. In a Facebook post, Black Lives Matter activists noted "the era of white supremacist terrorism against people of color across the U.S.," ([www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com), November 18, 2015; [www.mprnews.org](http://www.mprnews.org), November 20, 2015; [www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com), November 24,

2015) On April 12, 2015, as 25-year-old African-American Freddie Gray was being arrested, police handcuffed him and had knees on his back and his head. Gray was dragged and thrown into the back of a police van with his face down. Gray requested medical attention while being transported in the van but the request was denied. Gray lapsed into a coma following the journey on April 12 and died a week later in a hospital. He died of a severe spinal cord injury. The incident sparked large-scale protests in Baltimore. The protests turned violent on April 27, and Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard. It was the second time in six months that a state called out the National Guard to enforce order after a white police officer killed a black teenager, Michael Brown, in Ferguson in 2014. The New York Times said that Gray had become the nation's latest symbol of police brutality in an April 28 story. (edition.cnn.com, April 29, 2015; www.bbc.com, May 5, 2015; baltimore.cbslocal.com, April 27, 2015; www.nytimes.com, April 27 and 28, 2015) According to The Washington Post website, police fatally shot 965 people in 2015 as of December 24, 2015, including 36 unarmed African-Americans (www.washingtonpost.com, December 24, 2015). The CBS News-New York Times poll released on May 4, 2015 showed that 79 percent of African-Americans believed police were more likely to use deadly force against a black person than against a white person, and black respondents were more likely than white respondents to believe their local police made them feel anxious rather than safe (newyork.cbslocal.com, May 4, 2015). According to a poll released by the National Bar Association in the United States, 88 percent of blacks believed black people were treated unfairly by police, compared with 59 percent of whites who shared that view (www.usatoday.com, September 9, 2015).

Racial discrimination in the criminal justice system was severe. A Gallup survey in 2015 showed that 68 percent of African-Americans believed the American criminal justice system was racially biased, while 37 percent of whites said the same (www.usatoday.com, June 18, 2015). According to a survey released by the Public Religion Research Institute, 51 percent of Americans disagreed that blacks and other minorities received equal treatment as whites in the criminal justice system, and 78 percent of black Americans disagreed that blacks and other minorities received equal treatment to whites in the criminal justice system (publicreligion.org, May 7, 2015). Prosecutors intentionally struck black people from juries in trials of black defendants. In the South, the practice for prosecutors

to strike jurors based on race remained common ([www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com), June 5, 2015).

Race-related hate crimes occurred occasionally. Craig Stephen Hicks, 46, shot dead three Muslim students near the University of North Carolina on February 10, 2015. Hicks had frequently posted messages critical of various religions on the Internet ([indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com), June 5, 2015). On June 17, 2015, Dylann Roof, a 21-year-old white man, opened fire and killed nine people, including a pastor, at an African-American church in Charleston in South Carolina. According to witnesses, Roof told the victims, "You rape our women and you're taking over our country, and you have to go ([www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com), June 17, 2015; [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com), June 19, 2015)."

Anti-Muslim remarks caused a great clamor. The Guardian reported on November 19, 2015 that a Republican presidential candidate made public comments, saying that he would consider warrantless searches of Muslims and increased surveillance of mosques, and that he would not rule out tracking Muslim Americans in a database or giving them "a special form of identification that noted their religion ([www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), November 19, 2015)." On December 7, the presidential candidate made a statement calling for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States ([www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com), December 8, 2015)." In recent years, Americans' view on Islam became more and more negative. According to a survey by the Public Religion Research Institute, 56 percent of Americans said that the values of Islam were "at odds" with America's values and way of life, and 76 percent of Republicans were especially likely to have the same opinion ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), November 17, 2015). The Human Rights Committee remained concerned about the practice of racial profiling and surveillance by law enforcement officials targeting certain ethnic minorities, notably Muslims ([daccess-dds-ny.un.org](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org)).

