



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
United Nations

March 14, 2021

**Call for Input to a Thematic Report: Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity  
Joint Submission from Equity Forward and Ipas**

We write today representing [Equity Forward](#) and [Ipas](#), two United States-based organizations committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), LGBTQ rights, and other human rights to answer the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity's [call for input](#).<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, opponents of SRHR, gender equality, and LGBTQ rights have increased their attacks using rhetoric including: the traditional family composed by men and women as the “natural unit” of society; the right to freedom of religion, belief, and conscience to impose Christian values; the “right to life since conception” to oppose access to safe abortion care; and “gender ideology” to reject youth’s access to comprehensive sexuality education. These groups advocate for regressive language in legislation and resolutions, using misinformation and inconsistent arguments in attempts to roll back human rights and gender equality, and to limit access to: sexual autonomy, freedom of expression, public information, reproductive health care, and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). A huge emphasis is placed on how CSE supposedly violates “parental rights,” harms children, and is not education but “ideological indoctrination.” Most of the messages from these conservative actors are used and spread in advocacy at the UN, as well as through other multilateral efforts and international fora. Local actors have also spread their anti-gender campaigns at the national and local levels in different countries, adapted to their political contexts.

Our contribution will focus first on regressive measures taken by the Trump administration to advance these extremist narratives of “gender ideology” and their efforts to co-opt the discourse of freedoms of religion, belief, and conscience—using global and regional multilateral mechanisms to attack the human rights of LGBTQ populations, women and girls, and all those seeking reproductive health services including safe abortion care. We then highlight how these regressive campaigns and anti-gender advocacy efforts have pushed for regressive laws and policies around gender equality, SRHR, and CSE. We provide two case studies at the country level in Ghana and Brazil.

The key questions from the call for input addressed in this submission are:

- *Are there examples where a concept of gender has been used in religious, traditional, or indigenous narratives or values in a manner which promotes the acceptance of persons with diverse sexual orientations or gender identity, or protects LGBT individuals from violence and discrimination as well as covering a wider range of persons (for relevant*

*examples, see para. 3 of the Independent Expert's Report to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly)?*

- *Are there examples in which narratives or “gender ideology,” “genderism” or other gender-related concepts have been used to introduce regressive measures, in particular but not limited to LGBT persons or communities?*
- *Are there initiatives taken by States in connection with the right to freedom of religion, belief or conscience (including the figure of conscientious objection) that have had the practical impact of limiting the enjoyment of human rights (including sexual and reproductive rights) of LGBT persons?*
- *Have there been public expressions or statements by political and/or religious leaders that have led to indefinite extension, modification or suppression of actions, activities, projects, public policies or application of gender frameworks?*
- *Who are main actors who argue that the defenders of human rights of LGBT individuals are furthering a so-called “gender ideology”? What are their main arguments? Have they been effective in regressing the human rights of LGBT individuals? Have their strategies directly or indirectly also impacted on the human rights of women and girls?*
- *Is comprehensive sexuality education taught in schools?*
- *Are there examples where the concept of gender has been used in religious narratives or narratives of tradition, traditional values or protection of the family to hinder the adoption of legislative or policy measures aimed at addressing or eradicating violence and discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity?*
- *Are there examples in which narratives or “gender ideology,” “genderism” or other gender-related concepts have been used to introduce regressive measures, in particular but not limited to LGBT persons or communities?*

## **Concerning U.S. Leadership in Multilateral Attacks on Inclusive Gender Equality**

Over the course of the past four years, the United States government played a leadership role in multilateral efforts to attack inclusive gender equity, as well as rights and protections for people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. While a transfer of power has occurred within the United States, there is much damage and residual effects that must be addressed by the Biden administration, the international community, and civil society organizations.

### *Geneva Consensus Declaration*

One of the most recent restrictive measures taken by the U.S. government was that of the [Geneva Consensus Declaration](#).<sup>2</sup> Announced by Trump administration’s U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar in October 2020, the U.S. [co-sponsored](#) the international declaration in October 2020 alongside Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, and Uganda.<sup>3</sup> The Geneva Consensus Declaration is overtly anti-abortion, and purports that family is the “natural and fundamental group unit of society”<sup>4</sup>. Such coded language referring to the “natural family” is frequently deployed in efforts to limit the human rights of LGBTQ people.

