



Relieve U.S.

Strategic Plan 2024-2025



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 sibling organization based in London, Reprieve, registered in the UK (referred to as Reprieve UK in this strategy for ease of distinction).

We 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 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 because many of the grave human rights abuses our clients face today stem from policies and practices developed and exported by the USA in the modern era of securitization. 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. We are dynamic and creative in approach, and leverage our modest resources by working in strategic partnership with our independent sibling organization Reprieve UK, partners and Fellows all over the world, and with pro bono counsel from top law firms.

It is our investigation of, access to, and representation of victims of human rights abuses – be they on death row, in Guantánamo Bay, 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 partner organizations, at every level of our work.

As lawyers, investigators and advocates, we are uniquely placed to make the voices of these individuals heard: where possible we meet with them in person, thereby developing a factual portrait of their case and 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 in relation to the abuses they face. Using strategic litigation, we effect systemic change and through our clients' stories, we can change the minds of influential decision-makers and the public.

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: unlawful detentions, which includes our work on Guantánamo Bay, our Life After Guantánamo project, and our work fighting arbitrary detention in North East Syria; extra judicial executions, which includes our work on lethal drone strikes; and torture and renditions work, which focuses on accountability for past abuses, with a goal of preventing such abuses from taking place again.

We focus on 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. We continue to direct our efforts on human rights abuses carried out in the “counterterrorism” and “national security” space as experience has shown that this is where the boundaries of human rights protection are most easily eroded. We adopt a multi-pronged approach – using litigation, public and political advocacy, investigation and

campaigning – and 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.

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 men still detained in Guantánamo Bay, and offer targeted support to address further abuse based on their status as former detainees;
- Secure 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;

- Limit the use of the death penalty in the US and elsewhere by undertaking strategic projects, investigations, casework and/or litigation which have 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 in the US;
- 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, including by engaging in strategic advocacy where it is in their interest and they are able to;
- 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; and,
- 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.

Specific Aims:

- 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 and consultants, 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, as set by the Board; and,
- 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; and
- 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 Matt Wells 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.

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 regularly interacts 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), 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**, 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 professional rigor, mutual respect and collaboration, 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 sibling 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 in communicating and raising 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 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 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 in the US and beyond, and an end to extreme abuses – including torture, rendition, illegal detention and extrajudicial executions – carried out in the name of “counter-terrorism” or “national security”. 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 cases 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 in 2023, including:

Achievements in our death penalty work

- Execution rates in the United States remained at record lows. In 2023, 81% (22 out of 27) of the states that retain the death penalty have not executed, and only 7 states handed down new death sentences – the lowest number in 20 years.
- A Gallup poll revealed for the first time that more Americans believe that the death penalty is applied unfairly (50%) than fairly (47%).
- The Governor of Arizona ordered a review of the state's method of execution, following a string of botched lethal injection executions in 2022, and the Attorney General filed to withdraw a motion for the only pending death warrant. Executions in Arizona remained on hold throughout 2023.
- Executions remained on hold in Tennessee throughout 2023, due to an ongoing review of the state's lethal injection protocol after prison officials failed to test lethal injection drugs ahead of a planned execution in 2022.
- Following the longest botched execution in history in 2022, Alabama's Department of Corrections halted executions pending a top to bottom review of the state's execution protocol. This pause held until July 2023. Widespread media coverage of the execution and its aftermath, opened up an important conversation about the problems with lethal injection in the state, and the inherent brutality of the method.
- We concluded our decade-long resentencing project in Malawi, where 169 people have avoided death sentences, and nobody has been resentenced to death. Death row is now cleared in Malawi.
- We achieved another victory in the African Court of Human Rights, which ruled that John Lazaro's mandatory death sentence in Tanzania was unlawful. This is the sixth positive decision we have achieved to date.
- We secured the release of our client, Ali Kololo, after 11 long years in prison in Kenya. Ali was wrongfully sentenced to death in a deeply unfair trial after the Kenyan Police – with support from the UK's Metropolitan Police – investigated him for alleged involvement in an attack on two British tourists.
- We published a landmark report on the application of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia which analyzed 1,243 executions over 11 years for the first time.
- The mandatory death penalty was abolished in Malaysia. We facilitated shared learning

and knowledge exchange from successful resentencing projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and mitigation expertise from India to the rapidly unfolding resentencing project in Malaysia.

- We avoided the death sentence in two cases of victims of trafficking in Indonesia. We were able to intervene early, thanks to partnership with the Mexican and Peruvian embassies, which resulted in positive outcomes in both cases.
- Pakistan passed an amendment to the Control of Narcotics Substances Act 1997, thereby abolishing the death penalty for all drug offences.

Achievements in our abuses in counter-terrorism work

- All of the men whose cases we have worked on over the last two decades with Reprieve UK have now either been released from Guantánamo or been cleared for release.
- Our Life After Guantánamo program supported 19 released men in 12 countries on four continents across the world. This work has involved securing basic rights and services for released men, including legal status, housing and employment.
- We worked with the then-UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, to guide her in speaking to released and resettled men, to inform the Special Rapporteur's report following the first UN visit to Guantánamo, and provided information about the visit to the men themselves.
- We conducted detailed investigations into strikes which have impacted five families in Yemen, who have been systematically targeted by strikes. Three of these families lost 37 family members between them in seven attacks, including 12 children.
- We presented evidence directly to the US Department of Defense, alongside a program of targeted advocacy, to shape the development and implementation of the mechanism and ensure accountability and redress for victims of past and future drone strikes.
- We supported the repatriation of six British nationals (all Reprieve UK clients) from North East Syria to the UK, by the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office. They include minors, trafficking victims, and people taken to Syria as children, all of whom suffered extreme abuses.

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 an excellent 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 projects that are not working, and double 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.