

## **Human Rights Record of the United States in 2009**

**The Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China**

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The State Department of the United States released its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 on March 11, 2010, posing as "the world judge of human rights" again. As in previous years, the reports are full of accusations of the human rights situation in more than 190 countries and regions including China, but turn a blind eye to, or dodge and even cover up rampant human rights abuses on its own territory. The Human Rights Record of the United States in 2009 is prepared to help people around the world understand the real situation of human rights in the United States.

### **I. On Life, Property and Personal Security**

Widespread violent crimes in the United States posed threats to the lives, properties and personal security of its people.

In 2008, U.S. residents experienced 4.9 million violent crimes, 16.3 million property crimes and 137,000 personal thefts, and the violent crime rate was 19.3 victimizations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or over, according to a report published by the U.S. Department of Justice in September 2009 (Criminal Victimization 2008, U.S. Department of Justice, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>). In 2008, over 14 million arrests occurred for all offenses (except traffic violations) in the country, and the arrest rate for violent crime was 198.2 per 100,000 inhabitants (Crime in the United States, 2008, <http://www.fbi.gov>). In 2009, a total of 35 domestic homicides occurred in Philadelphia, a 67 percent increase from 2008 (The New York Times, December 30, 2009). In New York City, 461 murders were reported in 2009, and the crime rate was 1,151 cases per 100,000 people. San Antonio in Texas was deemed as the most

dangerous among 25 U.S. large cities with 2,538 crimes recorded per 100,000 people (The China Press, December 30, 2009). The murder rate rose 5.5 percent in towns with a population of 10,000 or fewer in 2008 (<http://www.usatoday.com>, June 1, 2009). Most of the United States' 15,000 annual murders occur in cities where they are concentrated in poorer neighborhoods (<http://www.reuters.com>, October 7, 2009).

The United States ranks first in the world in terms of the number of privately-owned guns. According to the data from the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), American gun owners, out of 309 million in total population, have more than 250 million guns, while a substantial proportion of U.S. gun owners had more than one weapon. Americans usually buy 7 billion rounds of ammunition a year, but in 2008 the figure jumped to about 9 billion (The China Press, September 25, 2009). In the United States, airline passengers are allowed to take unloaded weapons after declaration.

In the United States, about 30,000 people die from gun-related incidents each year (The China Press, April 6, 2009). According to a FBI report, there had been 14,180 murder victims in 2008 (USA Today, September 15, 2009). Firearms were used in 66.9 percent of murders, 43.5 percent of robberies and 21.4 percent of aggravated assaults (<http://www.thefreelibrary.com>). USA Today reported that a man named Michael McLendon killed 10 people in two rural towns of Alabama before turning a gun on himself on March 11, 2009. On March 29, a man named Robert Stewart shot and killed eight people and injured three others in a nursing home in North Carolina (USA Today, March 11, 2009). On April 3, an immigrant called Jiverly Wong shot 13 people dead and wounded four others in an immigration services center in downtown Binghamton, New York (The New York Times, April 4, 2009). In the year 2009, a string of attacks on police shocked the country. On March 21, a 26-year-old jobless man shot and killed four police officers in Oakland, California, before he was killed by police gunfire (<http://cbs5.com>). On April 4, a man called Richard Poplawski shot three police officers to death in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On November 29, an ex-convict named Maurice Clemmons shot four police officers to death inside a coffee shop in Parkland, Washington (The New York Times, December 1, 2 and 3, 2009).

Campuses became an area worst hit by violent crimes as shootings spread there and kept escalating. The U.S. Heritage Foundation reported that 11.3 percent of high school students in Washington D.C. reported being "threatened or injured" with a weapon while on school property during the 2007-2008 school year. In the same period, police

responded to more than 900 calls to 911 reporting violent incidents at the addresses of Washington D.C. public schools (A Report of The Heritage Center for Data Analysis, School Safety in Washington, D.C.: New Data for the 2007-2008 School Year, <http://www.heritage.org>). In New Jersey public schools, a total of 17,666 violent incidents were reported in 2007-2008 (Annual Report on Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Public Schools by New Jersey Department of Education, October 2009, <http://www.state.nj.us>). In the City University of New York, a total of 107 major crimes occurred in five of its campuses during 2006 and 2007 (The New York Post, September 22, 2009).

## **II. On Civil and Political Rights**

In the United States, civil and political rights of citizens are severely restricted and violated by the government.

The country's police frequently impose violence on the people. Chicago Defender reported on July 8, 2009 that a total of 315 police officers in New York were subject to internal supervision due to unrestrained use of violence during law enforcement. The figure was only 210 in 2007. Over the past two years, the number of New York police officers under review for garnering too many complaints was up 50 percent (<http://www.chicagodefender.com>). According to a New York Police Department firearms discharge report released on Nov. 17, 2009, the city's police fired 588 bullets in 2007, killing 10 people, and 354 bullets in 2008, killing 13 people (<http://gothamist.com>, November 17, 2009). On September 3, 2009, a student of the San Jose State University was hit repeatedly by four San Jose police officers with batons and a Taser gun for more than ten times (<http://www.mercurynews.com>, October 27, 2009). On September 22, 2009, a Chinese student in Eugene, Oregon was beaten by a local police officer for no reason (The Oregonian, October 23, 2009, <http://blog.oregonlive.com>). According to the Amnesty International, in the first ten months of 2009, police officers in the U.S. killed 45 people due to unrestrained use of Taser guns. The youngest of the victims was only 15. From 2001 to October, 2009, 389 people died of Taser guns used by police officers (<http://theduckshoot.com>).

