



United States Failure To Ratify Key International Conventions, Treaties And Laws

“We talk the talk, but we don’t walk the walk.”

The United States played a key role in composing the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other key principles that changed the nature of international human rights legislation. However, the U.S. has failed to ratify several principal international agreements designed to enhance civil and human rights worldwide, compromising its credibility as a leader for human rights.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

On December 18, 1979, the United Nations adopted CEDAW which is the most comprehensive and detailed international agreement which seeks the advancement of women. CEDAW has been ratified by 179 countries. **The United States is the only industrialized country that has not ratified the treaty**, putting us in the company of countries such as Sudan, Iran and Somalia.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The CRC was adopted by the UN in 1989, and is one of the most widely received conventions. The CRC has been accepted by 192 countries. The U.S. may soon be the only country in the world not to ratify this convention.

The Convention on the Prohibition, Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (The Ottawa Treaty)

Five years after the 1992 founding of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, over 143 countries met in Ottawa, Canada and signed a ban on anti-personnel mines. The United States has still not signed the treaty.

Kyoto Protocol

In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol legally bound industrialized countries by 2010 to reduce their collective emissions of six greenhouse gases by 5.2% compared to 1990 levels. One hundred forty-one (141) countries have signed the treaty, **but the United States (the largest producer of greenhouse gases) has not.**

The International Criminal Court (ICC)

As of March 2005, 139 countries had signed the ICC, including the United States, and 98 countries had ratified the ICC. However, on May 2, 2002 **the United States stated that it did not intend to be bound by its signature to the ICC and that it has no intention to ratify it.** President Clinton signed the ICC, and President Bush and the Republican-led Senate refuse to ratify it.

The ICC conducts trials of individuals accused of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity when there is no other recourse for justice.

The ICC identifies gender crimes and the crime of apartheid as crimes against humanity. Article 7 of the Statute presents clear language that defines rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity as gender crimes.

International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions

As of 2004, the United States only ratified 14 of the 162 active ILO Conventions. In addition, **the United States has only signed two out of eight conventions that the ILO describes as fundamental to the human rights of workers.**

The ILO Committee of Experts, in 2002, stated that the United States was not in compliance with one of the few conventions it had ratified: Convention 105, The Abolition of Forced Labor Convention that the United States ratified in 1991.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

The ICESCR requires states to promote and protect a wide range of social, economic and cultural rights, including the right to health, to an adequate standard of living, to education, and to social protection. It is often referred to as the “International Bill of Rights.”

The United States has yet to accept the ICESCR despite the fact that it has been approved by 149 countries.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC)

The MWC was presented for ratification in December 1990 and went into force July 1, 2003. It protects migrant workers and their families from abuse and inhumane treatment in the countries where they work. To date, 27 countries have ratified it. No industrialized country has signed the convention.

No key human rights treaty has been ratified by the United States under the guidelines by which it was adopted and enforced by the UN General Assembly.

When The United States Finally Does Ratify, It Imposes Restrictions

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

The CERD entered into force in 1969 and commits State parties to change their laws and policies to end racial discrimination that violates individual human rights on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin and descent. The United States ratified CERD in 1994 but rejected the components that included effect and intent in deciding discrimination cases.

Sources:

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