

UPR civil society toolkit

Gender equality & protection gaps in the United States

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
– 50th Session | USA review –
November 2025

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Introduction

This toolkit is designed to support **civil society organizations (CSOs), grassroots groups, and human rights amplifiers** in advocating for gender equality and closing protection gaps in the United States, in the lead-up to and during the Universal Periodic Review process. This toolkit centers on the findings and recommendations from the joint submission on gender equality and rights violations, focusing on **four critical areas**:

- **Lack of Constitutional Equality (Equal Rights Amendment)**
- **Child Marriage**
- **Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)**
- **Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSEA)**

UPR timeline

Period	Activity	Actions for CSOs
Now – Sept 2025	Pre-session advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Engage with Member States via embassies in DC or Geneva.■ Disseminate key messages and recommendations.■ Hold national-level consultations and briefings.
Aug 2025	Pre-session meetings in Geneva	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Attend or support participation in Geneva pre-sessions.■ Share survivor and expert testimony. Amplify issues on social media.
Nov 2025	UPR 50th session – US review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Monitor and share State recommendations.■ Host watch parties or briefings.■ Live-tweet and issue press statements.
Post-UPR (2026)	Follow-up & implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Track government commitments.■ Push for national implementation of accepted recommendations.■ Submit mid-term follow-up reports.

Core messages for advocacy

Lack of constitutional equality

- The **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** has met all requirements to be recognized as the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution.
- Without constitutional equality, legal redress for gender-based violence and discrimination remains weak.
- **Call to Action:** Recommend full recognition and implementation of the ERA.

Child marriage

- Over **290,000** minors have been legally married since 2000 in the US.
- Child marriage increases vulnerability to abuse and poverty.
- **Call to action:** recommend that the US urges all states to enact laws setting the minimum age of marriage at 18, without exceptions.

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

- Over **500,000 women and girls** in the US are at risk of or have experienced FGM/C.
- Gaps remain in law enforcement, services, and state legislation.
- **Call to action:** push for full implementation of federal and state laws, data collection, survivor services, and reject false connotations of *FGM/C with gender-affirming care*.

Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSEA)

- Online abuse is growing rapidly and is rooted in systemic gender inequality.
- Current laws fail to address **AI-generated abuse, deepfakes**, and platform accountability.
- **Call to action:** recommend passage and implementation of key legislation such as the **DEFIANCE Act** and **SHIELD Act**.

Advocacy tools & strategies

A. Messaging & communication

- Develop **factsheets**, **infographics**, and **testimonial videos** highlighting each issue.
- Use **survivor-centered language**; elevate voices of impacted communities.
- Tag key missions and UN delegations using UPR-relevant hashtags:

#UPR50 #USUPR #GenderEqualityNow #EndChildMarriage #ERANow

B. Direct diplomatic advocacy

- Identify and reach out to **supportive Member States** known for championing women's rights (e.g., Canada, Netherlands, Sweden).
- Request **bilateral meetings**, submit **1-2 page advocacy briefs**, and visit **Geneva missions** (in person or virtually).

C. Community mobilization

- Host **UPR info sessions**, **town halls**, and **advocacy trainings** with local organizations.
- Partner with youth, LGBTQ+, and survivor-led groups for coalition-based campaigning.

D. Media & social media

- Pitch **op-eds**, collaborate with journalists, and issue **joint press releases** during key milestones.
- Create a **UPR countdown campaign** on social platforms to keep attention on the review.

Sample advocacy language for member states

Use the following sample language to support your outreach to diplomatic missions:

Lack of constitutional equality

“We urge [Member State] to recommend that the United States recognize and implement the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution, to ensure full constitutional protections against sex-based discrimination.”

Child marriage

“We recommend that the US urge all states to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18, without exception, and repeal all legal provisions that enable or legitimize child marriage.”

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

“We urge the US to fully implement federal laws prohibiting FGM/C, collect prevalence data, and ensure no conflation of FGM/C with gender-affirming care.”

Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSEA)

“We recommend that the US adopt survivor-centered laws that address all forms of online sexual exploitation and abuse, including deepfake and AI-generated content, and by passing legislation such as DEFIANCE and SHIELD Acts, while going beyond criminalisation to include civil remedies and strong platform accountability.”

Sample social media messages

A. Constitutional equality (Equal Rights Amendment)

▪ English

As the United States undergoes its Universal Periodic Review in November 2025, civil society is calling on UN Member States to recommend the full recognition and implementation of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as the 28th Amendment.

Constitutional equality is long overdue.