Abuse of power is common among U.S. law enforcers. In July 2009, the Federal Bureau of Investigation put four police officers in the Washington area under investigation for taking money to protect a gambling ring frequented by some of the region's most powerful drug dealers over the past two years (The Washington Post, July, 19, 2009). In

September 2009, an off-duty police officer in Chicago attacked a bus driver for "cutting him off in traffic" as he rode a bicycle (Chicago Tribune, September 2009, <http://www.chicagobreakingnews.com>). In the same month, four former police officers in Chicago were charged with extorting close to 500,000 U.S. dollars from a Hispanic driving an expensive car with out-of-state plates and suspected drug dealers in the name of law enforcement, and offering bribes to their superiors (Chicago Tribune, September 19, 2009). In November 2009, a former police chief of the Prince George's County's town of Morningside was charged with selling a stolen gun to a civilian (The Washington Post, November 18, 2009). In major U.S. cities, police stop, question and frisk more than a million people each year - a sharply higher number than just a few years ago (<http://huffingtonpost.com>, October 8, 2009).

Prisons in the United State are packed with inmates. According to a report released by the U.S. Justice Department on Dec. 8, 2009, more than 7.3 million people were under the authority of the U.S. corrections system at the end of 2008. The correctional system population increased by 0.5 percent in 2008 compared with the previous year (<http://www.wsws.org>). About 2.3 million were held in custody of prisons and jails, the equivalent of about one in every 198 persons in the country. From 2000 to 2008, the U.S. prison population increased an average of 1.8 percent annually (<http://mensnewsdaily.com>, January 18, 2010). The California government even suggested sending tens of thousands of illegal immigrants held in the state to Mexico, in order to ease its overcrowded prison system (<http://news.yahoo.com>, January 26, 2010).

The basic rights of prisoners in the United States are not well-protected. Raping cases of inmates by prison staff members are widely reported. According to the U.S. Justice Department, reports of sexual misconduct by prison staff members with inmates in the country's 93 federal prison sites doubled over the past eight years. Of the 90 staff members prosecuted for sexual abuse of inmates, nearly 40 percent were also convicted of other crimes (The Washington Post, September 11, 2009). The New York Times reported on June 24, 2009 that according to a federal survey of more than 63,000 federal and state inmates, 4.5 percent reported being sexually abused at least once during the previous 12 months. It was estimated that there were at least 60,000 rapes of prisoners across the United States during the same period (The New York Times, June 24, 2009).

Chaotic management of prisons in the United State also led to wide spread of diseases among the inmates. According to a report from the U.S. Justice Department, a total of

20,231 male inmates and 1,913 female inmates had been confirmed as HIV carriers in the U.S. federal and state prisons at yearend 2008. The percentage of male and female inmates with HIV/AIDS amounted to 1.5 and 1.9 percent respectively (<http://www.news-medical.net>, December 2, 2009). From 2007 to 2008, the number of HIV/AIDS cases in prisons in California, Missouri and Florida increased by 246, 169, and 166 respectively. More than 130 federal and state inmates in the U.S. died of AIDS-related causes in 2007 (<http://thecrimereport.org>, December 2, 2009). A report by the Human Rights Watch released in March 2009 said although the New York State prison registered the highest number of prisoners living with HIV in the country, it did not provide the inmates with adequate access to treatment, and even locked the inmates up separately, refusing to provide them with treatment of any kind. ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org), March 24, 2009).

While advocating "freedom of speech," "freedom of the press" and "Internet freedom," the U.S. government unscrupulously monitors and restricts the citizens' rights to freedom when it comes to its own interests and needs.

The U.S. citizens' freedom to access and distribute information is under strict supervision. According to media reports, the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) started installing specialized eavesdropping equipment around the country to wiretap calls, faxes, and emails and collect domestic communications as early as 2001. The wiretapping programs was originally targeted at Arab-Americans, but soon grew to include other Americans. The NSA installed over 25 eavesdropping facilities in San Jose, San Diego, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Chicago among other cities. The NSA also announced recently it was building a huge one million square foot data warehouse at a cost of 1.5 billion U.S. dollars at Camp Williams in Utah, as well as another massive data warehouse in San Antonio, as part of the NSA's new Cyber Command responsibilities. The report said a man named Nacchio was convicted on 19 counts of insider trading and sentenced to six years in prison after he refused to participate in NSA's surveillance program (<http://www.onlinejournal.com>, November 23, 2009).

