

Human Rights First

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

[**https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/about**](https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/about)

Mission Statement

Work With Asylum Seekers

If you are seeking asylum, we can help

Areas of Focus

Current Initiatives

About Us

Autocratic leaders are increasingly gaining power and weakening human rights around the world.

Learn More

The ideology driving the antidemocratic far-right extremist movement in the United States has become increasingly visible in our institutions, policies, and public discourse. This movement represents an existential threat to our democracy.

Learn More

Systemic injustice has plagued America since the founding of the nation especially when it comes to people of color and historically marginalized groups.

Learn More

At a time when technology is increasingly changing our lives for the better, its also being used to empower dangerous ideologies and systems.

Learn More

Founding of Human Rights First

Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, later renamed Human Rights First, is founded by the International League for Human Rights and the Council of New York Law Associates.

Championing the Refugee Act

The organization helps draft and secure the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the first law to bring the countrys refugee and asylum policies into compliance with international law.

The El Salvador Justice Case

When four American churchwomen are killed in El Salvador, their families turn to LCHR to seek justice, and our staff undertake fact-finding missions and testify before Congress. This leads to the U.S. withholding 20% of its military aid to El Salvador pending a satisfactory resolution of the case. Within six months, five El Salvadoran National Guardsmen are found guilty, the first conviction of Salvadoran military personnel for human rights abuses.

Lawyer-to-Lawyer Network

Our organization initiates the Lawyer-to-Lawyer network -- which grows to 8000 lawyers in 130 countries -- to provide the international legal community a way to press for the release of imprisoned lawyers.

Creation of Witness

Inspired by the video that proved police beat Rodney King, we work with Peter Gabriel to create Witness, which provides video tools to document human rights abuses.

International Criminal Court

Our organization plays a major role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Fair Labor Association

We help establish the Fair Labor Association, bringing together civil society, colleges, and more than 60 major companies including Nike, Adidas, and UnderArmor, to set human rights standards for workplaces across industries.

Organizational Rename

To underscore the breadth of our constituencies and our work, we change our name to Human Rights First.

McCain Amendment

Human Rights First and our coalition of retired military leaders successfully advocate for the McCain Amendment, banning cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

Banning Torture

Our coalition of retired flag officers advocate for the banning of torture, then stand with President Obama when he signs an Executive Order to do it.

Torture Report

Using the release of the Torture Report to build support, Human Rights First works with Senators McCain and Feinstein to craft the strongest anti-torture law in U.S. history.

Innovation Lab

We launch our Innovation Lab, an incubator of high-technology tools to support human rights defenders and uncover human rights abuses.

Global Magnitsky Act

Human Rights First is instrumental in the reauthorization and permanent extension of the Global Magnitsky Act, which we have used to recommend corrupt actors or human rights abusers for sanction by the U.S. government.

We equip and activate the skilled to abolish oppression.

Human Rights First is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3). We do not favor or oppose any candidate for public office.