



CHAOS & CRUELTY: 10 COMPOUNDING ASSAULTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

A REVIEW OF PRESIDENT TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

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INTRODUCTION

One hundred days into his second term, President Trump has led with cruelty and chaos, creating a human rights emergency by systematically eroding human rights protections, fostering a climate of fear and division, and undermining the rule of law.

The president, his administration, and Elon Musk, an unelected billionaire, have targeted and undermined vital U.S. and international systems, institutions, and initiatives designed to make ours a safer and fairer world, using authoritarian tactics, policies and rhetoric, and [turbocharging harmful trends](#) already present. This all-out assault on multilateralism, asylum, racial and gender justice, global justice, global health and life-saving climate action threatens decades of painstaking work to build up and advance universal human rights and risks an acceleration of such practices globally.

The Trump administration has also weaponized the government to punish and silence dissent. The administration has withheld funding from colleges and universities, limited journalists' access to the White House, and arrested and threatened to deport students exercising their right to freedom of expression.

In this review of President Trump's first 100 days, we highlight the compounding impacts of many small and large actions by the administration, identifying how these attacks are jeopardizing human rights in ten key areas. This is not intended as a comprehensive assessment of the many anti-rights actions taken in the last 100 days but offers a snapshot of how the "shock and awe" of policy changes are fundamentally shifting human rights protections in key areas affecting millions of people.

1. ENDING ASYLUM AND TARGETING IMMIGRANTS

Only hours into the second term, the Trump administration began to implement its harmful, racist, anti-immigrant agenda through executive actions that dehumanize and criminalize migrants and refugees, including those who have fled human rights crises to seek safety.

By reinstating cruel border policies, seeking to halt the U.S. Refugee Admissions Programs and all access to asylum, and implementing raids targeting racialized immigrants across the United States, the administration sought to turn the white nationalist 'Great Replacement Theory' into federal policy.

An Amnesty International fact-finding [mission](#) found that the right to seek asylum in the United States is [non-existent at the U.S.-Mexico border](#), in violation of U.S. human rights national and international obligations.

Nearly all domestic law enforcement agencies have been [deputized](#) to engage in civil immigration enforcement since the early days of the administration. Communities around the United States have seen [masked agents in unmarked clothing](#) snatch immigrants out of their communities, armored [vehicles](#) and military grade weapons roving the streets, armed agents break down doors of homes and vehicles to arrest people, and targeted enforcement around schools, houses of faith, hospitals, and other community areas where such enforcement was previously prohibited. The U.S. mass immigration detention system continues to expand to hold tens of thousands of people in a sprawling web of immigration jails that are increasingly overcrowded and abusive and where conditions continue to decline. The Trump Administration has also restarted the practice of detaining families and separating them. The administration also detained immigrants and people seeking safety and sent them to the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

In his [invocation of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798](#) —which was last used as the basis for Japanese internment in the 1940s—President Trump declared that the Venezuelan criminal group Tren de Aragua

is a foreign terrorist organization that is “invading” the United States and all of its members are now “alien enemies.” Through this invocation, President Trump has called for the arrest, detention, and removal of everyone considered to be an “alien enemy.” In reality, the Trump Administration is using this broad power to target Venezuelans seeking safety, snatch them from their communities, detain and expel them without any consideration for due process or the right to non-discrimination, while exposing them to serious human rights violations, including torture and persecution.

Despite a court order, the Trump administration [moved to forcibly remove 238 individuals from the United States to El Salvador](#). The people expelled include individuals in the midst of ongoing court processes; arrested while complying with their immigration obligations; already granted protections in the United States including under the Convention Against Torture, or falsely labeled as gang members for their tattoos or connection to the Venezuelan state of Aragua with no other evidence. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials have since admitted “many” had no criminal record at all and that some were removed because of a perception they may commit crimes in the future. These expulsions are not deportations, a legal process defined in U.S. law and international law. These individuals were expelled without any notice or due process, seemingly to serve an indefinite prison sentence under a system where human rights are routinely ignored. Moreover, several weeks after their expulsion, neither the U.S. nor Salvadoran authorities have provided any official information on the identities of the individuals expelled to El Salvador or their whereabouts. Amnesty International therefore considers that these individuals have been subjected to [enforced disappearance](#).