After the September 11 attack, the U.S. government, in the name of anti-terrorism, authorized its intelligence authorities to hack into its citizens' mail communications, and to monitor and erase any information that might threaten the U.S. national interests on the Internet through technical means. The country's Patriot Act allowed law enforcement agencies to search telephone, email communications, medical, financial and other records, and broadened the discretion of law enforcement and immigration

authorities in detaining and deporting foreign persons suspected of terrorism-related acts. The Act expanded the definition of terrorism, thus enlarging the number of activities to which law enforcement powers could be applied. On July 9, 2008, the U.S. Senate passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments Act of 2008, granting legal immunity to telecommunication companies that take part in wiretapping programs and authorizing the government to wiretap international communications between the United States and people overseas for anti-terrorism purposes without court approval (The New York Times, July 10, 2008). Statistics showed that from 2002 to 2006, the FBI collected thousands of phone records of U.S. citizens through mails, notes and phone calls. In September 2009, the country set up an Internet security supervision body, further worrying U.S. citizens that the U.S. government might use Internet security as an excuse to monitor and interfere with personal systems. A U.S. government official told the New York Times in an interview in April 2009 that NSA had intercepted private email messages and phone calls of Americans in recent months on a scale that went beyond the broad legal limits established by U.S. Congress the year before. In addition, the NSA was also eavesdropping on phones of foreign political figures, officials of international organizations and renowned journalists (The New York Times, April, 15, 2009). The U.S. military also participated in the eavesdropping programs. According to CNN reports, a Virginia-based U.S. military Internet risk evaluation organization was in charge of monitoring official and unofficial private blogs, official documents, personal contact information, photos of weapons, entrances of military camps, as well as other websites that "might threaten its national security."

The so-called "freedom of the press" of the United States was in fact completely subordinate to its national interests, and was manipulated by the U.S. government. According to media reports, the U.S. government and the Pentagon had recruited a number of former military officers to become TV and radio news commentators to give "positive comments" and analysis as "military experts" for the U.S. war in Iraq and Afghanistan, in order to guide public opinions, glorify the wars, and gain public support of its anti-terrorism ideology (The New York Times, April 20, 2009). At yearend 2009, the U.S. Congress passed a bill which imposed sanctions on several Arab satellite channels for broadcasting contents hostile to the U.S. and instigating violence (<http://blogs.rnw.nl>). In September 2009, protesters using the social-networking site Twitter and text messages to coordinate demonstrations clashed with the police several times in Pittsburgh, where the Group of 20 summit was held. Elliot Madison, 41, was later charged with hindering apprehension of the protesters through the Internet. The police also searched his home (<http://www.nytimes.com>, October 5, 2009). Vic Walczak,

legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, said the same conduct in other countries would be called human rights violations whereas in the United States it was called necessary crime control.

### **III. On Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Poverty, unemployment and the homeless are serious problems in the United States, where workers' economic, social and cultural rights cannot be guaranteed.

Unemployment rate in the U.S. in 2009 was the highest in 26 years. The number of bankrupt businesses and individuals kept rising due to the financial crisis. The Associated Press reported in April 2009 that nearly 1.2 million businesses and individuals filed for bankruptcy in the previous 12 months - about four in every 1,000 people, a rate twice as high as that in 2006 (<http://www.floridabankruptcyblog.com>). By December 4, 2009, a total of 130 U.S. banks had been forced to close in the year due to the financial crisis (Chicago Tribune, December 4, 2009). Statistics released by the U.S. Labor Department on Nov. 6, 2009 showed unemployment rate in October 2009 reached 10.2 percent, the highest since 1983 (The New York Times, November 7, 2009). Nearly 16 million people were jobless, with 5.6 million, or 35.6 percent of the unemployed, being out of work for more than half a year (The New York Times, November 13, 2009). In September, about 1.6 million young workers, or 25 percent of the total, were jobless, the highest since 1948 when records were kept (The Washington Post, September 7, 2009). In the week ending on March 7, 2009, the continuing jobless claims in the U.S. were 5.47 million, higher than the previous week's 5.29 million (<http://247wallst.com>, March 19, 2009).

The population in poverty was the largest in 11 years. The Washington Post reported on September 10, 2009, that altogether 39.8 million Americans were living in poverty by the end of 2008, an increase of 2.6 million from that in 2007. The poverty rate in 2008 was 13.2 percent, the highest since 1998. The number of people aged between 18 to 64 living in poverty in 2008 had risen to 22.1 million, 170,000 more than in 2007. Up to 8.1 million families were under poverty, accounting for 10.3 percent of the total families (The Washington Post, September 11, 2009). According to a report of the New York Times on Sept. 29, 2009, the poverty rate in New York City in 2008 was 18.2 percent and nearly 28 percent of the Bronx borough's residents were living in poverty (The New York Times, September 29, 2009). From August 2008 to August 2009, more than 90,000 poor households in California suffered power and gas cuts. A 93-year-old man was frozen to death at his home (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com>). Poverty led to a sharp rise in the

number of suicides in the United States. It is reported that there are roughly 32,000 suicides in the U.S. every year, nearly double the cases of murder, which numbered 18,000 (<http://www.time.com>). The Los Angeles County coroner's office said the poor economy was taking a toll even on the dead as more bodies in the county went unclaimed by families who could not afford funeral expenses. A total of 712 bodies in Los Angeles County were cremated with taxpayers' money in 2008, an increase of 36 percent over the previous year (The Los Angeles Times, July 21, 2009).