Minority races were in a dire situation. According to figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rates in November 2015 were 4.3 percent for whites, 9.4 percent for blacks and 6.4 percent for Hispanics. The unemployment rate for blacks more than doubled that for whites, and the figure for Hispanics was 50 percent higher than that for whites ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)). The unemployment rate for black college graduates was roughly equal to the rate for white Americans with associate degrees ([huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com),

December 18, 2015). A third of Iowa's black households earned less than 20,000 U.S. dollars annually, compared with 8 percent of white households. More than one fifth of white households in Iowa earned 100,000 U.S. dollars or more in a year, but only eight percent of black households did ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), October 31, 2015). Approximately 57 percent of New York City homeless shelter residents were African-American, 31 percent were Latino, 8 percent were white ([www.coalitionforthehomeless.org](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org), March 18, 2015). According to a CNN report on February 18, 2015, financial inequality was pervading the country and it was getting worse. Whites had 12 times the wealth of blacks and nearly 10 times more than Hispanics. "The American Dream remains out of reach for many African-American and Hispanic families." ([money.cnn.com](http://money.cnn.com), February 18, 2015) The documentary Seeking Asylum by African-American Darnell Walker triggered heated responses after debuting online, chronicling the plight of black Americans who no longer felt safe in the United States due to rampant police brutality and were looking to settle elsewhere. Miles Marshall Lewis, who moved to France in 2004 from the United States, published his book "No Country for Black Men" in 2014, a response to the wave of police killings targeting blacks ([www.thedailybeast.com](http://www.thedailybeast.com), November 11, 2015).

#### V. Missing Rights for Women and Children

Rights of women and children were grossly violated in the United States in 2015. Women were facing serious workplace discrimination, domestic violence and sexual violation and children were under the threats of arms, abuse, poverty and police violence.

Women were facing worsening situation of inferior social status. On December 11, 2015, the United Nations Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice delivered a statement after a mission to the United States and pointed out the missing rights and protections such as universal paid maternity leave, accessible reproductive health care and equal opportunity in standing for political election for the country's women. In the United States, women fell behind international standards as regards their public and political representation, their economic and social rights and their health and safety protections. Women's average representation in state legislatures was 24.9 percent. This rate placed the country at only the 72nd in global ranking. The gender wage gap was 21 percent. The percentage of women in poverty increased

over the past decade, from 12.1 percent to 14.5 percent, with a higher rate of poverty than men. Poor and immigrant women faced severe barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive health services. Women faced fatal consequences of lack of gun control, in particular in cases of domestic violence. The statement also expressed concerns over violence against women in detention as well as the alarming high rates of violence against Native-American women ([www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org), December 11, 2015).

Women were suffering workplace discrimination. A report released by the U.S. Census Bureau in September 2015 revealed that women in the U.S. were paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to men in 2014, amounting to a yearly wage gap of 10,762 U.S. dollars between full-time working men and women ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). The United Nations' International Labour Organization said in 2014 that out of the 185 countries and territories with available data, the United States was the only industrialized nation with no overall law for cash benefits provided to women during maternity leave ([abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com), May 6, 2015). A report at the website of the Los Angeles Times on May 6, 2015 said that white men had a 42 percent advantage over white women when it came to being promoted to the executive level in U.S. tech companies, but that paled in comparison to the 260 percent advantage they had to Asian women ([www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com), May 6, 2015).

Women fell victim to various forms of sex harassments and sex assaults. A survey released by the Association of American Universities in September 2015 indicated that 23 percent of undergraduate women said they were victims of non-consensual sexual contact and that 20 percent of students said sexual assault and misconduct was very or extremely problematic on their own campus ([www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com), September 21, 2015; [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), September 1/September 21, 2015). According to a report at the USA Today website on August 17, 2015, a total of 37 percent of women said they had experienced some kind of online harassment. A total of 54 percent of Hispanics and 51 percent of African Americans said they had experienced online harassment. Also, women were more likely to be targets of serious cases in which they were stalked and sexually harassed ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), August 17, 2015). Another article at the USA Today website on December 11, 2015 reported that Daniel Holtzclaw, a former Oklahoma City police officer, was convicted of sexually assaulting women he preyed upon in a low-income neighborhood he patrolled. He was convicted of

18 counts connected to eight women, all of whom were black ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), December 11, 2015).

Children were under the threats of guns. According to statistics from the Gun Violence Archive website, as of December 28, 2015, gun-related incidents that year left 682 children under the age of 11 and 2,640 children aged between 12 and 17 killed or injured ([www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org), December 28, 2015). The RT America reported at its website on October 10, 2015 that the number of U.S. school shootings that year climbed to 52. There were at least two school shootings a month in 2015 ([www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com), October 10, 2015). A report at the website of the USA Today on January 21, 2015 said that almost two children were killed every week in unintentional shootings, and nearly two thirds of these unintended deaths took place in a home or vehicle that belonged to the victim's family ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), January 22, 2015). More than a quarter of the teenagers -- 15 years old and up -- who died of injuries in the United States were killed in gun-related incidents, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics ([www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com), January 12, 2015).

