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[Civil Society and the Convention Against Torture](#)

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In November, the [Committee Against Torture](#) (“the Committee”) will review the United States’ compliance with the [Convention Against Torture](#) (“the Convention”) at the [53rd Session in Geneva](#). Eight years have passed since the previous U.S. review before the Committee, which is the body responsible for overseeing implementation of the Convention by all States parties.

Since 2009, the U.S. Government and the Committee have engaged in preparation for the upcoming review. The process commenced with the Committee’s release of the [List of Issues](#) that they requested the U.S. to specifically address. Areas of Committee inquiry included: psychological torture; treatment of detainees held in U.S. territories; efforts to close Guantanamo Bay; non-refoulement; enhanced interrogation techniques; prevention of sexual violence in detention centers; treatment of women in detention; detention of children; prolonged isolation; use of excessive force by law enforcement; and racial profiling. In turn, in 2013, the U.S. Government provided the Committee its combined [Periodic Report](#) regarding its views on U.S. compliance with the Convention.

[Civil society organizations](#) have also been preparing for the U.S. review to ensure that their unique experiences and areas of concern are included in the discussions about U.S. compliance with the Convention. One way in which advocates have come together is through the work of the [Convention Against Torture Taskforce](#), a project of the [U.S. Human Rights Network](#). Collaborations through Working Groups within the Taskforce have resulted in joint shadow reports on topics relating to alleged violations of the Convention, such as juvenile justice, the death penalty, police brutality, a variety of national security issues, and immigration detention and deportation.

A shadow report submitted by members of the Immigration Detention and Deportation Working Group illustrates this process of human rights allies coming together to use international law to advocate for increased rights protections. Some non-citizens in U.S. immigration detention face a variety of abuses that are in violation of the Convention's norms. Examples include verbal, sexual, or physical abuse; the prolonged use of solitary confinement; or exposure to other abhorrent conditions of confinement such as the denial of adequate medical and mental health care, severe overcrowding, and a lack of hygienic and sufficient nutrition. Of additional concern are federal policies that allow for the detention and deportation of asylum seekers without adequate due process safeguards. As a result, some non-citizens may face deportation to their countries of origin despite concerns that they could suffer torture or other serious forms of persecution upon return. This joint shadow report calls for change in these and other aspects of U.S. immigration policy and practice that may violate the Convention.

The Committee Against Torture is not the only international entity highlighting concerns of rights violations of non-citizens in the United States. Recently the [Inter-American Commission of Human Rights](#) announced a [visit to the U.S.-Mexico border](#) to monitor and assess the human rights of unaccompanied children and families crossing the border.

While unfortunate that allegations of human rights abuses against immigrants in the U.S. abound, international bodies and actors have an important role to play in halting acts of torture against non-citizens—including asylum seekers and survivors of torture—and increasing U.S. compliance with the Convention.



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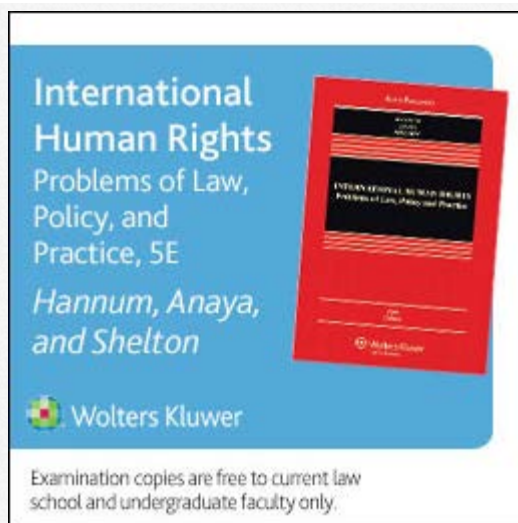
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