#UPR50 #RecognizeERA #GenderEqualityNow #USUPR

▪ Français

Alors que les États-Unis seront examinés dans le cadre de l'Examen Périodique Universel (EPU) en novembre 2025, la société civile appelle les États membres à recommander la reconnaissance et la mise en œuvre de l'Amendement sur l'Égalité des Droits #ERA comme 28^e amendement.

L'égalité constitutionnelle doit être reconnue dans le monde entier.

#UPR50 #ReconnaitreERA #ÉgalitéDesSexes #USUPR

▪ Español

Durante el Examen Periódico Universal (EPU) de los Estados Unidos en noviembre de 2025, la sociedad civil insta a los Estados miembros a recomendar el reconocimiento e implementación de la Enmienda de Igualdad de Derechos (ERA) como la 28^a enmienda.

La igualdad constitucional ya no puede esperar.

#EPU50 #ReconocerERA #IgualdadDeGéneroYa #EPUEUA

B. Child marriage

▪ English

Ahead of the US Universal Periodic Review at the UN in November 2025, civil society urges UN Member States to recommend the US to urge all states to pass laws establishing 18 as the minimum age of marriage, with no exceptions. Child marriage remains legal in 34 US states. That must change.

#EndChildMarriage #UPR50 #USUPR #GirlsNotBrides

▪ Français

À l'approche de l'Examen Périodique Universel des États-Unis en novembre 2025, la société civile appelle les États membres de l'ONU à recommander aux États-Unis d'inciter tous les États à adopter des lois fixant l'âge minimum du mariage à 18 ans, sans exception.

#StopMariageEnfants #UPR50 #USUPR

▪ Español

Antes del Examen Periódico Universal de Estados Unidos en noviembre de 2025, la sociedad civil insta a los Estados miembros a recomendar todos los estados de EUA a aprobar leyes que prohíban el matrimonio infantil, sin excepciones. En 34 estados aún es legal que menores de 18 se casen. Eso debe terminar.

#FinAlMatrimonioInfantil #EPU50 #EPUEUA

C. Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

▪ English

In the lead-up to the November 2025 US Universal Periodic Review, we call on Member States to recommend stronger laws and support systems to prevent and respond to FGM/C. FGM/C is still practiced in 94 countries, including the US. Survivor protections matter.

#EndFGM #UPR50 #USUPR #ProtectGirls

▪ Français

Dans le cadre de l'EPU des États-Unis en novembre 2025, la société civile appelle les États membres à recommander des lois plus fortes et un meilleur soutien pour prévenir et lutter contre les MGF dans les 94 pays du monde qui les pratiquent encore, y compris les États-Unis.

#StopMGF #UPR50 #USUPR #ProtégerLesFilles

▪ Español

Antes del Examen Periódico Universal de Estados Unidos en noviembre de 2025, la sociedad civil pide a los Estados miembros que recomienden leyes más fuertes y apoyo real para prevenir y atender casos de MGF. Más de 500,000 mujeres y niñas están en riesgo en EUA.

#FinAlaMGF #EPU50 #EPUEUA #ProtegerANiñas

La MGF no tiene ninguna relación con la atención de afirmación de género. Son temas distintos.

D. Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSEA)

▪ English

As the US approaches its Universal Periodic Review in November 2025, civil society urges Member States to recommend comprehensive laws addressing online sexual exploitation and abuse, including AI-generated content and deepfakes.

#UPR50 #USUPR #DigitalJustice

▪ Français

À l'occasion de l'Examen Périodique Universel des États-Unis en novembre 2025, la société civile demande aux États membres de recommander des lois globales contre l'exploitation sexuelle en ligne, y compris les contenus générés par l'IA et les deepfakes. Les violences sexuelles en ligne sont des violences de genre.

#UPR50 #NonAuxVBG #USUPR #Egalité

▪ Español

Durante el Examen Periódico Universal de Estados Unidos en noviembre de 2025, pedimos a los Estados miembros que recomienden leyes integrales contra el abuso sexual en línea, incluidas las imágenes falsas generadas por IA. La OSEA es una forma de violencia de género y debe abordarse como tal.

#FinAOSEA #EPU50 #JusticiaDigital #EPUEUA

Resources & contacts

- Please refer to the full joint submission for further information on these issues. Scan the code to view



- **Partner organizations**
 - [The ERA Coalition](#)
 - [Equality Now](#)
 - [Unchained At Last](#)
 - [US End FGM/C Network](#)
 - [AUDRi](#)
- **Information on the UPR process**
- **Gender equality & protection gaps in the US**

- **Communications contact:**

Mel Bailey

Communications Officer for North America,
Equality Now.

mbailey@equalitynow.org

- **Legal & advocacy contact:**

Anastasia Law

Program Officer for North America,
Equality Now.

alaw@equalitynow.org