



Relieve U.S.

Strategic Plan 2022-2023



1. Reprieve U.S.' Vision, Mission and Values

Vision: Reprieve U.S.' Vision is a world without the death penalty or extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of "counterterrorism" or "national security."

Our Mission: Reprieve U.S. is a non-profit organization of lawyers and investigators that uses strategic interventions to end the use of the death penalty, and to end extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of "counterterrorism" or "national security."

We are: Agile; Creative; Fearless; Effective; Resilient; Resolute.

Registration Type: Registered 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization.

EIN number: 72-1514282

2. Reprieve U.S.' Strategy / Modus Operandi

Reprieve U.S. is a small, feisty registered 501 (c) (3) Charitable Organization of human rights defenders. We work collaboratively with our sister organization based in London, Reprieve registered in the UK (referred to as Reprieve UK in this strategy for ease of distinction).

Our strategy is to use targeted interventions, including litigation and public policy advocacy, to end the use of the death penalty globally and to end extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of counterterrorism or national security.

We work for among the most disenfranchised people in society, as it is their cases in which human rights are most swiftly jettisoned and the rule of law is cast aside. We promote and protect the rights of those facing the death penalty and those who are the victims of extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of "counterterrorism" or "national security," with a focus on indefinite arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial executions.

Underlying all of Reprieve U.S.' work is a refusal to accept state abuse of power, a commitment to holding governments to account, and bringing power to those without power and those who have had it taken from them. Reprieve U.S. does not shy away from targeting the US



government in its efforts to bring about change; indeed Reprieve U.S. puts specific emphasis on vindication of human rights in its home jurisdiction. The US (as well as the UK) have held themselves out traditionally as shining examples of democratic societies that respect the rule of law and human rights, and therefore should be held to exacting standards in terms of how they respond to acts or allegations of terrorism and murder. Their responses have ripple effects worldwide, and are frequently used to justify the continuation of the death penalty, extrajudicial executions, torture, rendition and arbitrary detention globally.”

Although Reprieve U.S. is a small not-for-profit, we regularly achieve impact that vastly outstrips our size because we are dynamic and creative in approach, and we leverage our modest resources by working in strategic partnership with our sister organization Reprieve UK, grassroots partners and fellows all over the world, and with pro bono counsel from top law firms. We focus on addressing specific issues in ways that most other organizations in the human rights space do not, including our work over nearly two decades as the most active organization working on behalf of Guantanamo Bay detainees and our work on the cases of foreign nationals detained in North East Syria;; challenging extrajudicial killings by U.S. drones; stopping lethal injections by working with pharmaceutical companies to prevent their drugs from being used in executions; and working with death row inmates to seek benefits of consular access.

Project staff at Reprieve U.S. and Reprieve UK have worked together closely since Reprieve U.S. first began work in 2014; both organizations benefit enormously from this synergistic relationship and are able to achieve a lot more for the people we seek to assist because of it.

Our death penalty work focuses on the United States as well as in other jurisdictions execute in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Within those regions, we determine our focus countries by balancing the following factors:

- Whether we have local or regional partners and experience of investigating / litigating / carrying out work in the country in question;
- How rife the use of the death penalty is in that country / the rate of executions and /or size of the country’s death row;
- Our assessment as to the likely impact of our work – both in-country and for abolition regionally or globally;
- Our assessment as to whether the activities we undertake in-country will further our objects to an extent which justifies the resources committed;

- Our ability to have a reliable and secure presence on the ground, and access to the individuals we assist.

In considering these factors, we make an assessment on where we think our work is most needed and is most likely to achieve meaningful change. This necessarily involves surveying the presence and impact of other local and international organizations working to end the death penalty in those countries, and working collaboratively where possible..

