

**The Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2023**

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

**China**

**May 2024**

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## **Foreword**

The human rights situation in the United States continued to deteriorate in 2023. In the United States, human rights are becoming increasingly polarized. While a ruling minority holds political, economic, and social dominance, the majority of ordinary people are increasingly marginalized, with their basic rights and freedoms being disregarded. A staggering 76 percent of Americans believe that their nation is in the wrong direction.

Political infighting, government dysfunction, and governance failure in the United States have failed to protect civil and political rights. Bipartisan consensus on gun control remains elusive, contributing to a continued surge in mass shootings. Approximately 43,000 people were killed by gun violence in 2023, averaging 117 deaths per day. Police brutality persists and at least 1247 deaths were attributed to police violence, marking a new high since 2013, yet the law enforcement accountability system remains virtually nonexistent. Taking up less than 5 percent of the global population, the United States accounts for 25 percent of global prison population,, earning the title of a "carceral state." Political infighting intensifies as parties manipulate elections through gerrymandering, leading to "Speaker crisis "for twice in the House of Representatives, further diminishing the government's credibility, with only 16 percent of Americans trusting the federal government.

Deep-rooted racism persists in the United States, with cases of severe racial discrimination. United Nations experts point out that systemic racism against African Americans has permeated the U.S. police force and criminal justice system. Due to significant racial discrimination in the healthcare sector, the maternal mortality rate for African American women is nearly three times that of white women. Nearly 60 percent of Asians report facing racial discrimination, with the "China Initiative" targeting Chinese scientists having far-reaching consequences. Racist ideologies proliferate across multiple sectors such as social media, music, and gaming, and spill over across borders, making the United States a major exporter of extreme racism internationally.

The United States is witnessing intensified wealth inequality, with the phenomenon of "Working poor" becoming more pronounced, and the economic and social rights protection system is seen as ineffective. Long-standing disparities in the distribution of income between labor and capital have resulted in the most severe wealth gap since the Great Depression of 1929. There are 11.5 million low-income working families in the United States, but the federal minimum wage has not been raised since 2009. As of 2023, the purchasing power of one U.S. dollar has declined to 70 percent of its value in 2009. Low-income families struggle to afford basic necessities such as food, rent, and energy, leading to over 650,000 people experiencing homelessness, reaching a new high in 16 years. "Working poor" has shattered the "American Dream" for hardworking individuals, contributing to the broadest wave of strikes since the beginning of the 21st century, occurring in 2023.

Women and children's rights in the United States have long been systematically violated, with constitutional provisions for gender equality remaining absent. The United States remains the only UN member state that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In April 2023, the U.S. Senate rejected a constitutional amendment to guarantee gender equality. In the United States, approximately 54,000 women lose their jobs annually due to pregnancy discrimination. Over 2.2 million women of childbearing age cannot access maternity care. At least 21 states have enacted bans or strict restrictions on abortion. Maternal mortality has more than doubled in the past two decades. Sexual violence is rampant in workplaces, schools, and homes. Children's rights to survival and development are in jeopardy, with many children excluded from healthcare assistance programs. Gun violence remains a leading cause of child deaths, and drug abuse is rampant among youth. Forty-six states have been found to underreport around 34,800 cases of missing foster children.

The United States, a country that has historically and presently benefited from immigration, faces severe issues of exclusion and discrimination against immigrants. Practices of exclusion and discrimination against immigrants have been deeply ingrained in the U.S. institutional structure, from the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the internationally condemned "Muslim Ban" in 2017. Today, the immigration issue has become a tool for partisan gain and political blame-shifting, with politicians disregarding the individual rights and welfare of immigrants. Immigration policies are simplified into partisan positions of "If you support, I oppose," ultimately becoming political theatrics to manipulate voters. The immigration crisis falls into a vicious cycle, with immigrants and children subjected to widespread arrests, human trafficking, and exploitation. The hypocrisy of political polarization and the hypocritical nature of American human rights are glaringly evident in the immigration issue.

The United States has long pursued hegemonism, practiced power politics, and abused force and unilateral sanctions. Continuous delivery of weapons such as cluster munitions to other countries exacerbates regional tensions and armed conflicts, resulting in a large number of civilian casualties and severe humanitarian crises. Extensive "proxy forces" operations undermine social stability and violate the human rights of other nations. Guantanamo Bay prison remains open to this day.

## **I. Civil and Political Rights Become Empty Talk**

Gun violence in the United States takes a terrible toll on human lives, and vicious political party infighting leads to difficulties in achieving consensus on gun control. The government has abused its power to monitor citizens' privacy, police violence has intensified, and the system of police accountability for law enforcement is in vain. Political polarization continues to intensify, election manipulation is rampant, and the credibility of the government continues to decline.

**Gun violence inflicts a painful toll on human lives.** The data shows that all types of gun violence are on the rise in the United States.<sup>1</sup> According to the Gun Violence Archive, there were at least 654 mass shootings in the United States in 2023. Gun violence is responsible for nearly 43,000 deaths, an average of 117 per day.<sup>2</sup> For example, the ABC News website reported on Oct. 28, 2023, that a mass shooting in Maine killed at least 18 people and wounded 13 others.<sup>3</sup> The USA Today website reported on Dec. 6, 2023, that three college professors in Las Vegas were shot dead by a former colleague. Irene Mulvey, president of the American Association of University Professors, called gun violence an "unacceptable national menace" and urged the U.S. government to reform gun policy.<sup>4</sup> A spike in gun-related injuries and deaths in the United States raises serious concerns for the UN Human Rights Committee.<sup>5</sup>

**Gun violence spills over.** The proliferation of guns in the United States has led to the intensification of gun smuggling in neighboring countries, which has brought great harm to the lives of local people and regional stability. Mexican government figures show that more than half a million guns are smuggled into Mexico from the United States each year.<sup>6</sup> More than 70 percent of guns seized at violent crime scenes in Mexico between 2014 and 2018 came from the United States.<sup>7</sup> According to a 2022 report by InSight Crime, the flow of illegal guns from the United States into the Caribbean has led to a rising murder rate in the region.<sup>8</sup>

**Political party infighting leads to difficulties in achieving consensus on gun control.** The UN Human Rights Committee calls on the United States to take all necessary measures to effectively protect the right to life and prevent and reduce gun violence.<sup>9</sup> According to a survey report released on the website of the Pew Research Center on June 28, 2023, gun violence is widely recognized as a major and growing national problem, with 58 percent of respondents in favor of stricter gun control laws and more than 60 percent of American adults believing that gun violence is a major national problem in the United States today.<sup>10</sup> However, American politicians ignore the international community and the domestic public's call for gun control, only for money and political self-interest, so that the proliferation of guns in the United States can not be effectively controlled for a long time. In her article "U.S. gun violence: Capitalism is the culprit," Al Jazeera columnist Belen Fernandez argues that the United States "is entirely predicated on putting profits over people." The Buffalo supermarket shooting, the Uvalde Elementary School shooting, the Highland Park parade shooting and other mass shootings have defined American life. U.S. gun manufacturing giant Smith & Wesson Brands earned at least 125 million U.S. dollars in 2021 alone from sales of assault-style rifles, the weapons often used in mass shootings.<sup>11</sup> Joseph