[Amnesty International has documented the inhumane conditions](#) within detention centers in El Salvador, including the Terrorism Confinement Center (Spanish: Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, and abbreviated CECOT), a maximum-security prison where those removed from the U.S. are now believed to be held. Reports indicate extreme overcrowding, lack of access to adequate medical care, and widespread ill-treatment amounting to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Salvadoran organizations have reported more than 300 deaths of individuals while in state custody, some of them showing clear signs of violence.

The Trump Administration continues to process people as “alien enemies” and has now attempted to send dozens more Venezuelan men to El Salvador, a move that was blocked at the last minute by the U.S. Supreme Court.

2. ATTACKING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

The Trump administration has launched an aggressive attack on free expression, demonizing protest, dissent, academic freedom, and debate.

In violation of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly, the administration has detained and seeks to deport multiple students who have expressed views and engaged in protests in solidarity with the rights of Palestinians. This includes U.S. immigration authorities unlawfully arresting and arbitrarily detaining [Mahmoud Khalil](#), a Palestinian activist and student organizer who recently graduated from Columbia University. At least nine other students are known to have been similarly targeted. Hundreds more may face similar attacks: Secretary Marco Rubio [announced that he had revoked the visas of at least 300 students](#) and visitors, claiming that the individuals engaged in “vandalizing universities, harassing students, taking over buildings, creating a ruckus” without providing any evidence of their individual conduct. Some news outlets and lawyers representing students [reported a reversal on some of these visa revocations](#), but this could not be independently verified by Amnesty International at publication.

The administration has also opened criminal investigations against others without any specific allegation of criminal activity, weaponizing the justice system to target those who have expressed dissent or who are seen as politically opposed to the president. Department of Justice investigations have been opened into at least two prior government officials who have made statements critical of President Trump, one of whom contradicted the President's claim of fraud in the 2020 election. The misuse of the justice system to target those who oppose the administration is a direct threat to the freedom of expression for everyone. These unlawful actions are restricting the space for free expression and other civil liberties.

The Trump administration has also [targeted universities](#), arbitrarily withdrawing billions of dollars in federal contracts and grants in efforts to assert draconian control over who they hire, admit, and what they teach. Higher education institutions have been central to advancing notions of the rule of law, equality, and inclusiveness in the United States, yet in 2021, then Senate candidate, now Vice President, JD Vance [proclaimed](#), "The universities are the enemy."

The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has accused graduate programs at [forty-five schools](#) of violating the 1964 Civil Rights Act by partnering with The PhD Project, a nonprofit that helps students from underrepresented groups earn doctoral degrees in business. Six additional institutions of higher education are under investigation for awarding alleged "impermissible race-based scholarships." Another has been accused of "administering a program that segregates students on the basis of race." These attacks on educational institutions share the common theme of efforts to control speech, close spaces for open debate, restrict dissent, and eliminate equal access to education.

3.UNDERMINING THE RULE OF LAW

Court challenges are a critical mechanism for halting and reversing the executive branch's unlawful actions – and the Trump administration is seeking to neutralize this check on its power. Further, President Trump has issued executive orders and allowed [Elon Musk's DOGE to direct actions that appear to violate federal law](#) and encroach upon the authority of Congress, including: dismantling agencies authorized by Congress; firing government watchdogs, officials, and staff; refusing to spend funds already allocated to executive agencies by Congress; and accessing sensitive, personal data of millions of Americans while not acting to protect that data from further dissemination and exposure to third parties.