In a [January executive order](#) on women’s health, President Biden directed the U.S. Secretary of State and the HHS Secretary to withdraw the United States' co-sponsorship and signature from the Geneva Consensus Declaration.<sup>5</sup> But just because the U.S. government is now taking steps to disavow the Declaration, its prior work to create such regressive measures will live on through the multilateral coalition of country-level governments the U.S. helped form. For example, following the executive order, Brazil [double downed and reaffirmed](#) its commitment to the Geneva Consensus Declaration.<sup>6</sup> This is extremely concerning: many of the co-sponsors

and signatories of the Declaration have concerning human rights records, [authoritarian leanings, and poor women’s rights indexes](#).<sup>7</sup> Among the co-sponsors, the Ugandan government mandates that gay sex is [punishable by death](#).<sup>8</sup> [Ugandan and Brazilian civil society organizations have mobilized against their government’s signature and sponsorship of the Geneva Consensus Declaration](#).<sup>9</sup>

### *U.S.-led Restrictive Efforts against SRHR at the United Nations*

U.S. involvement in multilateral efforts to restrict human rights as related to gender including access to abortion, other reproductive rights, and gender inclusive language have been well-documented at the United Nations. Over the course of the past four years, Trump administration officials [repeatedly and aggressively](#) pushed to remove references to gender and reproductive health and rights from U.N. resolutions and agreements.<sup>10</sup> The U.S. delegation [forced the removal of references](#) to “modern contraception,” “emergency contraception” and “unsafe abortion” from Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) outcome documents;<sup>11</sup> repeatedly and vocally [opposed abortion](#);<sup>12</sup> [attacked gender inclusive language](#) to dilute the rights of nonbinary and transgender people;<sup>13</sup> and [undermined landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration](#).<sup>14</sup> The Biden administration’s U.S. Mission to the UN delegates must make clear commitments to internationally agreed upon human rights standards, including LGBTQ rights and access to birth control and abortion, on the floor of the General Assembly. Additionally, the international community must put pressure on the other member-states the U.S. aligned itself with under the Trump administration to do the same.

### *U.S. State Department Initiatives to Attack SRHR and LGBTQ Rights: Commission on Unalienable Rights, Ministerial on Religious Freedom*

Trump administration new initiatives out of the U.S. Department of State like the Commission on Unalienable Rights (CUR) and the Ministerials on Religious Freedom pushed “gender ideology” and anti-abortion extremism into other international forums, as well.

The Commission on Unalienable Rights was [launched by Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in May 2019](#),<sup>15</sup> which he proceeded to comprise with largely [right-wing, anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQ extremists as its members](#).<sup>16</sup> These members went on to create an artificial hierarchy of rights—reprioritizing certain human rights, such as religious freedom, at the expense of others, such as reproductive health care and LGBTQ rights. CUR’s first [report](#), published in the summer of 2020, concerningly denies the rights of abortion and LGBTQ people, instead referring to them as “divisive social and political controversies in the United States.”<sup>17</sup> The report purports to enshrine the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its work, yet ignores [UDHR](#)’s<sup>18</sup> equal protection for the rights it lays out—including on the basis of sex, which legal interpretations of UDHR have [extended](#) to include freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual and/or gender orientation and reproductive freedom.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, UDHR is part of the Universal Bill of Human Rights along with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which [the U.S. has signed and ratified](#).<sup>20</sup> To be clear, [ICCPR explicitly extends to abortion rights](#).<sup>21</sup>

The intention behind this strategy is to advance the regressive language that stigmatizes abortion and excludes LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people from human rights protections. This is part of an alternative and globally unrecognized framework based on a set of so-called unalienable rights.

This alternative framework “unalienable rights,” its proponents claim, is based on Christian values and liberal principles such as the sacredness of human life, property rights, and the sovereignty of nations. The recent creation of the Commission on Unalienable Rights and its report have been seen as an attempt to make the universality of human rights more flexible. By allowing country-level governments to reinterpret internationally agreed upon human rights standards, CUR challenges the principles of interdependence and the indivisibility of human rights.