Our work fighting human rights abuses carried out in the name of “counterterrorism” or “national security” is guided by a similar balancing assessment. This work originally stemmed from our anti-death penalty work, in that all those rendered, tortured and unlawfully detained at Guantánamo Bay Prison post 9/11 were facing possible death sentences. Over time, as the so-called “War on Terror” morphed into a combination of human rights abuses wider than the imposition of the death penalty, so too did our work broaden. We now focus on abuses in three areas: secret prisons and arbitrary detention; extra judicial executions, which includes our work on lethal drone strikes and unlawful and arbitrary detentions; and torture and renditions work, which focuses on accountability for past abuses, as well as horizon-scanning for new mutations in abusive “counterterrorism” or “national security” practices. We focus on the misconduct by the US and their allies, based on the premise that we cannot expect other countries to demonstrate respect for human rights and the rule of law / espouse broader notions of human rights if the countries that champion these values in principle renounce them in practice. Our presence and reputation in the U.S. courts allows us to leverage our resources most effectively and to focus on relief through the U.S. courts. We also prioritize those countries where:

- We have a history of working, strong local partners and understand the local context;
- The abuses in question are prevalent;
- We believe our work is likely to significantly impact positively on preventing or stopping those abuses, domestically, regionally and internationally (through publicizing success in remedying such abuses);
- On our assessment, the activities that we propose to undertake will further our objects to an extent that it justifies the resources committed;
- We are able to conduct our work safely, securely and effectively.

It is our investigation of, access to, and direct representation of victims of human rights abuses - be they on death row, in Guantánamo, or the survivors of a drone strike - that differentiates us from other well-known international human rights organizations, and gives us the ability to



effect change through our strategic casework and advocacy.

As lawyers and investigators, we are uniquely placed to make the voices of these individuals heard: where possible we meet with them in person, developing a factual portrait of their case and the conditions of imprisonment, as well as an understanding of their personal story. Our Fellows, partner organizations and consultants are renowned for their work, and are key to developing trust and gaining access to those whose rights we seek to defend.

We advocate for the people we assist in the courts of law where we can, but importantly we also advocate in other 'court' fora – including the 'court of public opinion' and 'political courtrooms' – both on behalf of victims and on behalf of the issues. Using strategic litigation, we effect systemic change and through our clients' stories, we can change the minds of influential decision-makers and the public.

We are strategic in terms of the cases we take on and how we use work to effect change. Where it becomes apparent that a particular case or campaign is successfully capturing the public imagination and thereby shifting the debate on the issues with which we engage – for example through increased press focus – we invest more resources in it and maximize our ability to have an impact for that individual and the broader issue. If a strategy is not working, we stand back from it until a better time, or we re-evaluate and adapt.

Key to our mutable strategy is our agile team of expert investigators, policy and campaigning experts, lawyers who take our cases to decision-makers, and our skilled communications team that takes our message to the public. The importance of public education to Reprieve U.S.'s work cannot be overestimated. Many of the people assisted by Reprieve U.S. do not have access to meaningful relief in courts of law: their best hope of justice lies in the court of public opinion. By humanizing victims of extreme human rights abuses through telling their stories, or emphasizing the value of the rule of law, fairness and due process, extraordinary shifts can be brought about in these audiences.

Agility

The area in which Reprieve U.S. operates is dynamic and fast moving. Reprieve U.S.'s agility is core to its strategy and approach to the work. All of our staff and Fellows are familiar with our key objectives. The aim is then to develop creative cases and campaigns that will get us closer to achieving those objectives. We track what is going on in the US and around the world and take action accordingly.



Reprieve U.S. captures the zeitgeist: we change the debate and we change people's minds. That is our product - it is the thing we do best; it is the reason our funders fund us and the reason we can punch so much above our weight.

3. Current Aims:

(A) Casework and Campaigns

Mission: Reprieve U.S.' mission is to use strategic interventions to end the use of the death penalty globally, and to end extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of "counterterrorism" or "national security."

