



Business and Human Rights

Who We Are

The State Department’s Internet Freedom and Business & Human Rights (IFBHR) Section within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor leads U.S. government policy engagement on business and human rights.

The activities of businesses impact the lives of millions of people worldwide. Even small enterprises have supply chains that span continents. Consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Guiding Principles) and the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, we encourage U.S. companies to uphold high standards and respect human rights in the communities where they operate.

What We Do

We partner with companies, civil society, and like-minded governments to promote respect for human rights in business. We lead policy efforts to disseminate and implement the Guiding Principles, engage in multi-stakeholder initiatives, and work to find solutions to urgent human rights policy issues involving business.

Examples of our Engagement

Bilateral and Multilateral: We collaborate with like-minded governments to advance human rights commitments at the UN, G-7, G-20 and the OECD. This includes co-sponsorship of the UN Human Rights Council’s landmark resolution endorsing the Guiding Principles—a framework that sets out state duties and business responsibilities around business and human rights.

Multi-stakeholder: We lead engagement in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPs). The VPs guide extractive companies on providing security for their operations in a manner that respects human rights. Member companies carry out a human rights risk assessment of their engagements with public and private security providers.

We participate in The International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers Association (ICoCA), an oversight and governance mechanism for private security companies promoting respect for human rights and humanitarian law in complex environments. ICoCA includes a certification, monitoring, and complaint mechanism.

We sit on the Advisory Committee of the Mega Sporting Events Platform to address human rights challenges in the life-cycle of mega sporting events, such as the World Cup and Olympic Games.

Programming: Our global programs support capacity building to enable civil society

actors to engage more effectively with businesses and other stakeholders to address business and human rights issues in the field.

Building awareness in the U.S. Government: We build tools and conduct training to help our State Department and interagency colleagues in Washington and overseas become more effective envoys on business and human rights issues.

OUR APPROACH

PROMOTE & PROTECT

Fostering implementation of international human rights law and developing commitments in the global business and human rights space with key stakeholders

CONVENE & FACILITATE

Creating a space for emerging and critical issues to be debated among relevant stakeholder groups

DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT

Establishing tools, training and guidance for U.S. government officials to be more effective envoys on business and human rights

Contact the IFBHR team:
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