Blocher, an American constitutional scholar and professor at Duke University Law School, argues that political jockeying has greatly harmed efforts to enact effective legislation to curb gun violence in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Even with the frequency of mass shootings, it is unlikely that there will be a new bipartisan consensus to enact specific gun control measures. Driven by partisan polarization and interest groups, a growing number of state governments have taken the initiative to push legislation to expand residents' rights to own and bear arms. In 2023, at least 27 states will not require a license to carry a handgun.<sup>13</sup> The chronic disease of gun violence, and inadequate government control policies, ultimately took a heavy toll on ordinary people's lives.

**The government abused its power to monitor citizens' privacy.** The UN Human Rights Committee remains concerned at the overly broad scope of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which not only allows U.S. law enforcement officials to monitor the electronic communications of foreigners, but also allows law enforcement officials to take advantage of legal loopholes to obtain large amounts of U.S. citizens' communications without a warrant (known as "backdoor searches"), and lacks a clear and transparent oversight mechanism.<sup>14</sup> A report released by the House Intelligence Committee on Nov. 16, 2023, revealed that the FBI redirected Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to conduct domestic surveillance, "persistent and widespread" monitoring of the communications of members of the Congress, congressional campaign donors, and anti-racist protesters.<sup>15</sup> The Brennan Center for Justice website reported on Nov. 20, 2023, that for more than a decade, the New York Police Department has abused social media to engage in illegal activities, including surveillance of public gatherings and tracking of individual citizens and their contacts without evidence, without oversight or accountability.<sup>16</sup>

**The problem of religious intolerance has worsened.** Religious prejudice is a long-standing problem in American society. In recent years, the number of crimes caused by religious intolerance has continued to increase. According to hate crime statistics released by the FBI in Oct. 2023, there were as many as 2,042 incidents of religious-based hate crimes in the United States in 2022.<sup>17</sup> According to a report released by the Council on American-Islamic Relations in April 2023, a total of 5,156 complaints of discrimination against Muslims were received in 2022, mainly related to employment discrimination, education discrimination and unfair law enforcement, of which education-related complaints increased by 63 percent over 2021.<sup>18</sup>

**Freedom of speech and expression is suppressed.** The harassment, intimidation, threats and attacks against media organizations and journalists by U.S. government authorities, politicians and law enforcement officials have drawn the attention of the UN Human Rights Committee. Led by Texas, Florida, Missouri, Utah and South Carolina, a growing number of states have passed legislation banning public schools from using educational materials and books that address specific topics such as race, history and gender.<sup>19</sup> Joe Cohn, legislative and policy director with the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, said the proliferating censorship is "deeply troubling." According to the foundation's tracking survey, the number of faculty members punished or fired for speech and expression on U.S. college campuses has reached a 20-year high. The Associated Press reported on March 15, 2023, that Katrina Majkut, an artist, used embroidery to illustrate chronic illness, drugs and other health care issues at a state school in Lewiston, Idaho. The display was censored and removed for allegedly violating the state's No Public Funds for

Abortion Act. Similarly, four documentary video and audio works by another artist, Lydia Nobles, that showed women talking about their own experiences with abortion were also removed.<sup>20</sup>

**Deaths from police brutality have hit a record high.** The article "Ending the Culture of Police Violence," published on the website of the Brennan Center for Justice on Feb. 3, 2023, pointed out that the U.S. security edifice is built upon a culture and inheritance of institutional violence.<sup>21</sup> The problem of excessive use of force by police is prominent in the United States, but most law enforcement departments refuse to release the data on the use of force. According to Mapping Police Violence, police in the United States killed at least 1,247 people last year, the highest number of killings since its national tracking began in 2013, which means an average of roughly three people killed by officers each day.<sup>22</sup>

**The accountability system for police law enforcement is in vain.** In the book "Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control," Amy Lerman, professor of Public Policy and Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley and Vesla Weaver, professor of Political Science and Sociology at Johns Hopkins University stated that American police departments have always detested citizens questioning the legality of their law enforcement actions, and the mechanism for holding police accountable for illegal acts is virtually useless.<sup>23</sup> In a paper published on The Lancet, Eve Wool and Mohsen Naghavi, two scholars from University of Washington, said that more than half of police killings have been incorrectly labeled as "general homicide or suicide" in CDC's official death statistics database.<sup>24</sup> According to a report of The New York Times on Jan. 31, 2023, internal-affairs departments are often more interested in exonerating colleagues than investigating misconduct, and police unions do everything they can to shield bad actors, attack critics and secure more due process for cops accused of abuse than their victims ever get.<sup>25</sup>

**The issue of mass incarceration and forced labor is prominent.** The United States is home to 5 percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of the world's prisoners, making it the country with the highest incarceration rate and the largest number of incarcerated individuals globally.<sup>26</sup> According to the report "Ten statistics about the scale and impact of mass incarceration in the United States" by the U.S. policy think tank Prison Policy Initiative in October 2023, on any given day, about 2 million people in the United States are locked up in federal and state prisons and immigration detention facilities. 3.7 million people are held under community supervision such as probation and parole.<sup>27</sup> The report released in June 2023 by the University of Chicago Law School and the American Civil Liberties Union reveals that incarcerated workers in the United States generate billions of dollars' worth of goods and services annually. However, in most states, the hourly wages paid to prisoners amount to only 2-3 percent of the federal minimum wage standard, with some states providing no compensation at all.<sup>28</sup> According to a report by the Prison Policy Initiative released on March 14, 2023, prisoners' work in U.S. prisons is mandatory, and incarcerated "workers" have almost no rights or protections. Prisons force inmates to work for low or no pay, without benefits, while also charging them fees for necessities, allowing prisons to shift the costs of incarceration onto the incarcerated individuals.<sup>29</sup>

