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140+ Organizations Demand Biden Administration Implement International Recommendations on Sexual and Reproductive Rights

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More than 140 organizations signed onto a letter sent to President Biden today urging him to implement recommendations on sexual and reproductive rights issued by United Nations member states. The recommendations came as part of the UN Human Rights Council's [Universal Periodic Review](#) (UPR), a process that reviews the human rights records of all UN Member States.

Signing organizations represent a diverse cross-section of issues and expertise, including in human rights, reproductive rights, racial justice, and global health. The full letter and list of signees can be found here: <http://bit.ly/BidenUPRletter>

[The US received numerous UPR recommendations](#), and several countries called for the US to take action on its abortion restrictions on foreign assistance, in particular [the Helms Amendment](#). [The Biden administration responded](#) to these recommendations, but did not mention Helms and instead referred to their recent [repeal of the Global Gag Rule](#).

To implement these recommendations, the letter outlines several executive and administrative actions the administration can take now:

- Take executive action and issue guidance to immediately clarify US foreign assistance can be used to provide abortion care in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment of the pregnant person
- Issue guidance from relevant agencies to proactively clarify that US foreign assistance may be used for abortion information and counseling under the Leahy Amendment
- Prioritize the removal of abortion funding restrictions like the Helms Amendment through the White House Gender Policy Council, in addition to addressing many other important sexual and reproductive health and rights priorities and considering the role of racial and other forms of discrimination on recipients of sexual and reproductive healthcare in the US and globally
- Consult with stakeholders and agencies to issue policies to combat systemic racism and ensure implementation of these policies at the state, federal and local levels, recognizing domestic US policy influences the values exported through US foreign assistance

- Eliminate Helms Amendment and similar abortion funding restrictions from FY 2022 budget

Four of the signing organizations issued the following statements:

“The Biden administration says it is committed to advancing sexual and reproductive rights around the world. Now, they have an opportunity to prove it,” said **Akila Radhakrishnan, President of the Global Justice Center**. “A failure to implement these recommendations would make the US commitment to the human rights system be mere rhetoric, and worse yet, rhetoric that is directly undermined by the failure to act.”

“It is time for the U.S. to join the global community to support and defend reproductive justice,” said **Dr. Anu Kumar, president and CEO of Ipas**. “Ending abortion funding restrictions like the Helms Amendment will protect people seeking abortion, will help countries expand access to health services, and will bring us closer to achieving reproductive and economic freedom and equity for millions worldwide. This policy has harmed Black and brown communities in low-to-middle income countries for far too long.”

“It is not enough to remove the Global Gag Rule and maintain the pre-Trump status quo,” said **Dr. Joia Crear-Perry, Founder & President of the National Birth Equity Collaborative**. “The Biden administration must go further to advance reproductive justice by supporting repeal of the Helms Amendment and advancing racial justice in the United States. The last year demonstrated how much further the US has to go to achieve racial justice and eliminate white supremacy from our domestic and foreign policy. This cannot wait.”

“This is an opportunity for Biden’s administration to fulfill its commitment to reproductive health care by completely removing abortion funding restrictions from US foreign assistance, ensuring that no woman, girl, or young person dies from an unsafe abortion as a result of stigma, lack of information, and lack of life saving services,” said **Nelly Munyasia, Executive Director of Reproductive Health Network Kenya**. “One death as a result of unsafe abortion is far too many deaths.”