The administration has [attacked law firms](#) in its effort to assert control and suppress dissent. Through executive orders, the Trump administration has denied law firms access to federal buildings, threatened their federal contracts, and revoked their security clearances. When challenged, these executive orders have been at least partially blocked by every court that has examined them. Rather than challenge these orders, some law firms have struck deals with the administration, for example, allowing the administration to assert control over hiring practices and agreeing to do pro bono work for causes backed by the President. Additionally, as a result of these attacks, it is reported that individuals needing legal representation to defend themselves against the administration's actions are finding it more difficult to obtain representation, apparently because of lawyers' fear of retribution from the government.

Further, [the Trump administration has disregarded court decisions](#), expelling 238 individuals from the United States to El Salvador despite a court order explicitly barring their removal. This action represents a clear abdication of the United States' human rights obligations. The administration is now calling for the impeachment of federal judges of the United States Judiciary with whom it disagrees, and there are members of Congress offering bills to defund courts they find are barriers to the administration's policy agenda. It has ratcheted up actions against judges by arresting a Wisconsin circuit court judge and charging her with a felony carrying a maximum penalty of five years in jail for effectively letting an immigrant exit out the jury door of the courtroom, even though the individual was easily seen by an

immigration agent upon his exit from the courtroom and was followed into the elevator by this agent. The manner in which the arrest was made, the extreme charges, and the statements by the administration surrounding this arrest clearly indicate that the intent is to intimidate the judiciary.

4. UNDERMINING PRESS FREEDOM

Independent media is critical to ensuring government accountability and freedom of expression – and the Trump Administration is seeking to undermine the critical role it plays in fostering debate, discussion, and dissent.

With new leadership appointed by President Trump, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [has threatened license revocation and launched investigations of various news outlets](#), weaponizing routine procedures against independent media outlets critical of the administration. The FCC's abuse of regulatory power to undermine freedom of the press contravenes its own congressionally mandated purpose to implement and enforce U.S. communications laws.

This includes the reopening of a dismissed complaint against the outlet CBS News by the FCC for allegations regarding its editing choices of its interview with former Vice President and then-presidential candidate Kamala Harris. This case follows a lawsuit by President Trump accusing CBS of election interference. Subsequently, the FCC launched an investigation into independent public media stations National Public Radio (NPR) and Public Broadcasting Service for allegedly violating their non-commercial terms. President Trump has directly called for NPR to be defunded.

Chairman Carr has also sought to enforce the termination of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within private entities as a form of FCC regulation. For example, he opened an investigation into [Comcast and NBC Universal](#), accusing them of violating FCC and civil rights laws for such initiatives. He also announced the FCC would investigate [Verizon](#) for its hiring practices related to DEI while it is awaiting FCC's approval to purchase and merge with telecommunication company Frontier.

The administration's targeting of independent media has had devastating consequences abroad as well. An executive order gutting the United States Agency for Global Media resulted in the shutdown of media outlets, including Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Asia (RFA), and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. The [impact of the abrupt and arbitrary shutdowns of these media outlets](#) is especially felt in countries where the robust and independent functioning of the press is already curtailed by their governments. Until now, RFA and VOA were the most accessible alternative to state media for many people in countries including China, North Korea, Myanmar and Vietnam, where governments continue to firewall access to uncensored global internet. A recent [court ruling](#) has indefinitely blocked this executive order.

5. ATTACKING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES

Immediately upon entering office, President Trump rescinded multiple executive orders protecting the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people—including executive orders that had previously promoted women's and LGBTQIA+ people's health and well-being or had worked to combat discrimination against them. The president has since instituted multiple executive orders [directly attacking the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people](#), with vitriol toward transgender people.

The administration has undertaken multiple measures meant to weaken sexual and reproductive rights for all people, particularly the right to abortion. President Trump [pardoned 23 people](#) convicted of violating

the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE Act), and the Department of Justice has ordered their prosecutors to cease enforcing this law protecting abortion patients and providers from violence and harassment, even though clinics and healthcare workers have reported increased violence and threats to themselves and their patients.