**The partisan strife in the United States has been intensifying.** The intense struggle between the two parties in the United States has led to a deadlock characterized by internal fragmentation and polarization. On the opening day of the 118th U.S. Congress in January 2023, the House of Representatives faced a "Speaker crisis." It took 15 rounds of tug-of-war voting before a new Speaker was elected. In April 2023, the Tennessee State Legislature expelled representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson for supporting local calls for strengthening gun control measures following a campus shooting incident, sparking uproar in the political arena. In early October 2023, due to the inability to reach consensus on significant issues such as funding for the new fiscal year, the Speaker of the House was ousted in an unprecedented recall vote. Subsequently, the House witnessed a more frantic repeat of the "Speaker crisis" from nine months prior. Despite the imminent expiration of temporary federal funding and the looming government shutdown crisis, lawmakers from both parties engaged in a 22-day struggle for the Speaker position. With no Speaker in place, the House remained in a state of deadlock, disrupting the normal political agenda of the United States. On Dec. 28, 2023, British magazine *The Economist* published an article reviewing the chaos in the American political arena in 2023. The article commented that there was a lot of attention on the long-running Republican civil war in the House in 2023, but not a lot of legislation made it through Congress and to the president's desk, and in fact by some measures, it was the least productive Congress since the actual civil war. "Perhaps the legislative highlight of the year was the Duck Stamp Modernisation Act," it said. (The main content of this stamp is to modify a legal provision to digitize permits for migratory bird hunting.)<sup>30</sup>

**The two parties continue to manipulate the election.** Money politics prevails in the United States, and the scale of burning money in elections expands. According to public data, in the gubernatorial elections of Kentucky in 2023, the candidates of the two parties spent 91 million U.S. dollars on campaign advertisements alone, which was more than three times in 2019, making it the most expensive election in 2023.<sup>31</sup> The two parties continue to change their ways to manipulate the redistricting and distort public opinion for the sake of party self-interest. Princeton University's "Gerrymandering Project" of the U.S. redistricting since 2021 shows that there are 16 states that have significant manipulation of congressional district boundaries, and 12 of them are states with serious manipulation of districts as a whole.<sup>32</sup> In 2023, New York, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and other states have successively carried out high-profile congressional House redistricting with obvious partisan interests, directly involving the party affiliation of more than one-fifth of the congressional House seats. New York's congressional delegation is made up of 15 Democrats and 11 Republicans after the 2022 election. However, under the new Democratic-led redistricting map in 2023, Democrats could maintain 15 seats while still having an edge in up to six districts currently held by Republicans. North Carolina's 14-member congressional delegation was split between seven Democrats and seven Republicans, but under the voting lines adopted by state lawmakers in 2023, the GOP is favored to win in 10 districts while Democrats are favored in three.<sup>33</sup>

**Government credibility continues to fall.** The general public in the United States is extremely disappointed with the federal government at all levels, and most of them think that the United States is in the wrong direction. According to the survey data of Pew Research Center, the U.S. public trust in government has been near historical lows and stood at 16 percent in 2023.<sup>34</sup>



Gallup surveys show from January to December, 2023, at most 81 percent and at least 76 percent of Americans expressed dissatisfaction with the way things are going in the country.<sup>35</sup> According to Ipsos poll, 76 percent of Americans believe the country is headed in the wrong direction. Only 23 percent think the country is headed in the right direction.<sup>36</sup> There is widespread dissatisfaction among young Americans with the practice of democratic politics. According to a 2023 survey by the Sine Institute of Policy and Politics at American University, 48 percent young Americans (aged 18-34) say the U.S. political system does more to prevent them from achieving the American Dream.<sup>37</sup> Young Americans are alienated from party politics and less likely to vote. According to a study released by Tufts University, the turnout of young voters nationwide in the 2022 midterm elections was only 23 percent.<sup>38</sup>

## II. The Chronic Disease of Racism

The UN Human Rights Committee noted that racism in the United States still exists today in the form of racial profiling, police killings and numerous human rights violations. Ethnic minorities in the United States face systematic, persistent and comprehensive racial discrimination, and racist ideology is widely prevalent in the American society and spreads to the international community.

**African Americans face serious racial discrimination in law enforcement.** On January 3, 2023, Keenan Anderson, a 31-year-old African American man in Los Angeles, was suspected of a traffic accident. The police shot him six times with taser in the process of subduing him, causing him to have a heart attack and die in hospital.<sup>39</sup> Four days later in Memphis, Tennessee, police pulled over 29-year-old African American Tyre Nichols for "reckless driving" and brutally beat him for several minutes. Nichols died of the injuries three days later, however, investigators said they were "unable to substantiate" the claim that he was driving recklessly.<sup>40</sup> These two cases of African Americans being killed by police violence have aroused the high concern of several UN experts. The experts stressed that in both cases, the use of force by the police violated international norms protecting the right to life and prohibiting torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.<sup>41</sup> The UN International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the Context of Law Enforcement, after an official visit to the United States, has said "systemic racism against people of African descent pervades America's police forces and criminal justice system." Black people in America are three times more likely to be killed by police than whites, and 4.5 times more likely to be incarcerated, it said. Of the more than 1,000 cases of killings by police each year, only 1 percent result in officers being charged. If use of force regulations in the United States are not reformed in accordance with international standards, many of these killings will continue, the UN body warned.<sup>42</sup>

**Hate crimes against African Americans are frequent.** The Associated Press reported on August 29, 2023, that a white man wearing a mask gunned down three African Americans in Jacksonville, Florida. The shooter, who had posted racist writings, then killed himself.<sup>43</sup> On the same day, the USA Today website reported that after a number of shootings targeting African Americans, African Americans became increasingly panic. Rep. Bennie Thompson, who served as former chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said racial attacks, including the shooting in Jacksonville, were part of a growing trend of violence against Black communities.<sup>44</sup> According to hate crime data released by the FBI in October 2023, there were 3,424 hate crimes against African Americans in the United States in 2022.<sup>45</sup> A report released by the office of the Attorney General of State of California Department of Justice on June 27, 2023, showed that hate crimes targeting Black people increased 27.1 percent from 513 in 2021 to 652 in 2022.<sup>46</sup>

**People of African descent face significant racial inequalities in healthcare.** A report

released by the UN Population Fund in July 2023 revealed that African American maternal mortality rates were higher than all other ethnicities and groups due to systemic racism in the healthcare system.<sup>47</sup> According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 69.9 out of every 100,000 pregnant women of African descent die during pregnancy or childbirth, almost three times the rate for white women, and this disparity is prevalent across African American women of varying levels of education and income.<sup>48</sup> African American newborns also have the highest mortality rate of any ethnic group, with nearly 11 deaths per 1,000 live births, about twice the average rate.<sup>49</sup>