The population in hunger was the highest in 14 years. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on Nov. 16, 2009, that 49.1 million Americans living in 17 million households, or 14.6 percent of all American families, lacked consistent access to adequate food in 2008, up 31 percent from the 13 million households, or 11.1 percent of all American families, that lacked stable and adequate supply of food in 2007, which was the highest since the government began tracking "food insecurity" in 1995 (The New York Times, November 17, 2009; 14.6% of Americans Could Not Afford Enough Food in 2008, <http://business.theatlantic.com>). The number of people who lacked "food security," rose from 4.7 million in 2007 to 6.7 million in 2008 (<http://www.livescience.com>, November 26, 2009). About 15 percent of families were still working for adequate food and clothing (The Associated Press, November 27, 2009). Statistics showed 36.5 million Americans, or about one eighth of the U.S. total population, took part in the food stamp program in August 2009, up 7.1 million from that of 2008. However, only two thirds of those eligible for food stamps actually received them (<http://www.associatedcontent.com>).

Workers' rights were seriously violated. The New York Times reported on Sept. 2, 2009 that 68 percent of the 4,387 low-wage workers in a survey said they had experienced reduction of wages. And 76 percent of those who had worked overtime were not paid accordingly, and 57 percent of those interviewed had not received pay documents to make sure pay was legal and accurate. Only eight percent of those who suffered serious injuries on the job filed for compensation. Up to 26 percent of those surveyed were paid less than the national minimum wage. Among those who complained about wages or treatment, 43 percent had experienced retaliation or dismissal (The New York Times, September 2, 2009). According to a report by the USA Today on July 20, 2009, a total of 5,657 people died at workplaces across the U.S. in 2007, about 17 deaths each day. About 200,000 workers in New York State were injured or sickened at workplaces each year (USA Today, July 20, 2009).



The number of people without medical insurance has kept rising for eight consecutive years. Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau on Sept. 10, 2009, showed 46.3 million people were without medical insurance in 2008, accounting for 15.4 percent of the total population, comparing 45.7 million people who were without medical insurance in 2007, which was a rise for the eighth year in a row. About 20.3 percent of Americans between 18 to 64 years old were not covered by medical insurance in 2008, higher than the 19.6 percent in 2007 (<http://www.census.gov>). A study released by the Commonwealth Fund showed health insurance coverage of adults aged 18 to 64 declined in 31 U.S. states from 2007 to 2009 (Reuters, October 8, 2009). The number of states with extremely high number of adults who were not covered by medical insurance increased from two in 1999 to nine in 2009. More than one in every four people in Texas were uninsured, the highest percentage among all states (<http://www.ncpa.org>). Houston had 40.1 percent of its residents uninsured (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com>). In 2008, altogether 2,266 U.S. veterans under the age of 65 died for lack of health insurance coverage or medical care, 14 times higher than the U.S. military death toll in Afghanistan that year (AFP, November 11, 2009). A report by the Consumer International showed 34 percent of U.S. families with annual income below 50,000 U.S. dollars and 21 percent of homes with annual income exceeding 100,000 U.S. dollars lost medical insurance or suffered reduction in medical insurance in 2009. In addition, two thirds of households with annual income below 50,000 U.S. dollars and one third of homes earning more than 100,000 U.S. dollars a year cut their medical expenses last year. About 28 percent Americans chose not to see a doctor when they fell ill; a quarter of them could not afford medical bills; 22 percent postponed medical treatment; a fifth of them did not buy medicine prescribed by doctors or undergo medical checkups; 15 percent took expired drugs or did not follow medical instructions to take medicine on time in order to save money (<http://www.oregonlive.com>). According to a report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on December 8, 2009, average life expectancy of Americans was 78.1 years in 2007, ranking the fourth from bottom among all member states of OECD. The average life expectancy of OECD member states was 79.1 that year (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com>).

The number of homeless has been on the rise. Statistics show that by September 2008, an upward of 1.6 million homeless people in the U.S. had been receiving shelter, and the number of those in families rose from 473,000 in 2007 to 517,000 in 2008 (USA Today, July 9, 2009). Since 2009, homeless enrollments in the six counties of Chicago area had climbed, with McHenry County seeing the biggest hike - an increase of 125 percent over the previous year (Chicago Tribune, November 28, 2009). These families could only live

in shabby places such as wagons. In March 2009, a sprawling tent city was seen in Sacramento of California where hundreds of homeless gathered. Police in Santa Monica of southern California even regularly used force to drive the homeless out of the city ([www.truthalyzer.com](http://www.truthalyzer.com)). In October, several thousand homeless in Detroit got into a fight, worrying they might not receive the government's housing subsidies (USA Today, October 8, 2009). In December, there were 6,975 homeless single adults in shelters in New York City, not including military veterans, chronically homeless people, and the 30,698 people living in short-term housing for homeless families (The New York Times, December 10, 2009). The Houston Chronicle reported on March 16, 2009 that large numbers of houses in Galveston were destroyed by Hurricane Ike in September 2008, leaving thousands homeless. About 1,700 households did not receive any aid and most of them do not have fixed residences (Houston Chronicle, March 16, 2009).

#### **IV. On Racial Discrimination**

Racial discrimination is still a chronic problem of the United States.

