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Escalating Authoritarianism in the United States: Disregarding International Law, Dismantling of Civil Society, and Undermining Fundamental Rights

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25th Anniversary of Global War on Terror: Déjà vu

- Detention at Guantánamo Bay
- Extraordinary renditions and torture
- Mass detention of immigrants
- Suspicionless surveillance

Lack of Accountability —————→
Impunity

Culture of

Overview on the Politics of “Counterterrorism”

- Undermining International Law and Accountability Bodies
- Corporate-State Alignment
- Systematic Targeting of Dissent

Undermining International Law and Accountability Bodies

- UPR withdrawal
- Unilateral military force: Iran, Venezuela
- ICC sanctions
- Defunding 66 international organizations and agreements
- Open defiance of international law: CECOT renditions, boat strikes, Iran war, refoulement, chain refoulement via third-country deportations

Recommendations

- Cease all **uses of force** inconsistent with the UN Charter, including an end the use of counterterrorism authorities to justify maritime military attacks framed as responses to “narcoterrorism,”
- Guarantee prompt, independent, and impartial investigations into all alleged unlawful killings and abuses carried out under so-called counterterrorism authorities, and **ensure accountability and access to effective remedy for victims.**
- Release any **foreign officials** unlawfully detained and ensure full compliance with international legal obligations.
- Reaffirming a **commitment to international law and re-engaging with the United Nations systems**, including by restoring funding and participating fully in its systems of global cooperation and accountability

Corporate-State Alignment

U.S. law enforcement is using artificial intelligence and other private tech tools such as:

- mobile phone geolocation tracking,
- automated license plate reading,
- facial recognition, iris scanning, and DNA testing,
- social media surveillance

The U.S. military is using artificial intelligence, such as use of Claude and Palantir-linked tools to accelerate the “kill chain” in Iran.

Recommendations

- **End ideology-based surveillance.**
- **Disclose the full details** of all commercial surveillance technology procurements, as well as vendor lobbying activities, to aid transparency and accountability.

Systematic Targeting of Dissent

- Targeted detention, deportation, and criminal prosecutions:
 - Detention and deportation proceedings of Mahmoud Khalil, Palestine activist
 - Terrorist labels applied to Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), civil society org
 - Criminal prosecution of migrant detention protestors & Southern Poverty Law Center, civil society org
- Trump's Counterterrorism Strategy Tools:
 - Cyber attacks
 - Digital surveillance
 - Labeling NGOs, advocates, organizers as "terrorists"

Recommendations

- Refrain from using counterterrorism and national security frameworks, including **terrorism designations**, to target civil society organizations and human rights defenders, including those engaged in advocacy related to Palestine.
- Rescind **executive policies and directives** that expand the scope of “domestic terrorism,” including National Security Presidential Memorandum 7, to ensure they do not enable the targeting of political dissent.

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