**Reparations for the racial persecution of people of African descent are far from certain.**

Shortly after the end of the Civil War, the U.S. government promised reparations to every African American family that had been enslaved, but for more than 100 years that promise was never fulfilled. In 1989, John Conyers, an African American member of the U.S. House of Representatives, introduced "the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act" (H.R. 40), but for decades, that bill never reached the floor of Congress for a vote.<sup>50</sup> In 1921, a genocide against African Americans in Tulsa, Oklahoma of the United States, resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people. A lawsuit seeking compensation for the last three known survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre is still pending, and Hughes Van Ellis, the youngest of the survivors, died in October 2023.<sup>51</sup> A report released by the Pew Research Center on Aug. 10, 2023 showed that 83 percent of African Americans said the U.S. government had not done enough to ensure racial equality.<sup>52</sup> Many people of African descent who were dissatisfied with American politics and racial discrimination chose to leave. Those who left the United States have established new communities in Portugal, Ghana, Colombia, and Mexico, which has become a trend known as "Blaxit," a combination of "Black" and "exit," and has been widely circulated on social media. They chant: "America does not deserve me!"<sup>53</sup>

**Discrimination against Asians has intensified.** A Pew Research Center survey released on Nov. 30, 2023 showed that nearly 60 percent of Asian Americans said they had faced discrimination because of their race or ethnicity.<sup>54</sup> A survey released by the Associated Press found that 51 percent of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders believed that racism was an "extremely" or "very serious" problem in the United States.<sup>55</sup> A survey released on April 27, 2023 by the Columbia University's School of Social Work and Committee of 100, a non-governmental organization, showed that nearly three quarters of Chinese Americans had experienced racial discrimination in the past year, and 55 percent feared that hate crimes or harassment would jeopardize their personal safety.<sup>56</sup>

**The persecution of Chinese scientists continues.** Although the U.S. government's "China Initiative" targeting Chinese scientists has been suspended, the program's far-reaching effects are still being felt, and many Chinese scientists still feel a strong sense of insecurity. An article published on March 23, 2023 on the Science magazine describes the persecution of Chinese scientists under the "China Initiative." Of the 246 people investigated by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), 103 lost their jobs and more than one-fifth were banned from applying for new NIH funding for four years, dealing a major blow to their academic careers. Eighty-one percent of these 246 scientists were Asian.<sup>57</sup> A survey of nearly 1,400 Chinese-Americans in

tenured or tenure-track positions at U.S. universities by Princeton, Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that 72 percent reported feeling insecure and 42 percent were afraid to conduct research in the United States.<sup>58</sup>

**Chinese students studying in the United States have experienced nightmarish treatment at U.S. Customs.** In recent years, the U.S. government has continued generalizing the so-called "national security" concept, politicizing and weaponizing academic research, and fabricating various excuses to block international people-to-people, cultural, science and technology exchanges and cooperation. The China Science Daily reported on Jan. 11, 2024, that a number of Chinese students were subjected to unreasonable and inhumane treatment at U.S. Customs, and were unable to complete their studies as scheduled. A Chinese student, with the pseudonym Meng Fei, was detained by U.S. Customs for 20 hours on two separate occasions at Washington Dulles International Airport on Dec. 19, 2023, and then detained for another five hours before being deported when she flew to Los Angeles to wait for her connecting flight. During this time, she was not only forced to sign "acceptance of deportation" under the coaxing of an examining officer and under the watchful eyes of two police officers armed with guns and stun batons, but she was also subjected to humiliating body searches and 12 hours of solitary confinement. A Chinese student, with the pseudonym Wei Na, at Johns Hopkins University, was also told by a U.S. Customs examiner at Dulles International Airport on Nov. 24, 2023, to accept deportation on the grounds that her visa had been canceled by the U.S. Embassy in China two days prior to her arrival. However, Wei contacted the U.S. Embassy in China several times after returning to China, but was told that her visa was not revoked by the embassy, but by the U.S. Customs. A number of Chinese students who had the same experience said that their U.S. Customs transcripts had been tampered with, either intentionally or unintentionally. They sought help from various sectors to complete their studies, but even when their American schools contacted the U.S. Customs, they did not receive any effective response, and some had to choose to withdraw from their studies.<sup>59</sup>

**The legacy of violations of Native Americans' rights remains.** The Associated Press reported on Nov. 6, 2023, that for more than 150 years, Native American children have been removed from their communities and forced into boarding schools, which abused students in order to assimilate them into white society, and that the trauma caused by these schools has rippled across generations, contributing to problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and sexual abuse.<sup>60</sup> CNN reported on Nov. 22, 2023, that for centuries, Native Americans have lived in a constant state of cultural oppression, with their religious beliefs and traditional practices ruthlessly stifled. In Aug. 2023, an eight-year-old Indian boy was forced by his school to cut off his long hair. But according to the cultural tradition of the Wyandotte ethnic group, to which the boy belongs, long hair is only cut when loved ones die.<sup>61</sup> According to a report released by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) on Nov. 20, 2023, Indians and Alaska Natives have chronically poor health compared to other ethnic groups in the United States, and low life expectancy and heavy medical burden for Native Americans are widespread problems.<sup>62</sup> Trula Ann Breuninger, CEO of Native American Connections, said that there is a serious shortage of medical insurance funds for Indian Natives. Although the U.S. federal government provides medical insurance for Natives, there is a gap between the funds and the needs of in real terms.<sup>63</sup> The Indian Health Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

provides federally funded health care to nearly 2.6 million Native Americans, but that number is less than 50 percent of the nation's Indian and Alaska Native population. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest rates of lack of health care coverage compared to other ethnic groups. <sup>64</sup>

**Ethnic minorities face workplace discrimination.** According to the 2023 Candidate Interview Experience Report by Greenhouse, a U.S. hiring software company, discrimination in the hiring process is "pretty sobering." 34 percent of job seekers have faced discriminatory questions in an interview, and nearly one in five have tried to avoid discriminatory hiring practices by changing their name on their resume. 45 percent of job seekers who changed their names did so to sound "less ethnic."<sup>65</sup> The British "Guardian" website revealed on April 23, 2023 that the U.S. government has deliberately evaded its responsibility to protect workers and exploited minority workers for decades. Nursing workers of color in New York are not only forced to work long hours, but also underpaid. Many nursing workers suffer from insomnia, chronic diseases and other diseases. It has caused serious harm to nursing workers and their families.<sup>66</sup> Ethnic minority workers have been trying to fight for the protection of rights through various channels, but with little success due to obstacles from some interest groups.<sup>67</sup> According to a report by Vox News on June 12, 2023, in the United States, African Americans have always earned less than whites. The discrepancy means that Black time — that same time stolen by discrimination — is worth markedly less than white time. To make up the pay gap caused by discrimination, a Black worker must toil an extra 2.7 hours each day. <sup>68</sup>