While the Commission is not expected to continue under the Biden administration, the Commission’s report ultimately presents a [concerning roadmap](#) of how to co-opt internationally-agreed upon human rights framework—and instead promote restrictive and conflicting interpretations of rights already recognized international human rights law provisions and standards.<sup>22</sup> These interpretations have been supported and promoted by anti-gender organizations and ultra right-wing government officials since then. For example, at the 75th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Pompeo hosted a side event touting CUR’s work.<sup>23</sup> It concluded with Pompeo asking for signatories to a declaration affirming support for UDHR in its narrowest form.<sup>24</sup> A similar coalition of largely authoritarian governments that supported the Geneva Consensus signed on. Among its signatories were Honduras, which recently approved legal reform violating same sex couples’ human rights as well as people’s sexual and reproductive rights. The Congress of Honduras approved the reform of its Constitution’s Article 67, establishing the prohibition and illegality of the interruption of pregnancy and creating a constitutional shield that makes it impossible to legalize the practice of abortion in Honduras in the future. The reform also bars any future modification of the Constitution’s Article 112, which holds that the celebration of marriage can only be between a man and a woman—violating the human rights of LGBTQ persons to private and family life and equality.

The U.S. Department of State’s Ministerial on Religious Freedom has been yet another opportunity for this anti-LGBTQ, anti-reproductive rights multilateralism to grow. The annual event took place under Trump’s State Department annually, with Pompeo and Former Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback at the helm.<sup>25</sup> The event convened diplomats from national delegations—but it also welcomed far-right wing, anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQ organizations as sponsors of side events.<sup>26</sup> In years past, these sponsors have included designated hate group Alliance Defending Freedom.<sup>27</sup> In 2020, the Ministerial was hosted by the Polish government as a virtual event in Warsaw<sup>28</sup>—against the backdrop of tens of thousands of Polish women’s weeks-long strikes and protests against the country’s recent abortion ban.<sup>29</sup>

### **Gender Ideology Initiatives to Restrict Access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

The information below is intended to provide information to the Independent Expert with relevant information on international agreements and international human rights framework related comprehensive sexuality education, as well as current statistics on the gap in access to CSE worldwide—despite scientific evidence about its benefits to health and lives of people. In addition, we present two case examples from Ghana and Brazil where regressive campaigns and anti-gender advocacy efforts have been promoting regressive policies that harm gender equality, SRHR, and comprehensive sexuality education.

#### *International Human Rights Framework and CSE*

During the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, governments reached a consensus that gender equality, human rights and empowerment of

women is a global priority. The ICPD Program of Action highlights several critical areas for advancing gender equality and empowering women, including universal access to family planning and other SRHR, as well as access to education for girls, among others. The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. In the Beijing Platform for Action, states committed to remove all barriers from sexual and reproductive health education, and pledged to encourage comprehensive education that includes discussions of family planning, safe and healthy sex, healthy relationships, and personal development.<sup>30</sup>

In the last decade, many governments, community groups, and civil society organizations have worked to advance adolescents' and youth's access to CSE programs and sexual and reproductive health services around the world. CSE programs are built to ensure the right of young people to evidence-based information and education about sexuality and reproduction and to ensure they have the information they need to make their sexual and reproductive health decisions.<sup>31</sup> Despite the demonstrated positive impact of CSE on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people and the reduction of sexually transmitted infections, HIV, unintended pregnancies, and unsafe abortions, such programs continue to come under attack by anti-SRHR groups and proponents of abstinence-only education.

#### *Anti-Gender Movements Attacks against CSE at Global and National Levels*

In recent years, SRHR and LGBTQ opponents have increased their attacks against CSE in global spaces and worldwide, targeting different countries' national policies. In many countries, key decisionmakers hold regressive beliefs about sexuality and young people's autonomy that undermine youth-friendly education and services. Actors across the world work to block CSE and SRHR care for young people, casting these evidence-based, progressive approaches as "gender ideology." When sexuality education is provided, it is often inadequate and reflects stigmatizing social norms. For example, contraception and abortion are often excluded from the curricula—even in countries where these services are available. This exclusion has devastating consequences in a world where [121 million unintended pregnancies](#) occur annually<sup>32</sup> and [3 million girls aged 15 to 19 experience unsafe abortions each year](#), resulting in a disproportionate share of deaths and disability.<sup>33</sup>

