

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

HUMAN RIGHTS ON CAPITOL HILL

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THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

U.S. – In the Wake of Three Mass Shootings in August, Amnesty International USA Demands That Congress Immediately Pass Legislation to Prevent Gun Violence and Save Lives. In the aftermath of the mass shootings in Gilroy, El Paso, Dayton and Odessa, Amnesty International USA [called](#) on Congress to convene an August emergency session to pass legislation to reduce gun violence and save lives.

On August 15, Amnesty [wrote to Senate leaders](#) to demand the Senate return to Washington for an emergency session to mandate universal background checks on all gun sales. Amnesty also urged [House leaders](#) to return to Washington for an emergency session to pass legislation banning assault weapons and pass extreme risk protection orders. Amnesty submitted a statement of support for the Assault Weapons Ban Act of 2019 ([H.R. 1296](#)), the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2019 ([H.R.1236](#)) and the Disarm Hate Act of 2019 ([H.R. 2708](#)), which will be marked up by the House Judiciary Committee during the week of September 9.



Above: On August 4, Amnesty Student Activist Coordinators convened in Washington, D.C. to demand that Congress mandate universal background checks.



Above: On August 8, Amnesty International, March for Our Lives, and Moms Demand Action protested in Cedar Rapids to demand that Senators Grassley and Ernst support universal background checks.

OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

a) Venezuela – Amnesty International Urges the Senate to Provide Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”) for Venezuelans. On July 25, the [House](#) passed the Venezuela TPS Act (H.R. 549), which allows Venezuelans to qualify for temporary protected status (“TPS”). TPS would prevent the deportation of Venezuelans from the U.S. and would allow them a means of survival, via work authorization, while they are here. Venezuela is undergoing a major human rights crisis that has led to the exodus of four million Venezuelans. The Congressional Budget Office [estimates that](#) approximately 200,000 Venezuelans in the U.S. could benefit from TPS. The Senate must follow the House’s lead and pass this crucial legislation.

b) Central American Children - Congress Must Protect the Flores Settlement to Prevent the Indefinite Detention of Children and Families. In August, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services published [final regulations](#) as required by the 1997 Flores settlement. The rules permit the [indefinite detention of families and children](#) and eviscerate minimal standards of detention for children, in stark contravention of the Flores settlement and human rights principles. Amnesty International filed an amicus brief in support of the challenge to the new regulations, and [previously issued comments](#) opposing the draft regulations. Congress should cease funding for family detention which [irreparably harms children](#).

c) Hong Kong – Amnesty International Calls for a Full Investigation into Unnecessary and Excessive Police Force on Protesters. While Hong Kong’s Chief Executive has announced the

official withdraw of the Extradition Law Amendment Bill, Amnesty International is [demanding](#) an independent and thorough investigation into the police's excessive use of force on protesters. The U.S. should push for the suspension of transferring crowd control equipment to Hong Kong.

FULL SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

For more human rights updates in Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and Eurasia, see our full September newsletter [here](#).

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WHAT'S COMING DOWN THE PIKE?

Amnesty International USA Congressional Briefing on U.S. Policy in Ukraine. On September 18, the Congressional Ukraine Caucus and Amnesty International USA will co-host a briefing "Ukraine: Where does US Policy go from here?" in Capitol Visitors Center 268 at 4 PM. Amnesty's Daniel Balson will join Michael Carpenter of the Penn Biden Center, Melinda Haring of the Atlantic Council and Nina Jankowicz of the Wilson Center to present policy options for Congress on U.S.-Ukraine relations. Representatives Kaptur and Fitzpatrick will offer opening remarks. Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to mcullen@aiusa.org.

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