**Racist ideology is spreading virulently in the United States and spilling across borders.** With the worsening of the problem of racism in the United States, the spread of racist ideology and speech has also shown a new trend. Racists have opened up a new space of communication on the Internet, using social media, music, games and other platforms to carry out widespread abuse and harassment against ethnic minorities.<sup>69</sup> The gunman who killed 10 Black people at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, in May 2022 had posted on Discord, a gaming chat app community, that a game on the Roblox gaming platform had influenced his radicalization.<sup>70</sup> In July 2023, a 14-year-old white boy in Massachusetts "racially motivated" attempted to drown an African American boy, and other white boys present at the time of the incident called the victim "George Floyd."<sup>71</sup> Racism in the United States has shown a trend of transnational diffusion and has become a major exporter of extreme racism, which has aroused the vigilance of many countries. Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware, fellows of the Council on Foreign Relations of the United States, published an article on the website of Foreign Affairs magazine on Sept. 19, 2023 entitled "American Hatred Goes Global," saying that the United States has become a typical country exporting far-right extremism and terrorism. Conspiracy theories, racial superiority theories, anti-government extremism, and other forms of hate and intolerance have spread so far in the United States that some countries have labeled American groups and citizens as foreign terrorists.<sup>72</sup>

### III. Growing Economic and Social Inequality

The United States not only lacks constitutional provisions on the rights to work, education and health, but also refuses to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The poor are blamed for falling into the "poverty trap" because of their "own laziness," and economic, social and cultural rights are stigmatized as "welfare cheese." The phenomenon of "in-work poverty" is widespread, and the gap between the rich and the poor is further widening.

**The gap between rich and poor has widened further.** The gap between rich and poor in the United States has reached its worst level since the Great Depression of 1929. According to data released by the Statista on November 3, 2023, the poverty rate in the United States in 2022 is as high as 11.5 percent.<sup>73</sup> The bottom 80 percent of U.S. households had exhausted their excess savings by June 2023, but cash savings among the richest 20 percent were still about 8 percent higher than at the start of the pandemic, according to the latest Federal Reserve study of household finances.<sup>74</sup> In the third quarter of 2023, 66.6 percent of total wealth in the United States was owned by the top 10 percent of income earners. In contrast, the bottom 50 percent of earners own only 2.6 percent of total wealth.<sup>75</sup> American economist Matthew Desmond has pointed out that in 2023, most Americans are working hard, but the rich are getting richer, and those struggling at the bottom of society are trapped in deep-rooted poverty. The accumulation of opportunity and reduced social mobility in American society is rooted in a triple institutional design: exploiting the poor, subsidizing the rich, and segregating the classes.<sup>76</sup>

**The issue of the "working poor" is prominent.** American labor market has undergone systemic changes, which is marked by low-wage jobs and lack of supervision.<sup>77</sup> A large number of "working poor" are toiling all day long, but their wages are barely enough to maintain their basic needs, and they lack adequate social security. The federal minimum hourly wage hasn't been raised since 2009.<sup>78</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor shows that 20 states still remain at the federal baseline wage in 2023.<sup>79</sup> There are more than 29.9 million people, including 14.8 million children, living in 11.5 million low-income working families in the United States.<sup>80</sup> The disparity in labor income growth has led to large-scale strikes in many industries. In 2023, the United States experienced the most widespread strike tide since the 21st century, and large-scale strikes took place in many industries including film and television, manufacturing, medical care and media.<sup>81</sup> Benjamin Newman, an associate professor at the School of Public Policy and Politics at the University of California, said that the "working poor" caught in structural poverty lack equal opportunities and are difficult to move upwards, which greatly reduces their belief in the "American Dream."<sup>82</sup>

**Low-income families can barely meet their basic needs.** As the commodity prices in the United States in 2023 remain high, coupled with the burden of continuous interest rate hikes, the cost of living of Americans continues to rise for several years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index, a dollar in 2023 can buy roughly 70 percent of what it could buy in 2009. Households who earn minimum wage have had a harder time paying rent, and buying

essential household goods, including groceries. Many have even depleted their savings and went deeper into debt.<sup>83</sup> According to a poll from the Financial Times and the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, 74 percent of Americans said rising food prices were having the greatest impact on their finances.<sup>84</sup> Household debt increased 1.3 percent to 17.29 trillion dollars in the third quarter, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit released on November 7, 2023. The report showed that the rate of households becoming delinquent or entering serious delinquency (behind by 90 days or more) on their credit cards was the highest since the end of 2011.<sup>85</sup>

**Homelessness is at a 16-year high.** According to a report released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on December 15, 2023, the number of homeless people in the United States at this stage exceeds 650,000, the highest since reporting began in 2007. Forty percent of the homeless live in streets without shelter, abandoned buildings or other places not meant for human habitation.<sup>86</sup> Homeless people not only struggle to survive, but also face an increasing risk of criminal conviction.<sup>87</sup> A National Homelessness Law Center report found that a growing number of cities in the United States are tightening legislation against the homeless. From 2006 to 2019, citywide bans on camping increased by 92 percent; on sleeping in public increased by 50 percent; on sitting and lying in public spaces by 78 percent; on loitering by 103 percent; and on living in vehicles by 213 percent.<sup>88</sup> According to these laws, it is illegal for homeless people to sleep, camp, eat, sit and beg in public places.<sup>89</sup> Authorities have the rights to eject them from public spaces; confiscate and destroy their property; and segregate them in often unsanitary and inhumane mass shelters and jails.<sup>90</sup> This violation of the basic human rights of homeless people in the United States has been widely criticized. The United Nations Human Rights Committee urged the United States to abolish laws and policies criminalizing homelessness at all levels, and adopt legislative and other measures that protect the human rights of homeless people.<sup>91</sup>

**A large number of families are facing food shortages.** The disparity between the rich and the poor, working poverty and lack of a social safety net have led to a resurgence of hunger and food insecurity in the United States. Nearly 13 percent of American households were food insecure in 2022, significantly higher than in 2021, according to a report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>92</sup> That means 44.2 million Americans struggled to meet their nutritional needs, including 13 million children.