Governments have agreed to encourage education to eliminate the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and other harmful behavior,<sup>34</sup> and studies show that CSE lowers the risk of acquiring STIs and unintended pregnancies.<sup>35</sup> Also, they have agreed to ensure universal access to reproductive health information and education by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (Target 3.7).<sup>36</sup> UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies have declared that nations are obligated to protect the rights of all persons,<sup>37</sup> including the right to education related to health and well-being,<sup>38</sup> and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.<sup>39</sup> To protect and promote these rights, youth need education not just about reproduction, but also education about sexuality, gender identity, healthy relationships, and sexual and reproductive rights, as all these topics directly relate to each individual's complete state of physical, mental and social well-being.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the advances in international human rights law, legal and policy global framework, statistics show time and again that women, girls, and LGBTQ people continue to be denied even their most basic human rights worldwide, such as their rights to education, safety, and life. Sixty-one million children (more than half of them girls) have no access to education, even at primary level.<sup>41</sup> More than 140 million girls will become child brides by 2020 if current rates of child, early and forced marriage continue. That is 14 million every year or nearly 39,000 girls

married every day.<sup>42</sup> Over 30% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) or non-partner sexual violence.<sup>43</sup>

Comprehensive sexuality education can create positive change. CSE is defined as age-appropriate education about human rights, human sexuality, gender equality, relationships and sexual and reproductive health and rights through the provision of scientifically accurate, non-judgmental information. It is essential for young people to be able to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, to promote values of tolerance, mutual respect and non-violence in relationships, and to plan their lives. A review from UNESCO of 87 comprehensive sexuality education programs, including 29 in developing countries, found several positive outcomes from CSE, particularly the increased use of condoms and decreased sexual risk taking. No studies showed hastened initiation of sex, an increased number of sexual partners, or decreased use of condoms.<sup>44</sup>

### *Access to CSE's Increased Importance During the Covid-19 Pandemic*

The importance of comprehensive sexuality education and care for young people is even more glaring during the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic's consequences, especially for adolescent girls, include social isolation, increased risk of violence and exploitation, poor nutrition, and increased rates of school dropout. According to the Global Partnership for Education, "more than 80 percent of the 1.2 billion children currently out of the classroom due to COVID-19 are in developing countries, where school closures are compounding an already urgent learning crisis."<sup>45</sup> Millions of them will never return to the classroom, as has previously happened during other health crises, like the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. During the Ebola crisis, teenage pregnancies increased sharply—and early data is showing the same increase among out-of-school youth during COVID-19.<sup>46</sup>

Governments and civil society organizations around the world are using digital platforms to implement distance learning programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, but gender, age, and other factors contributing to the technology gap will continue to limit girls' access to information, education, and other services. A [2018 study](#) found that gendered social norms can make it less socially acceptable for girls to use digital technology than boys, especially in low-income communities.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, adolescent SRH services and CSE are often overlooked during emergencies. The current context requires the design and implementation of evidence-based, human rights and gender-focused sexuality education programs—with a strong link to SRH services—to overcome existing barriers to care, and to create lifelong benefits for children and youth.

### *Widespread Misinformation and Anti-Human Rights Legislation to Counter So-Called Gender Ideology in Brazil's Educational Policies*

In the last five to ten years, attacks against the advancement of women's and LGBTQ rights at the national and international levels have accelerated. In particular, in Eastern Europe and Latin America, this violent reaction has been articulated as a counteroffensive against the so-called "gender ideology."<sup>48</sup> In this conception, the protection and promotion of equal human rights for historically disadvantaged groups is considered an ideology rather than the application of international legal human rights obligations. This reaction has been prompted by religiously identified groups, but it sometimes takes a secular form. Often, these extremist groups are successful in reversing rights, as messages are based on fear and misinformation.

Since Brazil's re-democratization in the 1980s, the escalation of right-wing populist activism has threatened efforts to guarantee progressive and inclusive public education. In the last few years, the 'No Party School Movement' (NPSM) and the 'Evangelical Parliamentary Front' (EPF) established a tactical alliance. Anti-gender religious conservative politicians have been trying to pass various bills in different Brazilian states and cities, stating that educators should not rely on ideological, political and partisan views, and should respect the "traditional values" of families. Othering was a fundamental articulating mechanism of right-wing populist movements and politicians' actions to forge a discourse that attacks Paulo Freire's pedagogy, gender ideology and ancestral African religions.<sup>49</sup>

Nowadays, talking about education and gender in Brazil immediately leads us to a series of debates about censorship, "fake news" and disputes over "gender ideology." The debate gained strength due to the vote on the National Education Plan (PNE) in 2014, which culminated in the replacement of the expression "racial, regional, gender, and sexual orientation equality" with "all forms of discrimination." Since then, draft laws have grown with the intention of criminalizing the gender debate under different nomenclatures and wide-ranging meanings, from banning sex education to sexual orientation and gender debate, under the leadership of NPSM. The anti-gender speech is part of the current government's political mobilization in both the national and international spheres attacking inclusive educational programs and health policies—including access to safe abortion services by women and girls' sexual violence victims.<sup>50</sup> Such mobilization has been bolstered in part due to Brazil's partnership with the United States and other country governments through multilateral initiatives such as the Geneva Consensus Declaration.