Black people and other minorities are the most impoverished groups in the United States. According to a report issued by the U.S. Bureau of Census, the real median income for American households in 2008 was 50,303 U.S. dollars. That of the non-Hispanic white households was 55,530 U.S. dollars, Hispanic households 37,913 U.S. dollars, black households only 34,218 U.S. dollars. The median incomes of Hispanic and black households were roughly 68 percent and 61.6 percent of that of the non-Hispanic white households. Median income of minority groups was about 60 to 80 percent of that of majority groups under the same conditions of education and skill background (The Wall Street Journal, September 11, 2009; USA Today, September 11, 2009). According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, the poverty proportion of the non-Hispanic white was 8.6 percent in 2008, those of African-Americans and Hispanic were 24.7 percent and 23.2 percent respectively, almost three times of that of the white (The New York Times, September 29, 2009). About one quarter of American Indians lived below the poverty line. In 2008, 30.7 percent of Hispanic, 19.1 percent of African-Americans and 14.5 percent of non-Hispanic white lived without health insurance (Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). According to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a record 10,552 fair housing discrimination complaints were filed in fiscal 2008, 35 percent of which were alleged race discrimination (The Washington Post, June 10, 2009). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that while African-Americans make

up 12 percent of the US population, they represent nearly half of new HIV infections and AIDS deaths every year (The Wall Street Journal, April 8, 2009; revised statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Employment and occupational discrimination against minority groups is very serious. Minority groups bear the brunt of the U.S. unemployment. According to news reports, the U.S. unemployment rate in October 2009 was 10.2 percent. The jobless rate of the U.S. African-Americans jumped to 15.7 percent, that of the Hispanic rose to 13.1 percent and that of the white was 9.5 percent (USA Today, November 6, 2009). Unemployment rate of the black aged between 16 and 24 saw a record high of 34.5 percent, more than three times the average rate. Unemployment rates for the black in cities such as Detroit and Milwaukee had reached 20 percent (The Washington Post, December 10, 2009). In some American Indians communities, unemployment rate was as high as 80 percent (The China Press, November 6, 2009). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for black male college graduates aged 25 and older in 2009 has been twice that of white male college graduates, 8.4 percent compared with 4.4 percent (The New York Times, December 1, 2009). In 2008, a record number of workers filed federal job discrimination complaints, with allegations of race discrimination making up the greatest portion at more than one-third of the 95,000 total claims (AP, April 27, 2009). According to an investigation by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a Houston-based oil and gas drilling company faced five complaints of racial harassment and discrimination (AP, November 18, 2009). According to a news report, by the end of May 2009, the black and Hispanic groups each accounted for roughly 27 percent of New York City's population, but only 3 percent of the 11,529 firefighters were black, and about 6 percent were Hispanic since the city's fire department unfairly excluded hundreds of qualified people of color from the opportunity to serve (The New York Times, July 23, 2009).

The U.S. minority groups face discriminations in education. According to a report issued by the U.S. Bureau of Census, 33 percent of the non-Hispanic white has college degrees, proportion of the black was only 20 percent and Hispanic was 13 percent (US Bureau of Census, April 27, 2009, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). According to a report, from 2003 to 2008, 61 percent of black applicants and 46 percent of Mexican-American applicants were denied acceptance at all of the law schools to which they applied, compared with 34 percent of white applicants (The New York Times, January 7, 2010). African-American children accounted for only 17 percent of the U.S. public school students, but accounted for 32 percent of the total number which were expelled from the schools. According to a

research by the University of North Carolina and Michigan State University, most of the black juvenile believed that they were victims of racial discrimination (Science Daily, April 29, 2009). According to another study conducted among 5,000 children in Birmingham, Ala., Houston and Los Angeles, prejudice was reported by 20 percent of blacks and 15 percent of Hispanics. The study showed that racial discrimination was an important cause to mental health problems for children of varied races. Hispanic children who reported racism were more than three times as likely as other children to have symptoms of depression, blacks were more than twice as likely (USA Today, May 5, 2009).

Racial discrimination in law enforcement and judicial system is very distinct. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, by the end of 2008, 3,161 men and 149 women per 100,000 persons in the U.S. black population were under imprisonment ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov)). The number of life imprisonment without parole given to African-American young people was ten times of that given to white young people in 25 states. The figure in California was 18 times. In major U.S. cities, there are more than one million people who were stopped and questioned by police in streets, nearly 90 percent of them were minority males. Among those questioned, 50 percent were African-Americans and 30 percent were Hispanics. Only 10 percent were white people (The China Press, October 9, 2009). A report released by New York City Police Department, of the people involved in police shootings whose ethnicity could be determined in 2008, 75 percent were black, 22 percent were Hispanic; and 3 percent were white (The New York Times, November 17, 2009). According to a report by Human Rights Watch, from 1980 to 2007, the ratio of the African-Americans being arrested for dealing drugs across the U.S. was 2.8 to 5.5 times of that of the white ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org), March 2, 2009).

Since the Sept. 11 event, discrimination against Muslims is increasing. Nearly 58 percent of Americans think Muslims are subject to "a lot" of discrimination, according to two combined surveys released by the Pew Research Center. About 73 percent of young people aged 18 to 29 are more likely to say Muslims are the most discriminated against (<http://www.washingtontimes.com>, September 10, 2009).

