



U.S. FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES 2026

WHO WE ARE

Inspired by the Jewish commitment to justice, American Jewish World Service (AJWS) works to realize human rights and end poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Working with American Jews and clergy in the United States, we mobilize American Jewish leadership in solidarity with our grassroots partners across the Global South. In Washington, D.C., the AJWS Advocacy and Jewish Engagement team elevates the voices of our partners by advocating for policies that strengthen their efforts as they fight for human rights and combat injustice in their communities.

WHAT WE DO

Since its founding in 1985, AJWS has granted over \$475 million to thousands of activists and social change organizations that have taken on some of the greatest social justice challenges of our time. AJWS makes grants to nearly 500 grassroots organizations to promote human rights across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In their countries, social change organizations supported by AJWS work tirelessly to fight the rise of authoritarianism around the globe, support communities living with the devastating effects of climate change, advance LGBTQI+ rights, and fight for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people.

In Washington, D.C., we advocate for a rights-based U.S. foreign policy that promotes dignity and strives to combat oppression, injustice, and poverty worldwide. AJWS seeks to ensure that the U.S. government puts vulnerable populations at the center of U.S. foreign policy by bringing their voices into decisions that affect their communities and their rights. Working with the U.S. Congress, Executive branch agencies, peer advocacy NGOs, and the American Jewish community and clergy, the Advocacy and Jewish Engagement team advocates for U.S. foreign policy that focuses on human rights, with strategic insight from our grantees and partners around the world.



Rabbi Sandra Lawson, GJF alumna, with Shari Turitz, Vice President for Programs, and Tanyanika Davis, Director of Media Relations and Thought Leadership, lobby lawmakers in Washington, D.C., to support human rights around the world. Photo by Joshua P. Roberts.

OUR PRIORITIES

Strengthen U.S. foreign policy that centers human rights by:

- Defending and bolstering the resources available to support human rights defenders and civil society globally to ensure that human rights principles and democratic norms are not abandoned in U.S. foreign policy decision-making.
- Supporting universal human rights instruments and international justice and accountability mechanisms.

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- Denouncing the use of narrow definitions of religious freedom and “natural rights” that harm all people and instead supporting inclusive language and policies that seek to protect everyone, especially those most at risk of human rights violations.
- Supporting robust funding for and bold leadership in multilateral organizations and agreements.

Promote comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights for all people worldwide by:

- Advocating for appropriations requests to include as strong global health funding as possible.
- Mitigating the harms of the expanded Mexico City policy (also known as the Global Gag rule) and working toward a full legislative repeal of these harmful rules.
- Standing up against persecution and abuse of LGBTQI+ people abroad by calling for accountability for those who commit human rights abuses against LGBTQI+ people.

Promote justice and accountability around the world by:

- Supporting the civil and political rights of all people globally to protest and speak out against abusive governments, participate fully in the political process, and access information from their governments without fear of reprisal or criminalization.
- Using all U.S. diplomatic and economic levers to uphold the rights of persecuted minorities, journalists, human rights defenders, and other grassroots movements globally, especially those that prioritize movements led by young people, women, and Indigenous people.
- Supporting credible domestic and international justice and accountability efforts for victims of human rights abuses in the wake of conflict or mass atrocities.
- Increasing support and funding within the international affairs budget for atrocity prevention, humanitarian response, and human rights-related accounts, particularly those that serve the most marginalized.

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