In 2020, the Federal Supreme Court ruled on the unconstitutionality of anti-gender educational laws and programs in Brazil, which represents a positive shift toward the affirmation of freedom—though other actions are pending judgment. Despite this recognition, public schools are also currently being militarized—so that curriculums are shaped to take root in "traditional family moral values" and predetermined gender roles. These changes detrimentally affect the freedom of expression and sexual autonomy, and concerningly challenge concepts such as inclusiveness and diversity in public education curriculums and legal and constitutional norms.

### *Misinformation Campaigns Against CSE in Ghana*

Misinformation communication campaigns and efforts against SRHR—including attacks on LGBT rights, access to safe abortion, and access to CSE programs—have taken place in Ghana recently. [In September 2019, the Ministry of Education](#), in partnership with the Ghana Education Service, announced they would be rolling out the "Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Ghana" for children 4 to 18 years old.<sup>51</sup> Funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and drafted by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the guidelines were quickly attacked for being un-Ghanaian, and for peddling a pro-LGBTQ agenda. The Ghana Bishops Conference [extorted families to reject the guidelines.](#) [Same-sex relationships are already considered criminal](#) activity in Ghana; exercising LGBTQ rights brings serious legal risk including [punishments from three to seven years in prison](#).

In April 2018, Ghanaian political leaders used similar arguments to speak out against LGBTQ rights, alleging that advocating for LGBTQ people was a confrontation to cultural norms in Africa. The spokesperson for the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values [announced](#) that in September his organization would be presenting the bill,

“Comprehensive Solution Based Legislative Framework for Dealing with the Lesbianism Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Phenomenon.” Presented as the “researched Afrocentric response to Western European and LGBT groups,” the bill would offer mental health counseling to people who are gay because of “peer pressure, economic reasons,” while those who are gay as a lifestyle choice would be prosecuted.<sup>52</sup> Though the CSE bill had buy-in from Ghana’s three main religious bodies, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Ghana Muslim Council, and Amadhiya community and traditional leaders, the bill was never formally presented.

The Ghanaian case is an example on how anti-gender groups have been increasingly using social media discourses and advocacy efforts working in different countries where national opposition to LGBTQ rights has been particularly strong, pushing for regressive, anti-SRHR, anti-LGBTQ policies. Such policies driven by conservative religious interests and anti-scientific evidence-based ideologies.

## Conclusion

On behalf of Equity Forward and Ipas, as we have raised in our submission, we are alarmed by the extremist and fearmongering narratives of “gender ideology” which have been used to attack reproductive rights and equal protections for LGBTQ populations. Specifically, we have highlighted regressive measures taken by the U.S. government and other countries to create multilateral coalitions around these efforts, as well as country-level impact of these anti-gender attacks as illustrated in the examples of legal reform to ban completely access to abortion and same sex marriage recently in Honduras, and efforts to reject laws and policies broadening access to comprehensive sexuality education in Ghana and Brazil. We thank the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for the opportunity to submit this input today and for putting together a subsequent report.

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, “Call for input to a thematic report: Gender, sexual orientation and gender identity,” March 2021,

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/GenderTheory.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Geneva Consensus Declaration,” 2020,

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/geneva-consensus-declaration-english.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Miriam Berger, “U.S. signs international declaration challenging right to abortion and upholding ‘role of the family’,” Washington Post, October 22, 2020,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/10/22/trump-geneva-consensus-abortion-family/>.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Cassidy, “U.S. Signs Anti-Abortion Declaration With 32 Countries,” Forbes, October 22, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielcassady/2020/10/22/us-signs-anti-abortion-declaration-with-32-countries/?sh=1f191f7351bc>.

<sup>5</sup> The White House, “Memorandum on Protecting Women’s Health at Home and Abroad,” January 28, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/28/memorandum-on-protecting-womens-health-at-home-and-abroad/>.

