

## QUESTION **Is the U.S. a global leader in human rights?**

**To date, no victims of the Bush torture program have had their day in a U.S. court.**

The Obama administration continues to invoke the state secret privilege to block accountability for victims.

**Violence against women is widespread in the U.S.**

Each day, more than 600 women are either raped or sexually assaulted<sup>1</sup> and 3 are murdered by an intimate partner.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. has failed to take reasonable measures to stem this tide of violence. Ratifying the U.N. Women's Convention would provide an important tool to combat violence against women.

**Each school year, nearly a quarter of a million school children are subjected to corporal punishment in public schools.<sup>3</sup>**

Students with disabilities and students of color are punished at disproportionately higher rates.<sup>4</sup>

**Racial profiling is pervasive in the U.S.**

The practice of racial profiling by members of law enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels remains a widespread problem impacting the lives of millions, especially of people of color. Passing the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) is key to ending racial profiling in this country.

**The U.S. has increasingly resorted to detention as a restrictive immigration enforcement strategy.**

**Approximately 400,000 men, women and children are detained annually on immigration violations.<sup>5</sup>**

This number has tripled in the last ten years and in 2009 alone, the number of immigrant detainees increased by 12 percent.<sup>6</sup>

**The U.S. incarcerates more people than any other nation in the world. Over 2.3 million people are behind bars across the country.<sup>7</sup>**

Failure to explore alternatives to incarceration and discriminatory sentencing laws and policies exacerbated the situation but the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act this August is an important first step towards reducing racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

**The U.S. fails to protect the voting rights of minority and indigenous communities.**

Denying Americans with criminal records the right to vote has a particularly devastating impact on minority individuals and communities. Additionally, American Indians continue to face discriminatory policies and actions that deny them their right to vote.

**The death penalty is the penalty of the poor and is applied in a discriminatory manner.**

Death sentences are disproportionately imposed on people of color, with African Americans comprising more than 40 percent of today's death row inmates while constituting only 12 percent of the national population.<sup>8</sup>

**The U.S. and Somalia are the only countries in the world not to have ratified a critical children's rights treaty that would better protect the world's children.**

**The U.S. is the only country in the world that sentences children to die in prison through the imposition of life sentences without the possibility of parole in homicide cases.**

The ACLU Human Rights Program works to ensure that the U.S. government complies with universal human rights principles including those recognized by the U.S. Constitution.

ANSWER

**We can (and should) do a lot better.**

1 <http://www.ojp.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cvus06.pdf>

2 <http://www.now.org/issues/violence/stats.html>

3 <http://www.aclu.org/human-rights/violent-education-corporal-punishment-children-us-public-schools>

4 <http://www.aclu.org/human-rights/corporal-punishment-children>

5 <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/09/us/09prison.html>

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 <http://www.aclu.org/capital-punishment/house-holds-hearing-death-penalty-appeals>