Specific Aims:

- Stop ongoing unlawful detention and torture/cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment used by the US and their allies in the name of "counterterrorism" or "national security" (most notably through the continued incarceration without charge or trial of men still held in Guantánamo Bay Detention facility, for many now in excess of 18 years) and assist survivors' rehabilitation.
- Hold to account those who perpetrated or colluded with past rendition, unlawful detention and torture associated with the War on Terror, ensuring that the lessons of history are learned from these abuses.
- End the use of the death penalty without trial by the US and their allies in the name of "counterterrorism", including through the use or support for lethal drones and or other forms of extrajudicial executions.
- Continue to call for the repatriation of foreign nationals held in detention camps and prisons in North East Syria, countering the current narrative and building a network of allies;
- Work to bolster and enforce international frameworks restricting the use of weaponized drones.
- End the use of Kill Lists by the US, the UK and their allies to extrajudicially execute people around the world in the name of "counterterrorism".
- Identify and combat emerging abuses perpetrated by the US government in the name of "counterterrorism" or "national security" and expose the ongoing human rights abuses that the US government seeks to conceal by altering the nature, footprint and location of these abuses.
- Limit the use of the death penalty across the world by undertaking investigations,



casework and/or litigation – in partnerships with other organizations and individuals – on cases with the potential to create systemic change.,

- Engage institutions, governments, civil society, corporations and the public in the fight for abolition of the death penalty worldwide, focusing specifically on the United States of America, and where strategic and we are able to have a positive impact, in South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.
- Challenge the use of the death penalty by undertaking casework - either directly or in partnership with other lawyers or organizations - on behalf of those facing the death penalty, and where those cases offer strategic opportunities to impact the landscape that Reprieve U.S. is well placed to pursue.
- Continue our work preventing the misuse of medicines; working with stakeholders across the pharmaceutical industry who do not wish their life-saving drugs used in life-ending executions;
- Collaborate closely with and support anti-death penalty activists and organizations in strategic locations.
- Build global public awareness of the issues Reprieve U.S. tackles and support for its work.

(B) Operations

Mission: Create the most efficient, nimble and effective organization possible, where staff are fully supported to achieve Reprieve U.S.' mission.

- Ensure that Reprieve U.S.' resources - which comprise its people, funds, and physical or digital equipment - are selected, harnessed and deployed efficiently, effectively, securely, ethically, and in compliance with all applicable laws, policies and standards.
- Provide a positive and energizing working space that is conducive to the Reprieve U.S. team achieving to their maximum potential.
- Provide operational and security support to staff, Fellows, and consultants.
- Ensure organizational safeguards are in place to enable Reprieve U.S. to do its work to the best of its ability, whilst always keeping the interests of its clients front and center.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Reprieve U.S.' work, and ensure that resources are utilized most efficiently in order to achieve the impact that we seek.
- Ensure that Reprieve U.S.' information technology systems and processes best support all staff, Fellows, consultants and volunteers, working both in the office and remotely, and that technology is an aid in the pursuit and achievement of the organization's strategic



objectives.

- Maintain a close working relationship with Reprieve U.S.' Board and ensure that the organization carries out its Mission through its Strategic Plan and Operational Plan, as set by the Board.
- Ensure that Board members are kept apprised of all significant developments at Reprieve U.S., and that their skills, experience and expertise are harnessed and deployed.

(C) Development and Outreach

Mission: Generate the right level and types of income - by converting public interest in our work into ongoing funding - to support Reprieve U.S.' work and facilitate its achievement of its mission.

Specific Aims:

- Build public support for our work, and galvanize key audiences such that they are able to take action to assist us in furthering our mission.
- Ensure that Reprieve U.S. has the quantum and diversified composition of funding needed to carry out its work efficiently and effectively.
- Gather and analyze data on Reprieve U.S.' performance and the impact of Reprieve U.S.' work and communicate that to prospective and current funding sources.

Who we are:

Reprieve U.S.' leadership is provided by its Board and supported by the staff team in DC, as well as from our sister organization, Reprieve UK, as directed by the Reprieve U.S. Board, chaired by renowned attorney, Eric Lewis. Anna Yearley and Maya Foa, Joint Executive Directors of Reprieve UK provide organizational and strategic guidance in line with instructions from the Board. Deputy Director, Shivan Sarin, manages the day-to-day work of the organization.