<sup>6</sup> Jamil Chade, “Biden sai de aliança antiaborto com Brasil; Itamaraty não muda de posição,” UOL, January 28, 2021, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2021/01/28/biden-sai-de-alianca-antiaborto-com-brasil-itamaraty-nao-muda-de-posicao.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Julian Borger, “US signs anti-abortion declaration with group of largely authoritarian governments,” The Guardian, October 22, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/22/us-trump-administration-signs-anti-abortion-declaration>.

<sup>8</sup> Miriam Berger, “Uganda arrested 16 LGBTQ activists. Here’s where else gay rights are a battleground in the world.” Washington Post, October 26, 2019,

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/10/26/uganda-arrested-lgbtq-activists-heres-where-else-gay-rights-are-battleground-world/>.

<sup>9</sup> International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion (SAWR), "UGANDA PETITION/PRESS RELEASE," October 23, 2020, <https://www.safeabortionwomensright.org/news/uganda-petition-press-release/>.

[Conectas - Brasil e EUA articulam aliança internacional contra direitos das mulheres](#)

<sup>10</sup> Liz Ford, "Letter suggests US is rallying UN member states to oppose abortion," The Guardian, September 23, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/sep/23/leaked-letter-suggests-us-is-rallying-un-member-states-to-oppose-abortion>.

<sup>11</sup> Ema O'Connor, "In Closed-Door UN Meetings, Trump Administration Officials Pushed Abstinence For International Women's Health Programs," BuzzFeed News, April 17, 2017, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/emaconnor/un-meeting-trump-administration-abstinence>.

<sup>12</sup> Michelle Nichols, "U.S. isolated at U.N. over its concerns about abortion, refugees," Reuters, December 17, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-un/u-s-isolated-at-u-n-over-its-concerns-about-abortion-refugees-idUSKBN1OG25Q>.

<sup>13</sup> Liz Ford, "US accused of trying to dilute global agreements on women's rights," The Guardian, March 18, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/mar/18/us-accused-of-trying-to-dilute-international-agreements-un-commission-status-of-women>.

<sup>14</sup> Colum Lynch, Robbie Gramer, "At the U.N., America Turns Back the Clock on Women's Rights," Foreign Policy, March 14, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/14/at-united-nations-women-rights-gender-health-trump-diplomacy/>.

<sup>15</sup> Eric Posner, "The administration's plan to redefine 'human rights' along conservative lines," Washington Post, June 14, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/the-administrations-plan-to-redefine-human-rights-along-conservative-lines/2019/06/14/5e456caa-8def-11e9-b162-8f6f41ec3c04\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/the-administrations-plan-to-redefine-human-rights-along-conservative-lines/2019/06/14/5e456caa-8def-11e9-b162-8f6f41ec3c04_story.html).

<sup>16</sup> Tim Fitzsimons, "Trump administration's new human rights commission alarms LGBTQ advocates," NBC News, July 10, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/trump-administration-s-new-human-rights-commission-alarms-lgbtq-advocates-n1028276>.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of State, Report of the Commission on Unalienable Rights, Summer 2020, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Report-of-the-Commission-on-Unalienable-Rights.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

<sup>19</sup> OHCHR, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70: 30 Articles on 30 Articles - Article 2," <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23858&LangID=E>.

<sup>20</sup> OHCHR, "Ratification of 18 International Human Rights Treaties," <https://indicators.ohchr.org/>.

<sup>21</sup> OHCHR, "General comment No. 36 (2018) on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life\*," Human Rights Committee, October 30, 2018, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/CCPR\\_C\\_GC\\_36.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/CCPR_C_GC_36.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Molly Bangs, "Pompeo's Commission on 'Unalienable Rights' Prioritizes Property Over People," Truthout, July 28, 2020, <https://truthout.org/articles/pompeos-commission-on-unalienable-rights-prioritizes-property-over-people/>.

<sup>23</sup> Secretary Pompeo Twitter, September 23, 2020, <https://twitter.com/SecPompeo/status/1308758165723414531?s=20>.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Mission to the UN, "Joint Statement on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," December 10, 2020, <https://usun.usmission.gov/joint-statement-on-the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>.

<sup>25</sup> Equity Forward, "Sam Brownback," <https://equityfwd.org/sam-brownback>.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Dias, "Pompeo Shifts Russia Focus to Another Issue: Religious Freedom," New York Times, July 19, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/19/us/politics/russia-religious-freedom-pompeo.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Equity Forward, "Alliance Defending Freedom," <https://pro-lies.org/alliance-defending-freedom/>.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, "Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom or Belief," 2020, <https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/schedule>.