**Drug and substance abuse keeps raging.** Interest groups use partisanship and money politics to conduct political bribery to push for the legalization of marijuana. As of December 2023, 24 states have legalized recreational weed in America.<sup>93</sup> According to top cannabis researcher Brightfield Group, the U.S. cannabis market is estimated to reach over 31.8 billion dollars annual sales by the end of 2023, growing to 50.7 billion dollars in annual sales by 2028.<sup>94</sup> According to a study by the U.S. National Institutes of Health in August 2023, reports of marijuana and hallucinogen use in 2022 among adults aged 35 to 50 reached 28 percent and 4 percent respectively, the highest level on record. For adults aged 19 to 30, 44 percent reported past-year marijuana use; 11 percent reported daily marijuana use; 8 percent reported past-year use of hallucinogens.<sup>95</sup> According to a survey by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration, over 70 million Americans aged 12 or older in 2022 used illicit drug. Among them, 61.9 million people used marijuana.<sup>96</sup> According to a survey published by the University of Michigan in December 2023, 10.9 percent of eighth graders, 19.8 percent of 10th graders, and 31.2 percent of 12th graders reported any illicit drug use in 2023.<sup>97</sup>

**Suicide rates continue to rise.** According to a report on the USA Today website on November 29, 2023, the suicide rate among Americans has risen steadily over the past decades. The suicide rate per 100,000 people in 2022 was 14.3, the highest since 1941. An estimated 49,449 people died by suicide in 2022, an increase of 2.6 percent compared with 2021, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>98</sup> Suicide rates among Black youths climbed steadily, rising 36.6 percent from 2018 to 2021 among those between 10 to 24 years old, the largest percentage jump across all demographics.<sup>99</sup>



#### **IV. Persistent Violations of the Rights of Women and Children**

The U.S. Constitution does not prohibit gender-based discrimination, which is rampant in the workplace and results in widening gender wage gap as well as insufficient protection for women's rights to life and health. The United States has for long the highest maternal mortality rate among developed countries, amplified by ban on abortion which seriously violates women's reproductive and health rights. Gender-based violence in workplaces, schools and other fields persists. Children's rights to life, development, and health are systematically violated with a soaring number of children living in poverty and without medical insurance.

**Constitutional prohibition on gender-based discrimination has long been absent.** The Equal Rights Amendment that guarantees equal rights for women has not yet entered into force more than half a century since its text approval by Congress in 1972. This legislative effort was born out of the surging civil rights movement in 1950s and 60s. In April 2023, the U.S. Senate failed to advance a resolution to remove the deadline for its ratification.<sup>100</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee regrets the lack of an explicit guarantee in the U.S. Constitution against sex- and gender-based discrimination.<sup>101</sup>

**The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate among industrialized countries,** far exceeding the second. According to a research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in July 2023, the number of people dying from pregnancy-related causes in the United States has more than doubled in the last 20 years.<sup>102</sup> More than 2.2 million U.S. women of childbearing age do not have access to obstetric care, and an additional 4.8 million live in counties with limited access to maternity care. In Alabama, for example, about 39 percent of counties do not have any maternity care provider, and more than 240,000 women live in counties with little or no guaranteed maternity care.<sup>103</sup>

**The ban on abortion is devastating to women's reproductive and health rights.** In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* (1973) which guaranteed a constitutional right to abortion, a devastating blow to millions of women's reproductive health rights. As of December 2023, at least 21 states in the United States ban or severely restrict abortion, where safe abortion is largely unavailable. The United Nations experts pointed out that the United States Supreme Court decision deprives women and girls of their fundamental human right to comprehensive health care including sexual and reproductive health, in violation of international human rights law.<sup>104</sup> Some state laws criminalize abortion, including bans on out-of-state travel for abortion, whether through medication or a procedure.<sup>105</sup>

**Violence against women is prevalent.** The UN Human Rights Committee noted that violence against women and girls, including domestic and sexual violence, persists in the United States, including in schools, institutions of higher learning, and armed forces.<sup>106</sup> Investigations into California State University, the nation's largest public university, found widespread sexual misconducts across its 23 campuses. Campus officials do not investigate most allegations of

sexual misconducts they receive. In the few cases investigated, no action was taken even when the accused was found guilty. At least 1,251 university employees were the subject of sexual harassment allegations from 2018 to 2022, yet only 254 complaints were investigated.<sup>107</sup> Scandals have also roiled Northwestern University's volleyball, football, softball, baseball and other sport teams, where whistle-blowers said sexual abuse and racial discrimination were rampant.<sup>108</sup> More than 600 American women are shot and killed by an intimate partner each year, about one every 14 hours, according to data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.<sup>109</sup>

**Gender discrimination is rampant in workplace.** The wage gap between men and women continues to widen, from 20.3 percent in 2019 to 22.2 percent in 2022, according to a report by The Times on Aug. 8, 2023.<sup>110</sup> Pregnancy discrimination is a widespread, forcing nearly 54,000 women in the United States to leave their jobs every year, according to the Equality and Human Rights Commission cited by The Independent on May 11, 2023.<sup>111</sup>

**Child poverty is soaring.** According to a U.S. Census Bureau report released in September 2023, poverty in the United States surged in 2022,<sup>112</sup> and over 5 million American children fell into poverty in this year, more than doubling child poverty rate, a historic one-year increase due largely to the expiration of improvements to the Child Tax Credit.<sup>113</sup>

**Large number of children's health insurance has been cancelled.** Between April and October 2023, nearly 10 million adults and children have been excluded from the federal government's Medicaid health insurance program. "This unwinding (reviewing all recipients' eligibility) has not been about determining who is eligible by all possible means, but how we can kick people off by all possible means," said Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families Health Policy Director Camille Richoux. The impact on children's health is immense. Nationwide, states have disenrolled at least 1.8 million children in the 20 states that provide the data by age.<sup>114</sup>

**Thousands of foster children go missing every year.** An audit published in 2023 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that across 46 states, state agencies failed to report an estimated 34,800 cases of missing foster kids. In Georgia state, nearly 1,800 children in state care went missing between 2018 and 2022, according to a new analysis conducted by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and more than 20 percent of them were likely trafficked.<sup>115</sup>

**Children in the juvenile justice system are subjected to inhuman practices.** The U.S. criminal justice system is riddled with certain inhumane practices, according to a survey conducted by the UN Human Rights Council's International Independent Expert Mechanism for Advancing Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement in October 2023. The United States is the only country in the world that sentences children to life in prison without parole.<sup>116</sup> In the U.S. state of Georgia, the head of the state's child welfare agency asked judges to keep some children inappropriately locked in juvenile detention centers.<sup>117</sup> Up to 80 children have been brought to the notoriously violent Angola prison in Louisiana since October 2022 and housed in cells in which condemned death row prisoners used to await execution.<sup>118</sup> Although the juveniles have

been segregated from adult prisoners, they have suffered dangerous heat waves, extended confinement to their cells, foul water and inadequate schooling.<sup>119</sup>

**The cases related to child sex abuse are rampant.** In early 2023, the Maryland attorney general's office released a scathing report on child sex abuse within the Baltimore archdiocese, detailing over 600 abuse cases. An Associated Press analysis shows that out of 27 parishes in the archdiocese that have significant Black populations, at least 19 previously had priests on staff who have been accused of sexual abuse, yet victims of sexual abuse have little opportunity to speak out.<sup>120</sup> According to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as many as one in 10 teenage girls in the United States have said that they have been raped, and high school girls are "engulfed in a growing wave of violence and trauma."<sup>121</sup>

## V. Heart-wrenching Struggles of Undocumented Migrants

Political strife has become a defining feature of U.S. immigration policy. Politicians have forsaken the rights and welfare of immigrants, engaging in divisive attacks on each other over immigration issues. They have failed to improve the resettlement capacity in border areas or show a genuine commitment to improving the living conditions of immigrants. The immigration issue has thus fallen into a vicious circle without a solution. The escalating humanitarian crisis in border regions is exacerbated by policies that inadvertently support modern slavery, leading to widespread violations of migrant rights.