The Trump administration [took down the entire government-run website](#), ReproductiveRights.gov, which provided resources and information on reproductive health care and abortion access, and scrubbed the Health and Human Services website of information about how to access abortion care and any mention of HIPAA protection for reproductive healthcare, making it more difficult for people to access information about reproductive health or their privacy rights, while they have begun using language in other executive orders attempting to normalize the concept of personhood at conception.

The President's executive order banning diversity, equity, and inclusion practices has eliminated hiring discrimination protection efforts across the federal government and is being weaponized against the private sector as well; the elimination of such programs threatens equitable hiring, equal pay, and anti-discrimination, especially for women. In the weeks following the order, many high-profile companies cut or severely curtailed their equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

In an attempt to [erase transgender people's existence under the law](#), the administration issued an executive order declaring it official U.S. policy to recognize only two genders, "male and female." In response to this executive order, various agencies have begun to erase references to transgender people's history and rights. The National Park Service has [removed all references to transgender people](#) at the Stonewall National Monument and erased pages detailing contributions of transgender people. The Department of State has [suspended previous rules allowing for updates to gender markers](#) on U.S. passports, causing confusion and delays and making it difficult and even dangerous for transgender people to travel with legal documentation. The Department of Health and Human Services has launched an [initiative and "whistleblower" online portal](#) encouraging people to "report" medical providers that offer gender-affirming treatment to trans people.

The President's executive order mandating "Patriotic Education" explicitly targets the safety of transgender children in school, threatening to [eliminate federal funding for schools that promote "indoctrination"](#) based on "gender ideology and discriminatory equity ideology." It prohibits recognition of students' gender identity, such as by using their correct pronouns, and exposes teachers and staff who support trans students to legal actions by the attorney general. It threatens to eliminate federal funding for schools that allow trans students to use restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identity, as well as schools that "deliberately conceal" a child's trans identity from their parents.

6. MARGINALIZING BLACK AND OTHER RACIALIZED COMMUNITIES

President Trump wasted little time to use the power of the presidency in efforts that directly impact the most marginalized communities. Shortly after the inauguration, the president issued a series of executive orders rooted in white supremacist ideologies.

One of the earliest orders [eliminates DEI programs across federal agencies](#). DEI initiatives were established to address systemic inequities in hiring, retention, and advancement that have historically excluded marginalized communities. Their purpose is to correct longstanding imbalances caused by discriminatory practices.

By framing this rollback as a return to “merit-based” systems, the administration ignores the structural barriers rooted in white supremacy that prevent equitable opportunities for all. The purpose of the programs is to widen the pool for those in consideration for roles, allowing for often overqualified Black and other racialized workers the chance to be considered. Eliminating DEI programs ensures that workplace disparities in pay, promotion, and representation remain unchallenged, reinforcing systems that prioritize white dominance.

Compounding this rollback is the administration’s move to place all federal employees working in DEI offices on indefinite leave, effectively paralyzing longtime efforts to combat inequality in hiring and the workplace. This decision undermines years of progress toward creating inclusive workplaces.

President Trump’s decision to [pardon and release members of extremist groups](#), like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, signals that the administration will directly support white supremacists. These groups played pivotal roles in the January 6, 2021, violent attack on the U.S. Capitol to halt certification of the 2020 election results.

The president also issued an [executive order in opposition of employment non-discrimination protections](#), which were born out of the Civil Rights Movement and the recognition that systemic discrimination requires intentional and systemic solutions.

7. ABRUPTLY DISMANTLING U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

President Trump’s decision to largely end foreign assistance has undermined human rights in U.S. foreign policy. By the end of his first day in office, Trump issued [an executive order pausing foreign assistance](#) obligations. In March, Secretary Marco Rubio confirmed via X that he had terminated 83% of USAID awards.

These terminations have had immediate, significant, and [detrimental impacts for people around the world](#). Services for refugee camps and medical clinics have closed. Funding cuts forced interruptions to life-saving aid and made preventative medicines and vaccines unavailable to communities in need.