<sup>29</sup> Vanessa Gara, "Poland: Tens of thousands hold new protest over abortion ban," AP News, October 30, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-poland-courts-warsaw-574bd22af31fbe65df16ae6009609550>.

<sup>30</sup> Beijing Paragraph 83 (k) and (l), especially "taking into account the importance of such education and services to personal development and self-esteem, as well as the urgent need to avoid unwanted

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pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and such phenomena as sexual violence and abuse”.

<sup>31</sup> Ipas, 2020. The full story: Advocating for comprehensive sexuality education that includes abortion. [The full story: Advocating for comprehensive sexuality education that includes abortion | Ipas](#)

<sup>32</sup> Guttmacher Institute, “New Estimates Show Worldwide Decrease in Unintended Pregnancies,” July 23, 2020, <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2020/new-estimates-show-worldwide-decrease-unintended-pregnancies>.

<sup>33</sup> World Health Organization, “Adolescent Pregnancy,” 31 January 2020, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy>.

<sup>34</sup> Beijing Paragraph 83 (l), particularly “taking into account the importance of such education and services to...the urgent need to avoid unwanted pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and such phenomena as sexual violence and abuse.”

<sup>35</sup> “For example, the Horizons project [in the U.S.]...resulted in a 35 percent lower risk of acquiring chlamydia. In Kenya, [a CSE program]...saw a 28 percent reduction in teenage pregnancy, indicating a significant drop in unprotected sex. The Stepping Stones curriculum used in South Africa...resulted in a 33 percent reduction of the incidence of herpes simplex virus and reduced reports of intimate partner violence” (Haberland & Rogow, *Sexuality Education: Emerging Trends in Evidence and Practice*,” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> “By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family-planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs.” SDG goal 3.7.

<sup>37</sup> UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner defines human rights thus: “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status.”

<sup>38</sup> CEDAW Part 3, Article 10.

<sup>39</sup> ICESCR Art. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Shameem N. AWID OURs. *Rights at Risk. Observatory on the Universality of Rights*. Trends Report 2017. Available at: <https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/rights-at-risk-ours-2017.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012, Youth and skills: Putting education to work, UNESCO, p8. Available at: [218003e \(1\).pdf \(reliefweb.int\)](#)

<sup>42</sup> UNFPA, *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*, New York: UNFPA, 2012. Available at: [MarryingTooYoung.pdf \(unfpa.org\)](#)

<sup>43</sup> WHO, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women*, 2013. Available at: [9789241564625\\_eng.pdf](#).

<sup>44</sup> *International technical guidance for sexual education*, Volumes 1 and 2, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Global Partnership for Education, “Global Partnership for Education increases COVID-19 (coronavirus) emergency fund to US\$500 million,” June 1, 2020, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news/gpe-increases-covid-19-coronavirus-emergency-fund-us500-million>.

<sup>46</sup> Ipas, “‘A challenge and an opportunity’ to center girls during COVID-19,” October 26, 2020, <https://www.ipas.org/news/a-challenge-and-an-opportunity-to-center-girls-during-covid-19/>.

<sup>47</sup> OECD, “Bridging the Digital Gender Divide,” 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Cristian González Cabrera, “Supreme Court Strikes Down Bigotry in Brazil’s Schools,” *Human Rights Watch*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/19/supreme-court-strikes-down-bigotry-brazils-schools>.

<sup>49</sup> “Changes in Brazilian education policy and the rise of right-wing populism”

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<https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/berj.3699>.

<sup>50</sup> *Gênero e educação: fortalecendo uma agenda para as políticas educacionais* / Denise Carreira... [et al.]. São Paulo : Ação Educativa, Cladem, Ecos, Geledés, Fundação Carlos Chagas. 2016. Available at: [generoeducacao\\_capa.indd \(generoeducacao.org.br\)](#).

<sup>51</sup> [Explain the Comprehensive Sexuality Education guideline to Ghanaians - Opuni-Frimpong \(ghanaweb.com\)](#)

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<sup>52</sup> Equal Eyes, “Ghana: Coalition to soon present bill to criminalise homosexuality,” May 31, 2018, <https://equal-eyes.org/database/2018/5/31/ghana-coalition-to-soon-present-bill-to-criminalise-homosexuality>.