Immigrants live in misery. According to a report by the U.S. branch of Amnesty International, more than 300,000 illegal immigrants were detained by U.S. immigration authorities each year, and the illegal immigrants under custody exceeded 30,000 for each single day (World Journal, March 26, 2009). At the same time, hundreds of legal immigrants were put under arrest, denied entry or even sent back under escort every

year (Sing Tao Daily, April 13, 2009). A report released by the Constitution Project and Human Rights Watch revealed that from 1999 to 2008, about 1.4 million detained immigrants were transferred. Tens of thousands of longtime residents of cities like Los Angeles and Philadelphia were sent, by force, to remote immigrant jails in Texas or Louisiana (The New York Times, November 2, 2009). The New York City Bar Association received a startling petition in October 2008 which was signed by 100 men, all locked up without criminal charges in the Varick Street Detention Facility in the middle of Manhattan. The letter described their cramped, filthy quarters where dire medical needs were ignored and hungry prisoners were put to work for 1 dollar a day (The New York Times, November 2, 2009). Some detained women who were still in lactation period were denied breast pumps in the facilities, resulting in fever, pain, mastitis, and the inability to continue breastfeeding upon release ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org), March 16, 2009). A total of 104 people have died while in custody of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency since October, 2003 (The Wall Street Journal, August 18, 2009).

Ethnic hatred crimes are frequent. According to statistics released by the U.S. Federal Investigation Bureau on November 23, 2009, a total of 7,783 hate crimes occurred in 2008 in the United States, 51.3 percent of which were originated by racial discrimination and 19.5 percent were for religious bias and 11.5 percent were for national origins ([www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)). Among those hate crimes, more than 70 percent were against black people. In 2008, anti-black offenses accounted for 26 persons per 1,000 people, and anti-white crimes accounted for 18 persons per 1,000 people (victim characteristics, October 21, 2009, [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)). On June 10, 2009, a white supremacist gunned down a black guard of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum with another two wounded (The Washington Post, June 11, 2009, The Wall Street Journal, June 11, 2009). According to a report issued by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an environment of racial intolerance and ethnic hatred, fostered by anti-immigrant groups and some public officials, has helped fuel dozens of attacks on Latinos in Suffolk County of New York State during the past decade (The New York Times, September 3, 2009).

## **V. On the Rights of Women and Children**

The living conditions of women and children in the United States are deteriorating and their rights are not properly guaranteed.

Women do not enjoy equal social and political status as men. Women account for 51 percent of the U.S. population, but only 92 women, or 17 percent of the seats, serve in

the current 111th U.S. Congress. Seventeen women serve in the Senate and 75 women serve in the House (Members of the 111th United States Congress, <http://en.wikipedia.org>). A study shows minorities and women are unlikely to hold top positions at big U.S. charities and nonprofits. The study reveals that women make up 18.8 percent of nonprofit CEOs compared to just 3 percent at Fortune 500 companies. Among the 400 biggest charities in the U.S., no cultural organization, hospital, public affairs group, Jewish federation or other religious organization is headed by a woman (The Washington Times, September 20, 2009).

Women have difficulties in finding a job and suffer from low income and poor financial situations. According to statistics from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), workplace discrimination charge filings with the federal agency nationwide rose to 95,402 during Fiscal Year 2008, a 15 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. Charge of workplace discrimination because of a job applicant's sex maintained a high proportion ([www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov), November 3, 2009). According to statistics released by the U.S. Census Bureau in September 2009, the median incomes of full-time female workers in 2008 were 35,745 U.S. dollars, 77 percent of those of corresponding men whose median earnings were 46,367 U.S. dollars, which is lower than the 78 percent in 2007 (The Wall Street Journal, September 11, 2009; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), September 10, 2009). According to the Associated Press, a female pharmacist who had been working for Walmart for ten years was fired in 2004 for demanding the same income as her male counterparts (The Associated Press, October 5, 2009). By the end of 2008, 4.2 million, or 28.7 percent of families with a female householder where no husband is present were poor ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), September 10, 2009). About 64 million, or 70 percent of working-age American women have no health insurance coverage, or have inadequate coverage, high medical bills or debt problems, or problems in accessing care because of cost (The China Press, May 12, 2009).

Women are frequent victims of violence and sexual assault. It is reported that the United States has the highest rape rate among countries which report such statistics. It is 13 times higher than that of England and 20 times higher than that of Japan (Occurrence of rape, <http://www.sa.rochester.edu>). In San Diego, a string of similar attacks happened to five women who have been sexually assaulted by a home invader in March 2009 (Sing Tao Daily, March 14, 2009). According to a report released by the Pentagon, more than 2,900 sexual assaults in the military were reported in 2008, up nearly 9 percent from the year before. And of those, only 292 cases resulted in a military trial. The report said the actual numbers of such cases could be five to ten times of the

reported figure (The evening news of the Columbia Broadcasting System, March 17, 2009). Reuters reported that based on in-depth interviews on 40 servicewomen, 10 said they had been raped, five said they were sexually assaulted including attempted rape, and 13 reported sexual harassment (Reuters, April 16, 2009).