We are also able to increase the impact of our small team by effective use of placements and funded Fellowships from academic institutions. In 2022/23 we are delighted to have partnered with UCLA Harvard University, and University of California, Berkley.

Our Board holds ultimate responsibility for the work of Reprieve U.S. and meets four times a year. The skills mix of the Board members is designed to bring a balance of legal, commercial,



fundraising, and communications expertise to underpin the strategy of the organization. It sets and monitors overall strategy for the organization and monitors the budget. The Board President is in regular interaction with the Joint Executive Directors.

Reprieve U.S.' Board is composed of:

Eric L. Lewis (President), Lewis Baach Kaufmann Middlemiss PLLC, 2014

Elliott Milstein (Secretary/Treasurer), Acting President, Dean and Professor Emeritus American University, 2014

Eliot Spitzer (Vice President), Spitzer Enterprises and Philanthropist, 2014

Esther Fein, New York Collaborates for Autism and The Osborne Association, 2014

Kim Skaggs, Skaggs Family Foundation and former legal non-profit director, 2018

Andrew Celli, Emery Celli Brinkerhoff and Abady LLP, 2018

Akila Radhakrishnan, Global Justice Center and human rights lawyer, 2020

Organizational culture: The culture at Reprieve U.S. is one of consensus, professional rigor, mutual respect, and accountability.

Reprieve U.S.'s small staff team is supported and benefits greatly from the relationship with Reprieve UK staff. Reprieve U.S. has a clear and tight structure with strong lines of communication and accountability between its senior staff, attorneys and officers. Being lean and agile ensures that we maximize information flows and conserve as much resource as possible for advancement of the cases of the clients that we assist. There are five levels of report flowing upwards to the President of the Board.

These levels are differentiated both in terms of remuneration and by specific and transparent criteria. The salary bands are competitive and non-negotiable. As staff are promoted at Reprieve U.S., their level of accountability increases.

The pay structure at Reprieve U.S. is as follows: the starting Staff Attorney salary is \$64,178, rising to \$71,880 after two years of continual service to Reprieve U.S.; the Senior Staff Attorney salary is \$80,507; the Managing Attorney salary is \$90,168; and the Deputy Director salary is \$97,593.

Positioning: Reprieve U.S. is a small human rights organization – and because we are small, we are nimble. As mentioned, we work closely with our larger independent sister organization,



Reprive, based in the UK, and with other partner NGOs in the US to ensure that they have access to the facts we gather, so that both those facts and our narrative are disseminated as widely as they can facilitate. We also engage and cooperate with a wide range of smaller civil society organizations; with specialized non-profit human rights organizations around the world; and with law firms and private sector organizations internationally.

Relationship with Reprive UK: Reprive U.S. and Reprive UK are independent organizations that work closely together to pursue each organization's mission and values. This collaboration is mutually beneficial to both Reprive U.S. and Reprive UK as it enables each organization to work more effectively and efficiently and take advantage of the strategic locations to increase the impact of this work. Reprive U.S. is able to take a leading role in pursuing litigation in the US on behalf of victims of human rights abuses, and communicate and raise awareness of the issues that both organizations work on amongst a US audience, including the US government. Both organizations work closely together to leverage resources on casework areas which are in furtherance of the charitable aims of each organization. Reprive UK is able to provide operational and administrative support to Reprive U.S., which saves costs and works effectively. The organizations' relationship is fostered by sub-grant arrangements that fund areas of work being carried out collaboratively; as well as by attendance of Reprive U.S. staff at an international Reprive retreat in London; and by the meeting at various points during the year of the trustees and staff of both organizations to discuss areas of work in which the organizations collaborate.

Reprive UK licenses the use of its trademark at no cost in the US to Reprive U.S.

7. History and Achievements

Reprive U.S. has spent the last eight years fearlessly pursuing justice for some of the most vulnerable people worldwide.