The humanitarian response to a March magnitude 7.7 earthquake in Myanmar was rendered near ineffective by the dismantling of USAID. Police in Serbia raided USAID-funded NGOs, spurred by Trump’s and Elon Musk’s inflammatory rhetoric about the agency. Aid workers in Yemen [reported that the cuts led to the shut-down of lifesaving assistance and protection services](#), including malnutrition treatment to children, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, safe shelters to survivors of gender-based violence, and healthcare to children suffering from cholera and other illnesses. [In Afghanistan, more than 200 health facilities closed](#) or ceased operations due to cuts. The facilities had provided 1.84 million people with medical care, including vaccinations and maternal and child health services. In Sudan, where parts of the country are already experiencing famine, hundreds of community kitchens have had to close, and clinics providing medical support to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence no longer have the funding necessary to supply appropriate care.

On February 4, President Trump issued an Executive Order prohibiting U.S. funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). [UNRWA is the backbone of the humanitarian response](#) for nearly two million Palestinians in Gaza, providing indispensable food, water, medical aid, education and shelter. Blocking funding during Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in Gaza is especially cruel and unconscionable. The UN agency has been a lifeline providing critical aid and services for Palestinian refugees throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in neighboring countries for 75 years. President Trump’s reinstatement of this ban for U.S. funding for UNRWA, which extends the policy of the Biden administration, exacerbates the suffering of Palestinians.

8. RETREATING FROM MULTILATERAL BODIES THAT PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

The Trump administration has overseen an unprecedented retreat from global leadership, withdrawing from the [Human Rights Council \(HRC\)](#), the [World Health Organization](#), and the [Paris Climate Agreement](#), and reviewing its membership in UNESCO, and [imposing sanctions on officials of the International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#).

These actions represent a significant retreat from multilateral bodies and leadership that will have a profound impact on human rights. Funding support for HRC-mandated fact-finding missions and monitoring mechanisms is vital to providing human rights oversight in crisis situations such as those in Venezuela, [Ethiopia](#), [Sudan](#), [Ukraine](#), and [Syria](#). In withdrawing from the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. has hampered a global response to emerging and existing global health threats – potentially harming people globally. [The sanctions against ICC officials](#) send a chilling message that the U.S. is willing to undermine justice and accountability for the atrocities and crimes under international law committed globally.

In [withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement](#), the U.S. is forfeiting the fight against one of the most pervasive threats to human rights today and abdicating its responsibility to the rest of the world as the number one historic polluter. Indeed, 2024 marked a grim landmark, with average global temperatures exceeding pre-industrial levels by 1.5 degrees Celsius. The climate crisis will exacerbate and instigate famine, refugee and other humanitarian crises, [ill-health](#), poverty and homelessness across the globe, with the impacts falling disproportionately on marginalized communities in countries at all levels of income, including the United States. In addition, several executive orders seek to expand fossil fuel production, which will cause decades of fossil fuel pollution, harming community health and worsening climate change. At the same time, other executive orders seek explicitly to limit research or action that will better enable humanity to adapt to the harms caused by climate change.

President Trump's executive order withdrawing from various UN agencies also mandated [a 180-day review of all international intergovernmental organizations](#) of which the U.S. is a member and to which it provides any type of funding or other support. It also mandates a review of all conventions and treaties to which the United States is a party, to determine which organizations, conventions, and treaties are purportedly contrary to the interests of the United States; and whether such organizations, conventions, or treaties can be reformed.

The administration has also pushed efforts to undermine human rights at the UN. While the March 10 adoption of a [declaration on gender equality](#) at the UN Commission on the Status of Women ended up as a win for human rights, the U.S. created considerable opposition and requested that references to “gender-responsive” be deleted throughout, as well as language regarding multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Co-facilitators refused to concede to the U.S. Moreover this year, unlike in the past, the U.S. (joining a small group of member states that included Russia, North Korea, Belarus, Nicaragua, and Sudan) cast a negative vote on the Ukraine- and EU-drafted text of a UNGA resolution condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the need for accountability for crimes under international law and justice for all victims. The U.S. also introduced a competing resolution totaling barely seven lines of text that made no mention of Russia's aggression, the human rights and international humanitarian law violations stemming from the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, or the need for accountability.

