



PRESS RELEASE

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## **U.S. Nonprofit Rights Highlighted in UN Human Rights Submission**

**Washington, DC – April 19, 2010**

Today a coalition of charitable, development, human rights and other organizations submitted a report to the United Nations Human Rights Council calling on the United States government to “re-assess its national security and counterterrorism laws as applied to civil society organizations.” The filing, part of the UN's Universal Periodic Review of the U.S. human rights record, recommended that U.S. laws and policy provide for “clear standards, fair redress procedures, and protection for humanitarian aid, charitable funds and free speech.”

The 24 organizations and experts that signed the submission said “U.S. security laws and policies create unnecessary and unreasonable barriers to the legitimate activities of civil society organizations.” These include rights to free speech and association “protected by international obligations of the U.S. government, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.”

“The U.S. must align its human rights values with its security policies for charitable operations. This is not an either-or choice. Violating the basic rights of organizations that deliver essential services around the world only hurts U.S. efforts to make the world a safer place. U.S. charities stand ready to work with the administration and Congress to achieve sensible, practical solutions to the problems current policies create,” said Kay Guinane, a signatory who coordinates the Charity and Security Network.

The report provides a comprehensive examination of how U.S. counterterrorism policies are inconsistent with human rights principles. These include: The lack of clear standards for getting on or off terrorist watchlists, the criminalization of life-saving humanitarian aid and peacebuilding efforts, and surveillance of U.S. advocacy and religious groups, especially those that openly dissent from government policies.

The recommendations outlined in the report said U.S. rules for civil society organizations should reflect “a good faith standard adhering to widely accepted due diligence standards.” It also calls for a clear and fair process for nonprofit groups to address and respond to allegations, and the protection of donors who support critical life-saving humanitarian aid programs.

The Universal Periodic Review was created as a peer to peer review process in which countries review other countries’ human rights standards. This is the first review for the U.S. The U.S. government will submit its own report in August, and the review by the UN will be conducted in November 2010.