Throughout the previous 12 months, Reprive U.S. has continued to make strides in achieving its mission: to bring about an end to the use of the death penalty, and an end to extreme abuses - torture, rendition, illegal detention and extrajudicial executions. By continuing to seek fair and just outcomes and holding powerful governments to account, we strive to uphold the most fundamental principles in society: justice, human rights and the rule of law.



Our unique and multi-pronged approach of investigation, litigation and advocacy sees us secure justice in the case of individuals, create systemic change and tell stories which change the hearts and minds of decision-makers and the public.

We have secured many victories over the past year and these include:

Achievements in our death penalty work

1. In the US, the vast majority of states that retain the death penalty did not carry out a single execution. Just 11 executions took place in total across five states, down 35% from 2020 (17).
2. We collected and reviewed over 700 case files of individuals who were sentenced to the mandatory death penalty in Kenya, who are now eligible for re-sentencing.
3. We published major reports into the use of the death penalty in Bahrain and Egypt, and a cross-region report investigating the impact of the death penalty on migrant workers.
4. 34,000 Reprieve supporters joined our campaign on behalf of Jagtar Singh Johal, a British national arbitrarily detained, tortured and facing the death penalty in India.
5. Two child defendants, Ali al-Nimr and Abdullah Hasan al-Zaher – for whom Reprieve had advocated over many years and who had been spared the death penalty in Saudi Arabia – were finally released from prison and allowed to return home to their families.
6. **Virginia** became the 23rd state to abolish the death penalty, the first former Confederate State to do so. We have worked in the state for over a decade on individual cases and systemic issues including execution secrecy. This year we helped educate Virginians about the problems with lethal injection and the death penalty.
7. We advised numerous global firms in optimising their policies to prevent the misuse of their products in executions. In 2021, two additional pharmaceutical companies joined a group of over sixty companies which have issued statements opposing the misuse of their medicines in lethal injections.
8. **South Carolina** could not proceed with two executions because of lack of access to lethal drugs. They have not executed for over a decade.
9. Executions were put on hold until 2025 in **Ohio** following years of engagement by pharmaceutical companies to protect their life-saving medicines from diversion and misuse in executions. There is now a bipartisan push to abolish the death penalty in the state legislature.
10. Pharmaceutical companies, medical experts, and state lawmakers in **Montana** defeated legislation that would have radically expanded the list of drugs that officials could use to execute prisoners.

11. **Nevada** was prevented from using a new and experimental execution protocol due to lethal injection litigation and engagement by global pharmaceutical companies demanding the return of their surreptitiously purchased medicines.
12. We coordinated expert declarations, testimony and amicus briefs in several ongoing criminal cases.
13. We advised consular officials from six countries on how to best intervene in the cases of their nationals facing capital punishment in the US.
14. We supported articles in The Las Vegas Review Journal, Guardian US, New York Times and Arizona Capitol Times exposing the enormous cost of lethal injection executions, further debunking the myth that the method is cheap, easy and humane.

Achievements in our abuses in counter-terrorism work

1. In May 2021, we secured clearance for the release of our client **Saifullah Paracha** through the Periodic Review Board. The 74-year-old has been detained for 16 years, suffered three heart attacks, and never been charged with a crime.
2. In July 2021, we secured the transfer of our client **Abdul Latif Nasser** out of Guantánamo and home to his family in Morocco, six years after he was first cleared for release.
3. In October 2021, we successfully won a *habeas corpus* case on behalf of our client **Asadullah Haroon Gul**; the first successful *habeas* challenge in ten years. His detention in Guantánamo was ruled unlawful by a US Federal Court.
4. In October 2021, we secured clearance for the release of our client **Ahmed Rabbani**. In the lead-up, we secured Op-Eds supporting Ahmed in The Independent, Truthout and Al-Jazeera, among others.
5. We supported 73 former Guantánamo detainees in 28 countries across the world with access to legal assistance, medical care, and vocational and educational training. As of 2021, Life After Guantánamo has supported:
 - 34 men to obtain appropriate legal status.
 - 29 men to receive specialist medical care.
 - 23 men to receive business loans, employment support and vocational training.
 - 20 men to reunite with their families after two decades of separation.
 - 16 men to secure safe housing.
 - 15 men to learn new languages.
 - 14 men to access specialized psychological care, and torture rehabilitation from Arabic speaking clinicians.
6. We fought five legal cases in four jurisdictions and conducted five ongoing investigations through our Extrajudicial Executions project. We represent 21 families of people killed in US drone strikes and raids.