While retreating from multilateralism, President Trump has also pushed forward with unilateral plans to compound the violations that have been committed in Gaza. During Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's first visit under the new administration on February 4, 2025, President Trump made remarks that the U.S. government will [“take over the Gaza Strip,”](#) advocating for what would amount to forcible

deportation of more than two million Palestinians from Gaza to neighboring countries. These remarks were repeated during Prime Minister Netanyahu's second visit to the White House on April 7.

9. RETREATING FROM CIVILIAN HARM MITIGATION EFFORTS

From shrinking offices aimed at reducing civilian harm caused by U.S. lethal actions, to the callous discussion on Signal of potential civilian harm caused by a strike in Yemen, to the weakening of norms and abandoning support for clearance of anti-personnel mines, to reversing executive orders aimed at ensuring the U.S.'s arms transfers do not contribute to violations of international law, the Trump Administration has demonstrated a dangerous disregard for the lives of civilians endangered by armed conflicts.

Critical systems put in place in recent years to reduce and better respond to civilian harm caused by U.S. lethal actions abroad are under attack. In March, the [Washington Post reported](#) that the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence that grew out of initiatives started by President Trump's first defense secretary, James Mattis, was being gutted. That followed [CBS reporting](#) that President Trump quietly "rolled back constraints on American commanders to authorize airstrikes and special operation raids outside conventional battlefields," a policy shift that, according to an expert quoted in the report, "inherently raises the risk of flawed decisions and unintended civilian casualties." Defense Secretary Hegseth's firing of the top military lawyers responsible for ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law is further indication of the Administration's actions designed to undermine consideration of civilian harm and international law in its military planning.

Meanwhile, President Trump's 90-day stop-work order for U.S. foreign assistance programming included suspending [U.S.-funded mine clearance programs](#). With an average of 15 casualties a day worldwide from explosive remnants of war – about half of which are children – these clearance efforts are critical to saving lives. In 2023 alone, U.S.-funded programs cleared over 47,000 acres of land and provided medical and rehabilitative care to over 71,000 survivors of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war.

On January 25, President Trump announced that [he was lifting the pause put in place by the Biden administration on a shipment of 2,000 lb. bombs to Israel](#), bombs that can destroy an entire city block. On February 7, the State Department broke with a long-standing norm and disregarded a congressional hold put in place by a member of Congress to rush more than \$8 billion in weapons to Israel despite the fact that it continues its genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. As part of the congressional oversight process, members of Congress can place a hold on an arms transfer if it raises significant concerns. On March 2, Secretary Rubio [invoked "emergency authorities,"](#) following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Secretary Antony Blinken, to completely bypass Congress and send an additional \$4 billion in weapons to Israel. The administration is thus giving a full stamp of approval for the Israeli government's unlawful actions and crimes under international law, including genocide, committed in Gaza.

The transcript of the leaked Signal chat used by top Trump Administration officials to plan a March 15 missile attack on the Houthis in Yemen makes casual mention of targeting the "top missile guy" for the Houthis as he walked into his girlfriend's residential building. The transcript made no mention of efforts to mitigate civilian harm, raising questions about what steps were taken by the U.S. Central Command and whether top administration officials [considered civilian harm](#) at all in their deliberations over the strike.

10. DEMOLISHING CHECKS ON CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

President Trump and his administration moved quickly to take down existing checks on corporate accountability and slashed efforts to fight corruption.

Tech firms have long facilitated discriminatory and authoritarian practices, but President Trump has exacerbated this trend, encouraging social media companies to roll back protections – [evidenced in Meta’s removal of third-party fact-checking](#) – and double down on a business model that incentivizes the spread of hateful and violent content. The alignment between the Trump administration and tech billionaires also risks opening the door to an era of rampant corruption, disinformation, impunity and consolidation of corporate capture of state power, especially among certain actors.