**The humanitarian crisis along the border has escalated.** The U.S. government has continuously made empty promises on immigration policy, leading to the worsening humanitarian crisis in the border region. The U.S.-Mexico border is the world's deadliest land migration route, according to the United Nations migration agency.<sup>122</sup> On Nov. 30, 2023, the El Paso Times reported that at least 149 migrants perished in the El Paso border patrol region in fiscal 2023. The number of women who died there has more than doubled from 2022. Border Patrol agents sometimes found two or three bodies per day. A spokesman for Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said "What is happening in the El Paso Sector is the direct result of the unsustainable chaos President Biden has unleashed on the border." "We need to start by recognizing that migrants are dying because of U.S. policy and U.S. strategy," said Fernando Garcia, executive director of the El Paso-based Border Network for Human Rights.<sup>123</sup>

**Immigration drama of "shifting blame" is on display in the United States on a grand scale.** Texas, under Republican leadership, has bused over 90,000 migrants to "sanctuary cities" run by Democrats like Washington, DC, New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver and Los Angeles since April 2022, according to a CNN report on Dec. 30, 2023.<sup>124</sup> Chicago's Brock Club website reported on Oct. 31, 2023, that more than 19,000 people have arrived in Chicago since August 2022 and the influx of asylum seekers has strained the city's shelter system. Some migrants, including children, had to be accommodated in makeshift tents or even sleep on the streets.<sup>125</sup> Chicago Sun-Times reported on Oct. 14, 2023, that a six-year-old girl, Yohanyelis, lived in a makeshift tent with elderly people. As winter set in, the plummeting temperatures posed a formidable challenge for them.<sup>126</sup>

**Migrants are also subjected to torture and other forms of inhuman treatment.** In fiscal year 2023, the number of immigrants apprehended or deported at the U.S. southern border reached more than 2.4 million, another record high.<sup>127</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the prolonged periods of immigration detention in the United States, criticizing the poor conditions at overcrowded detention facilities in the country, where detainees are denied access to food, water and medical care, resulting in the deaths of many people, including children; Public and private immigration detention facilities are plagued by human rights abuses such as sexual violence, prolonged solitary confinement, and abuse.<sup>128</sup> The Guardian website reported on Dec. 6, 2023, that the Stewart facility, an immigration and customs enforcement detention center

in Lumpkin, Georgia, operated by CoreCivic, has been the subject of recent reports detailing alarming issues, including deaths, prolonged solitary confinement, sexual abuse and medical neglect.<sup>129</sup> On Feb. 15, 2023, the Innovation Law Lab released a report revealing the torture of detainees at the Torrance County Detention Facility in Estancia, New Mexico, operated by CoreCivic. During the night, every 15 minutes a guard walks by the rooms with their radios at full volume, bangs on the doors loudly and shines strong flashlights into the rooms, waking up anyone who may fall asleep. It is severely cold and in each cell, the air ducts blast cold air all night. Some of the men try to use toilet paper or blankets to cover the vents, but the guards remove anything the men use to block the cold air. In some of the pods, flooded toilets overflow with feces spilling out onto the floor in cells where some of the men are forced to sleep.<sup>130</sup>

**U.S. border policies facilitate modern slavery.** The U.S. government's border policies exacerbate the problem of human trafficking. Migrants abandoned in border state towns or transported across the country are often isolated and most vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. Children who cross the border illegally and gather in crowded, lightly supervised shelters also fall prey to traffickers.<sup>131</sup> 72 percent of those trafficked in the United States are immigrants. Most of them are here illegally. Many are women and children who are highly vulnerable to being smuggled and eventually trafficked. A study from the Coalition Against Trafficking In Women estimated that 60 percent of unaccompanied alien children are caught by cartels and exploited through child pornography and drug trafficking.<sup>132</sup> On Jun. 18, 2023, the USA Today reported that criminal syndicates lure migrants to grow marijuana in farms of Northern California and Southern Oregon, where they are subjected to slavery and forced to work. Some workers were stunned, while others were made to work 16 or more hours without a break and sometimes without a meal. And women are sometimes sexually assaulted. Some disappear, presumed murdered, their bodies discarded within the area's vast wilderness.<sup>133</sup> About 60 suspected human trafficking victims working at a black market marijuana facility in central California, are forced to grow marijuana and pay their debts to the smugglers, according to CBS News reported on July 27, 2023.<sup>134</sup>

**Alone and exploited, migrant children work brutal jobs across the U.S.** In an article published on Feb. 25, 2023, the New York Times uncovered the illegal employment of immigrant child labor and forced labor in American factories. The report revealed that as of the time of publication, more than 250,000 children have entered the United States by themselves. To survive and repay the expenses of their sponsors, most children are subjected to forced labor and exploitation. The presence of immigrant child labor is pervasive across numerous hazardous industries in dozens of states nationwide, such as construction sites and slaughterhouses. They often work night shifts and engage in perilous tasks, becoming a “shadow work force” within forms of economic exploitation.<sup>135</sup> Without proper scrutiny, American immigration authorities release detained children to 'sponsors,' effectively becoming complicit in human trafficking. In Alabama, a 12-year-old immigrant girl was forced to work overnight shifts making auto parts; a 12-year-old child arrived in Florida and was promptly assigned roofing work the next day. A 13-year-old boy worked 12-hour shifts, six days a week, at a commercial egg farm in Michigan.<sup>136</sup> Legislative bodies have played a role in enabling the exploitation of child labor. In a report published on March 14, 2023, the Economic Policy Institute of the United States exposed that in

Arkansas, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders has signed into law a 2023 bill repealing restrictions on work for 14- and 15-year-olds. Under the new law, children under 16 will no longer need to provide an employment certificate from the Division of Labor that verifies proof of their age and parental consent to work. This action brazenly absolves responsibility for businesses hiring immigrant child laborers separated from their families.<sup>137</sup>

## VI. American Hegemony Creates Humanitarian Crises

For decades, the United States has pursued hegemony, unilateralism, and power politics. Leveraging military dominance to threaten global security and stability, it has unabashedly engaged in military interventions, stirred regional tensions, instigated proxy wars, exacerbated armed conflicts, imposed unilateral sanctions, and under the pretext of counter-terrorism, carried out illegal detentions and torture.