American children suffer from hunger and cold. A report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed that 16.7 million children, or one fourth of the U.S. total, had not enough food in 2008 (The Washington Post, USA Today, November 17, 2009). The food relief institution Feeding America said in a report that more than 3.5 million children under the age of five face hunger or malnutrition. This figure accounts for 17 percent of American children aged five and under. In 11 states, more than 20 percent of young children were at risk for hunger. Louisiana, with 24.2 percent, had the highest rate of child food insecurity ([www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org), May 7, 2009). Children at or below 18 account for more than one third of the U.S. people in poverty. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau showed that the number of children younger than 18 who live in poverty increased from 13.3 million in 2007 to 14.1 million in 2008 (<http://www.census.gov>, The Washington Post, September 11, 2009). According to statistics from the U.S.-based National Center on Family Homelessness, from 2005 to 2006, more than 1.5 million children, or one in every 50 children, were homeless in the U.S. every year. Among the homeless children, 42 percent were younger than 6 and the majority were African-Americans and Indians (CNN.com, MSNBUC.com, March 10, 2009). In 2008, nearly one tenth of the children in the United States were not covered by health insurance. It was reported that about 7.3 million children, or 9.9 percent of the American total, were without health insurance in 2008. In Nevada, 20.2 percent of the children were uncovered by insurance (<http://www.census.gov>, the Washington Post, September 21). On August 13, 2009, a state board voted that California will begin terminating health insurance for more than 60,000 children on October 1. The program could ultimately drop nearly 670,000 children by the end of June 2010 (The Los Angeles Times, The China Press, August 14, 2009). A research led by the Johns Hopkins Children's Center showed that lack of health insurance might have led or contributed to nearly 17,000 deaths among hospitalized children in the U.S. in the span of less than two decades (Journal of Public Health, October 30, 2009). The A/H1N1 flu has infected about 8 million children under 18 from April to October 2009, killing 540 of them, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States (USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, November 13, 2009).

Children are exposed to violence and living in fear. It is reported that 1,494 children younger than 18 nationwide were murdered in 2008 (USA Today, October 8, 2009). A report released by the Health Department of the New York City on June 16, 2009 showed that between 2001 and 2007, the national average rate of child deaths was 20 per 100,000 children aged 1 to 12 years. Homicide rates were 1.3 deaths per 100,000 among the group (<http://www.nyc.gov>). A survey conducted by the U.S. Justice Department on 4,549 kids and adolescents aged 17 and younger between January and May of 2008 showed, more than 60 percent of children surveyed were exposed to violence within the past year, either directly or indirectly. Nearly half of all children surveyed were assaulted at least once in the past year, about 6 percent were victimized sexually, and 13 percent reported having been physically bullied in the past year (The Associated Press, October 7, 2009). There have been at least 1,227 children died from abuse or neglect in Texas since 2002 (The Houston Chronicle, October 22, 2009). According to research of U.S.-based institution and public health media reports, in the U.S., one third of children who run away or were expelled from home performed sexual acts in exchange for food, drugs and a place to stay every year. The justice system no longer considers them as young victims, but as juvenile offenders (The China Press, October 28, 2009).

Child farmworkers are prevalent. An organization devoted to protecting children's rights disclosed that as many as 400,000 children are estimated to work on U.S. farms. Davis Strauss, executive director of the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, noted that for decades, children, some as young as eight years old, have labored in the fields using sharp tools and toiling amongst dangerous pesticides. The association's president Ernie Flores said children account for about 20 percent of all farm fatalities in the United States (Spain's Uprising newspaper, October 14, 2009). A labor standards act permits a child beyond 13 to work in heat for long time in a farm, but does not permit that child to work in an air-conditioned office and even forbids them working in a fast food restaurant.

The U.S. is the only country in the world that does not apply parole system to minors. Detentions of juveniles have increased 44 percent from 1985 to 2002. Many children only committed only minor crimes but could not get assistance from lawyers. Many procurators and judges turned a blind eye on abuse in juvenile prisons.

## **VI. On U.S. Violations of Human Rights against Other Nations**



The United States with its strong military power has pursued hegemony in the world, trampling upon the sovereignty of other countries and trespassing their human rights. As the world's biggest arms seller, its deals have greatly fueled instability across the world. The United States also expanded its military spending, already the largest in the world, by 10 percent in 2008 to 607 billion U.S. dollars, accounting for 42 percent of the world total (The AP, June 9, 2009).

According to a report by the U.S. Congress, the U.S. foreign arms sales in 2008 soared to 37.8 billion U.S. dollars from 25.4 billion a year earlier, up by nearly 50 percent, accounting for 68.4 percent of the global arms sales that were at its four-year low (Reuters, September 6, 2009). At the beginning of 2010, the U.S. government announced a 6.4-billion-U.S. dollar arms sales package to Taiwan despite strong protest from the Chinese government and people, which seriously damaged China's national security interests and aroused strong indignation among the Chinese people.

The wars of Iraq and Afghanistan have placed heavy burden on American people and brought tremendous casualties and property losses to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. The war in Iraq has led to the death of more than 1million Iraqi civilians, rendered an equal number of people homeless and incurred huge economic losses. In Afghanistan, incidents of the U.S. army killing innocent people still keep occurring. Five Afghan farmers were killed in a U.S. air strike when they were loading cucumbers into a van on August 5, 2009 (<http://www.rawa.org>). On June 8, the U.S. Department of Defense admitted that the U.S. raid on Taliban on May 5 caused death of Afghan civilians as the military failed to abide by due procedures. The Afghan authorities have identified 147 civilian victims, including women and children, while a U.S. officer put the death toll under 30 (The Philadelphia Inquirer, June 9, 2009).