Poor health and living conditions for children. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the rate of newborns with syphilis jumped 38 percent between 2012 and 2014 to its highest level in more than a decade ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), November 12, 2015). A survey said that one in five drug abusers in some treatment programs in the United States received their first taste of these illegal substances from their parents, usually before the age of 18 ([abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com), August 24, 2015). According to U.S. Census Bureau, about 17.4 million children under the age of 18 were being raised without a father and 45 percent lived below the poverty line ([singlemotherguide.com](http://singlemotherguide.com), June 1, 2015). About 6 percent of New York City's African-American population under 18 years old and nearly 3 percent Latino children utilized New York City shelters because of homelessness ([www.coalitionforthehomeless.org](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org), March 19, 2015). The USA Today website reported on August 15, 2015 that 47 percent of rural Hispanic babies were born poor, compared to 41 percent of Hispanic babies in urban areas. Hispanics babies born in rural enclaves were more likely to be impoverished and it was harder for them to receive help from federal and state programs, such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. "These babies are starting behind the starting line." ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com), August 15, 2015)



children were suffering abuse. A report at the website of The Washington Post on January 1, 2015 said that among the young children killed in the D.C. region, the majority was killed by a parent or guardian ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), January 1, 2015). The Miami Herald website on March 10, 2015 reported that one in three girls and one in five boys would become a victim of child sexual abuse in Florida before they turned 18. Such experience would have serious negative impact on their future lives. On average, each victim of child sexual abuse would lose 250,000 U.S. dollars in earnings throughout his or her lifetime because of the abuse. Fifty percent of victims had below-average grades ([www.miamiherald.com](http://www.miamiherald.com), March 10, 2015).

African-American children fell victim to police violence. The CNN website on June 10, 2015 reported that a video went viral online showing violence by a white police officer of the Police Department in McKinney, Texas, against a 14-year-old African-American girl. The officer, called to a community swimming pool party after complaints, cursed at several black teenagers and yanked the girl wearing only a bikini to the ground. He also pointed his gun at the teenagers. The white witness who shot the video said there was no doubt race was a factor in how police responded. This incident triggered some public protests ([edition.cnn.com](http://edition.cnn.com), June 10, 2015). On October 26, 2015, a video that showed Ben Fields, a white school resource officer at Spring Valley High School in South Carolina, manhandling an African-American school girl drew intense criticism. The officer grabbed the girl, who used her cell phone during class, by the neck, flipped her over and dragged her across the floor. Fields in 2013 was named as a defendant in a federal lawsuit that claimed he "unfairly and recklessly targets African-American students." The U.S. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People criticized that such violence "doesn't affect white students". Victoria Middleton, the executive director for the South Carolina branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, said that regardless of the reason for the officer's actions, such egregious use of force - against young people who were sitting in their classrooms - was outrageous. "School should be a place to learn and grow, not a place to be brutalized." ([abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com), October 28, 2015)

## VI. Gross Violations of Human Rights in Other Countries

In 2015, the United States continued to trample on human rights in other countries, causing tremendous civilian casualties. Its overseas monitoring projects infringed on the privacy of citizens of other countries while torture scandals at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp continued. Up to date, the United States has not ratified some core human rights conventions of the United Nations and voted against some important human rights resolutions.

Air strikes caused a large number of civilian casualties. According to Airwars, a project aimed at tracking air strikes in the Middle East, the United States had repeatedly organized coalition forces to launch air strikes against military forces in Iraq and Syria since August 8, 2014. As of December 6, 2015, the United States launched 3,965 air strikes in Iraq and 2,823 in Syria, causing an estimated number of civilian deaths between 1,695 and 2,239 ([www.airwars.org](http://www.airwars.org)). The Syrian government called U.S.-led coalition air strikes an "act of aggression" ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk), December 7, 2015). On October 3, 2015, a hospital run by aid group "Doctors Without Borders" in the city of Kunduz in Afghanistan was under a bombing that continued for half an hour. Many patients who were unable to move were killed on site, while some staff of the aid group were shot at from the air while fleeing the hospital. A total of 42 people were killed in the air strike, with some bodies charred beyond recognition ([www.sputniknews.com](http://www.sputniknews.com), December 12, 2015; [www.abcnews.go.com](http://www.abcnews.go.com), October 5, 2015).