**Initiating overseas wars creates enduring humanitarian disasters.** A research report released in May 2023 by Brown University's "Costs of War" project website reveals that in the theaters of war where the United States conducted overseas "counter-terrorism" operations following the 9/11 attacks, the total death toll ranges from at least 4.5 to 4.7 million people. Among them, the number of deaths indirectly caused by war-related economic disruption, environmental damage, loss of public services, and health-care infrastructure is estimated to be around 3.6 to 3.8 million people.<sup>138</sup>

**Violating the sovereignty and human rights of other nations via "proxy forces" programs.** In order to ensure sufficient funds and authority for future operations to support foreign militaries, the United States Special Operations Command has championed legislation known as Section 1208, ultimately enshrined in Section 127e of Title 10 of the United States Code. According to this provision, the Department of Defense is allocated an annual budget to assist foreign militaries, paramilitaries, and private individuals that are "supporting" U.S. counterterrorism operations. Katherine Yon Ebright, who serves as counsel with the Brennan Center's Liberty & National Security Program, pointed out that under Section 127e, the Department of Defense recruits, trains, equips, and pays the salaries of foreign militaries, paramilitaries, and private individuals, creates proxy forces who pursue military objectives alongside of and on behalf of U.S. forces.<sup>139</sup> A report released on the Brown University website in September 2023 reveals that the United States has conducted operations known as "127e" in countries including Afghanistan, Cuba, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Niger, and Tunisia.<sup>140</sup> According to a report on The New York Times website on May 14, 2023, the "127e" program does not mention violations of human rights — such as rape, torture or extrajudicial killings.<sup>141</sup>

**Continued provision of arms to conflict zones.** A press release by the U.S. Defense Department on July 7, 2023 showed that the United States provided Ukraine with an additional security assistance up to 800 million U.S. dollars, which includes a significant amount of cluster munitions.<sup>142</sup> Responding to questions from reporters on July 7, 2023, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Farhan Haq stated that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hopes all countries adhere to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and refrain from the continued use of cluster munitions on the battlefield.<sup>143</sup> According to a report on the website of the UN Human Rights Office on Sept. 20, 2023, Alice Jill Edwards, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or p

unishment, sent an urgent communication to the U.S. government in July 2023, warning that cluster munitions may be extremely harmful to civilian populations, causing death and life-altering permanent injuries.<sup>144</sup> According to a report on The Washington Post on Dec. 11, 2023, billions of dollars' worth of U.S. munitions flow to Israel every year. In October, Israel used U.S.-supplied white phosphorus munitions in an October attack in southern Lebanon that injured at least nine civilians.<sup>145</sup> Josh Paul, a former director in the State Department's political-military affairs bureau, pointed out in an article on New York Times on Oct. 18, 2023, that the United States currently provides Israel with at least 3.8 billion U.S. dollars in annual military assistance. Most of the severe casualties in the Gaza Strip are caused by U.S.-supplied ammunition, he said, and he condemns this military aid for ignoring human rights issues.<sup>146</sup> The Center for Constitutional Rights, a progressive non-profit legal advocacy organization based in New York City, reported on Nov. 16, 2023, that William Schabas, the world's leading legal expert on genocide, condemns the United States' breach of its legal duty to prevent it, as required under customary international law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.<sup>147</sup>

**The notorious Guantanamo prison is still in operation.** The U.S. government has repeatedly promised to close Guantanamo prison, but has repeatedly broken its promise. As of 2023, the notorious prison is still in operation. After ending her visit to Guantanamo prison on June 26, 2023, Fionnuala Ni Aolain, the UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, pointed out that there are still about 30 people in custody in the prison, and every detainee she met lives with unrelenting, ongoing harms following from systematic practices of rendition, torture, and arbitrary detention. It is imperative to close the prison. The human rights of the vast majority of former detainees continue to be violated, and the U.S. government has “serious shortcomings in the provision of the essential means that former detainees need to live a dignified life, including legal identity, health care, education, housing, family reunification, and freedom of movement.” which violate the obligations of the United States under international law before, during and after the transfer of detainees.<sup>148</sup> On February 16, 2023, Mansoor Adayfi, an artist and activist who had been arbitrarily detained in Guantanamo prison for over 14 years, commented on the Al Jazeera website, “After decades of abuse, the United States simply threw us away, offering no support, care or compensation.”<sup>149</sup>

**Prolonged and indiscriminate use of unilateral sanctions has caused serious humanitarian consequences.** Since 1950, the United States has used more sanctions than any other country in the world. According to data released by the U.S. Treasury Department on December 28, 2023, the United States has sanctioned more than 20 countries.<sup>150</sup> The Speaker of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly stated on 1 November 2023 that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba violates the Charter of the United Nations and has had a devastating impact on the Cuban people.<sup>151</sup> On November 2, 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution once again urging the United States to end the more than 60-year economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, the 31st consecutive year of such a resolution. On January 28, 2023, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said after a visit to Venezuela that the sanctions



imposed by the United States since 2017 "have exacerbated the economic crisis and hindered human rights."<sup>152</sup> The "American Conservative" website reported on June 1, 2023, that the U.S. sanctions have further exacerbated the poverty of the Syrian people. Seventy percent of Syria's population faces food shortages, including "12 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from" and "2.9 million people are at risk of sliding into hunger."<sup>153</sup> Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, stated on February 14, 2023 that the U.S. sanctions against Iran "affect the import of life-saving iron-regulating medicines for Iranian thalassemia patients. This not only violates their right to health, but also results in increased complications and mortality rates," the experts said.<sup>154</sup> The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 3 April 2023 stating that unilateral coercive measures "have far-reaching implications for the human rights of the general population of targeted States, disproportionately affecting the poor and persons in the most vulnerable situations." The resolution condemns the continued unilateral application of unilateral coercive measures by certain powers. The United States voted against the resolution.<sup>155</sup>

## **Conclusion**

At present, the human society is facing unprecedented challenges, and the world once again stands at the crossroads of history. Various human rights problems in the United States not only turned its own human rights essentially into a privilege enjoyed by a few, but also seriously threatened and hindered the healthy development of the world human rights cause.

Actions speak louder than words. Can the United States break through the impasse with ideas and initiatives that are in line with the characteristics of the times and the currents of history? The American people are waiting, the international community is watching, and the U.S. government must respond.

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