

## **An Open Letter in Response to Executive Order Withdrawing the United States from International Organizations, Conventions, and Treaties**

We, the undersigned, are writing in response to the Executive Order titled “*Withdrawing the United States from International Organizations, Conventions, and Treaties that Are Contrary to the Interests of the United States.*” The US’s withdrawal from 66 international organizations, conventions, and treaties, including 31 United Nations entities, is incredibly troubling and comes as tensions around the world are already heightened, and multilateralism needs to be reinforced and supported, not repudiated. These withdrawals follow several already commenced or finalized, including from UNESCO, the UN Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review Mechanism, the World Health Organization, and the Paris Climate Accords, among others.

Notwithstanding the questionable legality of withdrawing from Senate-ratified treaties like the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the confusing practicalities of disengaging from statutory components of the UN, such as UN DESA, ECOSOC, and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, these moves do not only undermine multilateralism, but also US interests.

For example, leaving the International Law Commission does not undermine the existence of international law but means the US cannot help to shape it. Similarly, abandoning the Freedom Online Coalition and International IDEA forfeits US leadership on democracy and digital rights, allowing repressive regimes to rewrite the rules of global communication. The consequences of climate change are inherently a global problem, and will be felt in the US, whether or not it is a party to the UNFCCC or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. By withdrawing from the UN Register of Conventional Arms, the US signals to the world that transparency is obsolete, encouraging illicit arms flows that will ultimately endanger Americans.

Furthermore, the accompanying press release from Secretary Rubio, which chastises the so-called “multilateral ‘NGO-plex,’” is a dangerous attack on civil society. Rhetoric that baselessly demonizes nonpartisan, nonprofit, and nongovernmental organizations, coupled with the dismantling of the architecture that supports human rights defenders, endangers those working to advance democracy worldwide. The US has opened the door for further repression, and the vacuum it will create by withdrawing from multilateral institutions will doubtlessly be filled by malign actors. There is no shortage of states which will be pleased to see the US withdrawal, seizing it as an opportunity to influence international institutions in ways which serve their national interests alone.

Accompanied by President Trump’s calls for the US military budget to be raised to \$1.5 trillion on January 8, 2026, and recent actions by the US beyond its borders, including in Venezuela and Nigeria, and threats against Denmark and Greenland, Mexico, Cuba, and Colombia, this continued withdrawal from multilateral institutions demonstrates the administration’s intent to pursue a “might is right” approach to the detriment of global stability, the degradation of US leadership, and the great expense of US citizens.

Fundamentally, the US has helped to shape the international multilateral order, and within that it has always seen its interest reflected within those institutions and served by those institutions. In an increasingly interconnected world, a nation that chooses isolationism over internationalism threatens its own prosperity. As the US turns its back on these international organizations and commitments, it diminishes its own standing and leaves the world a more dangerous place.

This is not the death knell for multilateralism unless we let it be. It is incumbent on all states - including the US - to uphold the letter and spirit of the UN Charter, which was forged from the ashes of the Second World War, and to recommit to a pluralistic, meaningful, inclusive, and accessible international order, which serves the interests of all humanity, in every state around the world, not just the powerful.

We call on the President and Secretary to reverse this decision, and to engage with rather than retreat from the international community, of which the US will always be a part.

Signed, in alphabetical order,

1. Aditus Foundation
2. Alliance of Humanists, Atheists and Agnostics Luxembourg
3. American Atheists
4. American Ethical Union
5. American Humanist Association
6. Asociația Secular-Umanista din Romania
7. Associação Republica e Laicidade
8. Atheists United
9. Black Nonbelievers
10. British Columbia Humanist Association
11. Burmese Atheists
12. Capital District Humanist Society
13. Central London Humanists
14. Centre d'Action Laïque
15. Children's Spaces
16. Conway Hall Ethical Society
17. Corporación Bogotana para el Avance de la Razón y Laicismo
18. Coventry and Warwickshire Humanists
19. Czech Humanists
20. deMens.nu
21. Disability Action
22. Environmental Smart
23. ETHOS
24. European Humanist Services Network
25. Finnish Humanist Association
26. Freedom From Religion Foundation

27. Four Freedoms Forum
28. Freethought Society
29. Greater Manchester Humanists
30. Greek Helsinki Monitor
31. HALEA
32. Hawaii Institute for Human Rights
33. Hispanic American Freethinkers
34. Humanist Association Netherlands
35. Humanist Association of Germany
36. Humanist Association of Ghana
37. Humanist Union of Greece
38. Humanist Society of Greater Phoenix
39. Humanist Society Scotland
40. Humanistische Vereinigung
41. Humanists Iceland
42. Humanists International
43. Humanists Malawi
44. Humanists Malaysia
45. Humanists Malta
46. Humanists Mutual Aid
47. Humanists Ottawa
48. Humanists UK
49. Hungarian Atheist Association
50. Index on Censorship
51. Kenya Humanist Alliance
52. New Enlightenment Project (Canada)
53. New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists
54. Norwegian Humanist Association
55. Ontario Humanist Society
56. Peruvian Association of Atheists
57. Race Equality First
58. Rocky Mountain Atheist Society
59. Secular Coalition for America
60. Secular Student Alliance
61. Shropshire Humanists
62. Society for Humanistic Judaism
63. Uganda Humanist Association
64. Umbrella Association of Free Worldview Congregations
65. Watford Humanists
66. Welsh Refugee Council

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