Prisoner abuse is one of the biggest human rights scandals of the United States. A report presented to the 10th meeting of Human Rights Council of the United Nations in 2009 by its Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism showed that the United States has pursued a comprehensive set of practices including special deportation, long-term and secret detentions and acts violating the United Nations Convention against Torture. The rapporteur also said, in a report submitted to the 64th General Assembly of the United Nations, that the United States and its private contractors tortured male Muslims detained in Iraq and other places by stacking the naked prisoners in pyramid formation, coercing the homosexual sexual behaviors and stripping them in stark nakedness (The

Washington Post, April 7, 2009). The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has begun interrogation by torture since 2002. The U.S. government lawyers disclosed that since 2001, CIA has destroyed 92 videotapes relating to the interrogation to suspected terrorists, 12 of them including the use of torture (The Washington Post, March 3, 2009). The CIA interrogators used a handgun and an electric drill to frighten a captured al-Qaeda commander into giving up information (The Washington Post, August 22, 2009). The U.S. Justice Department memos revealed the CIA kept prisoners shackled in a standing position for as long as 180 hours, more than a dozen of them deprived of sleep for at least 48 hours, three for more than 96 hours, and one for the nearly eight-day maximum. Another seemed to endorse sleep deprivation for 11 days, stated on one memo (<http://www.chron.com>). The CIA interrogators used waterboarding 183 times against the accused 9/11 major plotter Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and 83 times against suspected Al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubaydah (The New York Times, April 20, 2009). A freed Guantanamo prisoner said he experienced the "medieval" torture at Guantanamo Bay and in a secret CIA prison in Kabul (AFP, London, March 7, 2009). In June 2006, three Guantanamo Bay inmates could have been suffocated to death during interrogation on the same evening and their deaths passed off as suicides by hanging, revealed by a six-month joint investigation for Harpers Magazine and NBC News in 2009 ([www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), January 18, 2010). A Somali named Mohamed Saleban Bare, jailed at Guantanamo Bay for eight years, told AFP the prison was "hell on earth" and some of his colleagues lost sight and limbs and others ended up mentally disturbed (AFP, Hargisa, Somali, December 21, 2009). A 31-year-old Yemeni detainee at Guantanamo Bay who had been on a long hunger strike apparently committed suicide in 2009 after four prior suicide deaths beginning at 2002 (The New York Times, June 3, 2009). The U.S. government held more than 600 prisoners at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. A United Nations report singled out the Bagram detention facility for criticism, saying some ex-detainees allege being subjected to severe torture, even sexual abuse, and some prisoners put under detention for as long as five years. It also reported that some were held in cages containing 15 to 20 men and that two detainees died in questionable circumstances while in custody (IPS, New York, February 25, 2009). An investigation by U.S. Justice Department showed 2,000 Taliban surrendered combatants were suffocated to death by the U.S. army-controlled Afghan armed forces (<http://www.yourpolicicsusa.com>, July 16, 2009).

The United States has been building its military bases around the world, and cases of violation of local people's human rights are often seen. The United States is now maintaining 900 bases worldwide, with more than 190,000 military personnel and

115,000 relevant staff stationed. These bases are bringing serious damage and environmental contamination to the localities. Toxic substances caused by bomb explosions are taking their tolls on the local children. It has been reported that toward the end of the U.S. military bases' presence in Subic and Clark, as many as 3,000 cases of raping the local women had been filed against the U.S. servicemen, but all were dismissed (<http://www.lexisnexis.com>, May 17, 2009).

The United States has been maintaining its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba for almost 50 years. The blockade has caused an accumulated direct economic loss of more than 93 billion U.S. dollars to Cuba. On October 28, 2009, the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba," with a recorded vote of 187 in favor to three against, and two abstentions. This marked the 18th consecutive year the assembly had overwhelmingly called on the United States to lift the blockade without delay (Overwhelming International Rejection of US Blockade of Cuba at UN, [www.cubanews.ain.cu](http://www.cubanews.ain.cu)).

The United States is pushing its hegemony under the pretence of "Internet freedom." The United States monopolizes the strategic resources of the global Internet, and has been retaining a tight grip over the Internet ever since its first appearance. There are currently 13 root servers of Internet worldwide, and the United States is the place where the only main root server and nine out of the rest 12 root servers are located. All the root servers are managed by the ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), which is, by the authority of the U.S. government, responsible for the management of the global root server system, the domain name system and the Internet Protocol address. The United States has declined all the requests from other countries as well as international organizations including the United Nations to break the U.S. monopoly over the root servers and to decentralize its management power over the Internet. The United States has been intervening in other countries' domestic affairs in various ways taking advantage of its control over Internet resources. The United States has a special troop of hackers, which is made up of hacker proficient recruited from all over the world. When post-election unrest broke out in Iran in the summer of 2009, the defeated reformist camp and its advocators used Internet tools such as Twitter to spread their messages. The U.S. State Department asked the operator of Twitter to delay its scheduled maintenance to assist with the opposition in creating a favorable momentum of public opinion. In May 2009, one web company, prompted by the U.S.

authorities, blocked its Messenger instant messaging service in five countries including Cuba.