Meanwhile, President Trump has seemingly given carte blanche to the wealthiest man on Earth, Elon Musk, to run rampant with DOGE, directing actions that appear to violate federal law, [including accessing sensitive, personal data of millions of Americans](#). This data could be weaponized in numerous ways to attack human rights and preparations are reportedly already underway to use it to build a database to target migrants for deportation. There have been no safeguards put in place to protect access to this data from further dissemination, exposure to third parties and downstream rights-violating uses.

In February, President Trump signed an executive order [pausing enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act \(FCPA\)](#) – the United States’ foundational anti-bribery and anti-corruption law. The executive order claims, without evidence, that the FCPA harms “American economic competitiveness” and “national security” – interests Trump’s own administration cited as reasons to prioritize combatting corruption during his first term. While the pause does not mean that the FCPA will cease to exist, enforcement is likely to be significantly deprioritized moving forward. The Department of Justice also issued a memorandum directing the FCPA Unit to prioritize investigating only corruption in cartels and transnational criminal organizations and deprioritize all other investigations. Flying in the face of the widespread and bipartisan consensus that corruption damages the reputation of the United States, the decision to pause FCPA enforcement weakens U.S. national security and undermines economic growth. The FCPA is a model for efficient good governance, operating as a strong deterrent against corrupt business and other forms of corporate abuse that follow along with corruption.

The administration is also reportedly [considering cutting most of the lawyers in the U.S. Justice Department unit that handles public corruption cases](#). The plan targets a Justice Department unit where several supervisors pushed back on a directive from Justice Department leadership to drop corruption charges against New York Mayor Eric Adams. If the cuts go forward, approximately 20 attorneys would face reassignments to handle cases involving drugs, violent crime or immigration, leaving a handful behind. The changes under consideration would also shift control over public corruption and election-related cases from the Washington-based unit to U.S. attorneys’ offices across the country.

The Trump administration has also [backed away from the UN Tax Convention negotiations](#) – a key process towards ensuring corporations are paying their fair share of taxes. Meanwhile, it is also gutting enforcement against corporate lawbreakers. So far, the Trump administration has halted, dropped, or withdrawn enforcement actions against 115 corporations, according to Public Citizen. Among them are all 42 corporations facing Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) cases and investigations. Some of the cases include known ties between the corporations in question and the Trump administration.

CONCLUSION

The perilous state of human rights in the United States comes on the heels of a global rise in authoritarian practices and attacks on international norms and institutions. In fact, the Trump administration's anti-rights campaign is turbocharging harmful trends already present, gutting international human rights protections and endangering billions across the planet.

The Trump administration's human rights and international law-averse foreign policy approach using blunt threats of military action, tariffs, and threats of taking over Greenland, the Panama Canal and the occupied Gaza Strip has caused chaos and confusion around the world. The domestic and global impacts and implications for human rights are severe, and the ripple effect of accelerating anti-rights policies and authoritarian practices elsewhere is visible.

Thanks to the “[Trump-effect](#),” human rights abusers are being emboldened to roll back rights and silence dissent—accelerating the attack on the people who defend human rights and systems designed to protect and advance human rights. However, the consolidation of authoritarian practices is not inevitable. Human rights defenders, journalists, civil society organizations, and many others are documenting and exposing their impact. Lawmakers in the United States Congress have an essential role to play to serve as a check on abuses by the president, and it is critical that they play this role more effectively. World leaders must call out and push back against authoritarian practices that violate human rights and step up to address their impact wherever they are being implemented, including in the United States.

Amnesty International is the largest grassroots human rights organization in the world, and if there were ever a time for a human rights organization like ours to show its strength and be bold, now is that time. We know that what we are seeing in the United States is not unique or novel, though the implications are disproportionately far-reaching; we have seen this playbook before. From Hungary to China, or from Venezuela to Iran, and anywhere else leaders think they can act with impunity—we have fought back at every turn. And now is no different.