7. We filed a petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on behalf of the Al Ameri, Al Taisy and Al Khobzi families. The US has killed 37 members of the families including 12 children, in seven attacks. The petition led to media coverage about the imprecision, secrecy and lack of accountability of the US drone program in the Washington Post, the BBC, the AFP and Vice, amongst others.
8. Working with partners at the **European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights**, we filed a petition to the Constitutional Court in Germany, challenging Germany's role in US drone strikes in Yemen.
9. In September 2021, we co-hosted a side event to the UN Human Rights Council: *In pursuit of Human Rights and Accountability: Challenges around Regulating the Use of Force* with partners PAX for Peace. Panelists included the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Countering Terrorism. Fifteen state representatives were amongst the 78 attendees.

Going forward, we will continue to combat injustice and work towards our vision and our main focus will be on:

- Limit the use of the death penalty in the U.S. and across the world by undertaking investigations, casework and/or litigation – in partnerships with other organizations and individuals – on cases with the potential to create systemic change;
- Engage institutions, governments, civil society, corporations and the public in the fight for abolition of the death penalty worldwide and the end to extreme human rights abuses, focusing specifically on the US, Asia, the Middle East and Africa;
- Continue our work preventing the misuse of medicines; working with stakeholders across the pharmaceutical industry who do not wish their life-saving drugs used in life-ending executions;
- End extrajudicial detention in Guantánamo Bay and other secret prisons for those victimized by States under the guise of “counterterrorism”;
- Work with clients from their detention in Guantánamo through their release and resettlement through our innovative and unique Life After Guantánamo (LAG) program, ensuring they are safe and able to thrive and rebuild their lives after years of torture and detention;
- Stop ongoing rendition, unlawful detention and torture/cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment associated with the “counterterrorism” and “national security”;
- Investigate, expose and seek justice for victims of extrajudicial executions in the name of “counterterrorism” or “national security”, including off-battlefield use of weaponized drones and the use of, or collusion with, other mechanisms for state-sponsored assassination;
- Hold the US, and their European allies accountable to the highest standards in their responses to allegations of extreme crime;
- Remain agile and responsive to emerging threats associated with the use of the death penalty and human rights abuses carried out in the name of “counterterrorism” or “national security”;



- Protect the rule of law and ensure justice is delivered fairly and justly and for all;
- Build global public awareness and support for the issues Reprieve U.S. works on; shifting the debate, highlighting individual cases and umbrella themes of abuse and injustice;
- Work with partner organizations across the world, building a network of organizations tackling similar issues;
- Identify and work with other organizations, activists, lawyers and other allies across our geographic areas of work.

The Future

Reprieve U.S. has an ambitious vision: a world without the death penalty, or extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of “counterterrorism” or “national security”.

We have every reason to believe we can achieve that vision. Our strategy – investigating on the front line, litigating on behalf of individuals in the U.S. and other jurisdictions, and supporting clients to tell their stories in order to advocate in furtherance of our mission in the court of public opinion – is tried and tested and takes us closer to that vision every day.

We must preserve Reprieve U.S.’s agility and adaptability. Our agility means that we are well placed to manage unexpected events and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves. We have a good record of innovation in response to global developments. To maintain our effectiveness, we will continue to assess our impact regularly, so that we can learn from our experiences, close down projects that are not working, whilst doubling down on cases and campaigns that are achieving change. We must also remain confident of trying new techniques in order to achieve results.

As a small but hard hitting and agenda setting legal non profit, we must remain courageous in the face of emerging challenges and be prepared to continue our strong legacy of holding power to account.