


## US withdraws from key UN human rights report, draws criticism from rights advocates

By Andrew R.C. Marshall and Olivia Le Poidevin

August 28, 2025 11:06 AM EDT · Updated 3 hours ago



The United Nations headquarters building is pictured through a window with the UN logo in the foreground in the Manhattan borough of New York August 15, 2014/File Photo [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) 

### Summary

US says it won't participate in a key UN human rights review Rights advocates say US withdrawal weakens global rights efforts

UN human rights office calls decision 'regrettable'

LONDON/GENEVA Aug 28 (Reuters) - The United States will not participate in a U.N. review of its human rights record, officials said, a move that rights advocates called a worrying retreat from Washington's global engagement on rights and justice issues.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) expects all 193 U.N. member states to submit reports on their human rights records every 4.5 to 5 years. The reports are reviewed by other member states, which provide non-binding recommendations.

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A U.S. State Department official told Reuters the U.S. will not participate in the UPR mechanism or submit its report in November, when it and 13 other countries are due to be reviewed.

This followed an executive order by [President Donald Trump](#) on 4 February to [disengage](#) from the U.N. Human Rights Council, the official said.

"Engagement in UPRs implies endorsement of the (Human Rights) Council's mandate and activities and ignores its persistent failure to condemn the most egregious human rights violators," the official said.

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Spokespeople for the intergovernmental U.N. Human Rights Council and U.N. human rights office said the U.S. Mission in Geneva had notified them of the decision.

According to an analysis of the council's public records, the U.S. is now on course to be the first country to not deliver a report to the UPR, unless it submits a report within the timeframe of the current review period, which ends in July 2027.

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Ravina Shamdasani, chief spokesperson for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), told Reuters that it regretted the U.S. decision.

"Constructive engagement with the Council, by the U.S. and all States, has contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide over the years," she added.

#### DECISION GIVES OTHER COUNTRIES 'AN EXCUSE'

Although there are no direct consequences of not submitting a UPR report, Michael Posner, director of the Center for Business and Human Rights at N.Y.U. Stern School of Business, said the U.S. was undermining global efforts on human rights.

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"By withdrawing from the UPR, the U.S. gives gross human rights abusers like Iran, Russia and Sudan an excuse to follow suit," said Posner, a former senior State Department official who helped direct the UPR process under President Barack Obama.

Phil Lynch, Executive Director of Geneva-based NGO International Service for Human Rights, said that under Trump the "U.S. is rapidly becoming a human rights pariah state". Washington's refusal to take part signalled disdain for people facing discrimination, he added.

The State Department official said in response to the criticism that the U.S. is proud of its human rights record and leadership in advancing human rights around the world.

In Trump's first term in office, in 2017-2021, the U.S. submitted its UPR in April-May 2020, despite withdrawing from the Human Rights Council.

The UPR process consists of a national report submitted by the country under review and a compilation of information from U.N. human rights reports and NGOs.

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