A frequent use of drones claimed many innocent lives. According to an October 15, 2015 report run by Daily Mail website, when carrying out drone assassinations, the U.S. military used "phone data alone" -- a limited way of guaranteeing a kill. During Operation Haymaker, a campaign in northeastern Afghanistan which ran between January 2012 and February 2013, some 219 people were killed by drones but just 35 were the intended targets. During another five-month stretch of the operation, a staggering 90 percent of those killed were not the intended target. Despite this all the deaths were labeled EKIA, or "enemy killed in action." ([www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk), October 15, 2015). A report posted on April 24, 2015 by The Washington Post on its website said a study, which documented 415 strikes in Pakistan and Yemen since the September 11, 2001 attacks, put the total number of killed civilians between 423 and 962 ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), April 24, 2015). The abuse of drone strikes not only drew widespread criticism from international community, but also incurred strong doubt from U.S. scholars. The Washington Post posted an article on March 20, 2015, introducing to its readers

two books on drones - Kill Chain: The Rise of the High-Tech Assassins, by Andrew Cockburn, and A Theory of the Drones, by Gregoire Chamayou. Cockburn sees America's killer drone policy as "the culmination of a historical pattern of lies, deception and greed in the deployment of lethal military force around the world" and as "a continuation of previous U.S. assassination policy." Failing miserably to achieve the country's stated goal of enhanced security, the policy simultaneously undermined the democratic process, Cockburn writes, noting that "assassination by robot is bound to inspire rather than curtail extremism." According to Chamayou and Cockburn, killer drone exposes the trend toward a new -- and "inhumane form of warfare." "With drone warfare, there is no victory, just perpetual elimination." ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), March 20, 2015).

Abuse of cruel torture trampled on human rights. A report by the U.S. Senate on the study of the Central Intelligence Agency's detention and interrogation program found that the CIA's use of brutal interrogation techniques, such as waterboarding, long-term solitary confinement, slamming prisoners' heads into walls, lashing and death threat, were in serious violation of U.S. law ([www.intelligence.senate.gov](http://www.intelligence.senate.gov)). While according to some witnesses, the CIA torture went far beyond the Senate report had disclosed. Majid Khan, a Guantanamo Bay detainee-turned government cooperating witness, said interrogators poured ice water on his genitals, twice videotaped him naked and repeatedly touched his "private parts". At one point, Khan said, his feet and lower legs were placed in tall boot-like metal cuffs that dug into his flesh and immobilized his legs. The guards also stripped him naked, hung him from a wooden beam for three days and provided him with water but no food. All the above torture details that Khan had undergone were not included in the Senate report ([www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), June 2, 2015). On January 11, 2016, human rights experts, including the UN special rapporteurs on torture Juan E. Mendez; on human rights and counterterrorism, Ben Emmerson; on independence of the judiciary, Monica Pinto; Chair-Rapporteur of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention Seong-Phil Hong; and the director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights under the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Michael Georg Link, together called on the U.S. Government to promptly close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, 14 years after the detention center became operational. The experts recalled in the letter that close to 100 detainees still languished in Guantanamo after years of arbitrary detention without trial ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org), January 11, 2016).

The United States spied on leaders from other countries. The BBC reported on April 30, 2015 that the U.S. National Security Agency, by working with other secret services, has long monitored on European leaders ([www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com), April 30, 2015). The Independent reported on June 24, 2015 that the United States had bugged the phones of three French presidents and many other senior French officials, for which a French government spokesman said was "unacceptable" ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk), June 24, 2015). Facing criticism from its allies, the U.S. government continued to monitor some leaders in the name of "national security purpose" ([www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), December 30, 2015).

Though the United States repeatedly vowed to defend "human rights," it still has not ratified core human rights conventions of the UN, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United States is the only country that is yet to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United States also takes an uncooperative attitude towards international human rights issues. It often kept stalling or turned a deaf ear to criticisms leveled by the UN Human Rights Council special sessions and High Commissioners for Human Rights. On September 28, 2015 when the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution related to development right, the United States, as always, voted against it ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)).