



Relieve U.S.

Strategic Plan 2023-2024



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 globally, 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 registered 501 (c) (3) Charitable Organization of human rights defenders. We work collaboratively with our independent 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 people whose circumstances have made them extremely vulnerable, 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 have experienced 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 independent sister organization Reprieve UK, 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 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; working with death row inmates to seek benefits of consular access and our work over nearly two decades as the most active organization working on behalf of Guantánamo Bay detainees.

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 that 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. We are committed to engaging and involving people we support and their clients, families and communities, as well as our colleagues in national organizations, at every level of our work.

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 rendition, unlawful detention and torture/cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment associated with "counterterrorism" and "national security";
- Work to secure the release and repatriation or resettlement of the remaining Reprieve clients from Guantánamo Bay, offer targeted support to prevent further harms / abuses and ultimately achieve Guantánamo Bay closure;
- 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;
- Investigate, expose and seek justice for victims of extrajudicial killings 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;
- Shine a light on U.S. complicity in abuses within Reprieve U.S' remit, and expose and challenge government policies which may lead to abuses;

- Hold to account those who perpetrated or colluded with past human rights abuses, ensuring a public record of abuses committed and that lessons are learnt from past injustices;
- Hold the US, the UK and their European allies accountable to the highest standards in their responses to allegations of extreme crime;
- 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 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 to be used in life-ending executions;
- 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”;
- Work with our clients, their families and communities, and others to support those with lived experience of the abuses we work against to share insights into the devastating impact of these abuses, and to explore how we can work together to change the negative public portrayal of their relatives and communities;
- 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;
- Work with partner organizations across the world, building a network of organizations tackling similar issues;

(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 Joint Executive Directors Anna Yearley and Maya Foa, as directed by the Reprieve U.S. Board, chaired by renowned attorney, Eric Lewis. 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 2023/24 we are delighted to have partnered with New York University and University of Chicago..

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
- **Andrew Celli**, Emery Celli Brinkerhoff and Abady LLP, 2018
- **Esther Fein**, New York Collaborates for Autism and The Osborne Association, 2014
- **Akila Radhakrishnan**, Global Justice Center and human rights lawyer, 2020
- **Kim Skaggs**, Skaggs Family Foundation and former legal non-profit director, 2018

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.

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, Reprieve, 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 Reprieve UK: Reprieve U.S. and Reprieve UK are independent organizations that work closely together to pursue each organization's mission and values. This collaboration is mutually beneficial to both Reprieve U.S. and Reprieve 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. Reprieve 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. Reprieve UK is able to provide operational and administrative support to Reprieve 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 Reprieve U.S. staff at an international Reprieve 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.

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

7. History and Achievements

Reprieve U.S. has spent the last eight years fearlessly pursuing justice for people whose experiences have made them some of the most vulnerable worldwide.

Throughout the previous 12 months, Reprieve 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. Of the 27 states in the United States that retain the death penalty, 21 did not carry out a single execution in 2022.
2. Three Republican-led executing states – Ohio, Tennessee and Alabama – paused executions due to lethal injection issues this year.
3. Death row in Malawi has been cleared, with a total of 25 people receiving clemency.
4. We prevented the execution of Jordanian national, Hussein Abo al-Kheir, in Saudi Arabia following an international political advocacy and media campaign.
5. We supported British blogger Jagtar Singh Johal, who is in arbitrary detention in India, to launch a legal claim against the UK government.
6. We have worked with diplomatic missions, civil society and lawyers to improve consular assistance, legal representation and detention conditions for foreign nationals on death row in Malaysia and Indonesia.
7. We advised numerous firms on protecting their medicines from misuse in executions. We supported seven companies to optimize their distribution policies to protect their

medicines from diversion and sale for use in executions. We also provided advice to two newly impacted companies, who joined the group of healthcare companies that oppose the misuse of their medicines in executions.

8. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine issued nine reprieves in 2022, due to growing concerns about lethal injection and engagement by the pharmaceutical industry. Executions were first put on hold in Ohio in 2019.
9. Tennessee's Republican Governor Bill Lee imposed an official moratorium on the death penalty and ordered an independent review of its lethal injection protocol after Tennessee failed to test its drugs for bacterial endotoxins. Prior to this announcement, Tennessee was on track to execute more prisoners than any other state in 2022.
10. Alabama faced national and global scrutiny after a recent spate of botched executions, including what appears to have been the longest-recorded lethal injection execution in US history. At the end of 2022, Alabama halted all executions in the state pending a top-to-bottom review of the state's execution protocol.
11. Louisiana announced that they are unwilling to use manufactured medicines in lethal injection executions following engagement by pharmaceutical companies. They now consider themselves "out of the execution medication business."
12. Idaho was unable to source lethal injection drugs, so called off the scheduled execution of a terminally ill death-row prisoner.

South Carolina's Supreme Court halted two scheduled executions in April amid ongoing legal challenges by state death-row prisoners to the state's execution methods and no availability of lethal injection drugs. A secrecy bill that would have seen manufacturers, distributors and suppliers newly defined as members of the 'execution team' stalled in 2022 following engagement by pharmaceutical industry leaders.

Achievements in our abuses in counter-terrorism work

1. We secured the repatriation of the first British woman and her child from North East Syria. To date we have facilitated releases to the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago and the USA.
2. We filed a criminal complaint in Italy, regarding a US airstrike launched from Sigonella airbase in Sicily, which killed eleven innocent Libyans in 2018.



3. Working with partner pro bono legal counsel, we secured the release of two Reprieve clients from Guantánamo. Both are now reunited with their families, in their home countries.
4. We also secured the clearance for release for the last of our clients from Guantánamo. All Reprieve clients have now been cleared for release.
5. Our Life After Guantánamo sprogram has supported 17 cases in 12 countries across the world this year. To date, we have supported 76 cases in 29 countries.
6. In June 2022, our client Asadullah Haroon Gul returned home to Afghanistan, having been detained for 15 years without charge or trial. This follows the victory we secured in October 2021 in Asadullah's habeas corpus case, alongside the law firm **Lewis Baach Kaufmann Middlemiss**.
7. In July 2022, our client Khalid Qasim was cleared for release by the Periodic Review Board. Six key US agencies, including the Department of Defense and Homeland Security, unanimously agreed that he posed no threat to US security. All our clients have now been cleared through this process, and our full focus can now shift to ensuring releases are enacted.
8. In October 2022, our client Saifullah Paracha returned home to Pakistan, having been detained for 20 years without charge or trial. Saifullah was the oldest detainee still at Guantánamo, aged 75.
9. Working in collaboration with partners at the **European Center for Civil and Human Rights** and Italy's **Rete Italiana Pace e Disarmo**, we filed a criminal complaint in Italy, regarding a US airstrike launched from Sigonella airbase in Sicily, which killed eleven innocent Libyans in 2018. A murder investigation has officially been opened, and two public prosecutors have been assigned to the case.
10. We supported Adel al Manthari, the survivor of a drone strike in Yemen 2018 that killed four of his relatives and left him catastrophically injured. We filed a complaint to US Central Command (CENTCOM) with a request for compensation and support with Adel's medical evacuation to Egypt in April 2022. Reprieve teamed up with campaign group **Ban Killer Drones** to get Adel the medical care he urgently needed, and he underwent successful operations to save his legs and address the injuries caused by the strike. He is currently undergoing physiotherapy in Egypt to recover his independence.



11. Working with our partners, **Zomia Center** and **Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)**, we have conducted political advocacy regarding the US Department of Defense's new civilian harm policy: the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP), briefing the Department of Defense officials and Congressional offices on our recommendations and concerns.

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.

We need to remember and remain true to our values: we must be agile; creative; fearless; impactful; resilient; and resolute.