



Advancing Human Rights

Best Practices and Opportunities to Partner with U.S. Embassies

The protection and promotion of human rights is a core foreign policy priority for the United States. As such, U.S. embassies around the world engage regularly with stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, and the public sector to share information, strengthen collaboration, and support overall efforts to advance human rights. This series of recommended best practices and opportunities for engaging with U.S. embassies aims to provide stakeholders with a better understanding of how to work most effectively with our embassies to protect human rights.

Overall Recommendations

- Cultivate enriching, mutually beneficial relationships with officers at U.S. embassies
- Take initiative: request meetings, share information, and invite officers to events on timely issues
- Be targeted in your communication to emphasize shared interests and opportunities for action

Best Practices

- Cultivate relationships with officers and staff at embassies and emphasize shared interests and goals
 - Reach out to contacts when you have a question, want to share information, seek to raise a particular issue, and/or are interested in connecting with individuals best positioned to help
- Recognize that officers at embassies have diverse portfolios and competing demands
 - Depending on the issue, it may be appropriate to reach out to more than one officer as they have different expertise (human rights, labor rights, economics, commercial, etc.) and contacts
 - Embassy officers cover a variety of issues; use your engagement with them as an opportunity to increase their understanding of an issue of concern to you and the embassy
 - You may need to reach out regularly to strengthen and maintain the relationship
- Identify the objectives of the embassy in your country
 - Consult the embassy's website, press releases, and social media to identify priorities
 - If your organization's issue is not represented, you can help the embassy identify it as a topic worth exploring by aligning it within their existing priorities
- Emphasize the following when reaching out directly to an embassy via email
 - What is important about a given issue
 - Why the issue is important to the United States
 - What the embassy can do to help find a solution
- Consider reaching out to subject matter experts in Washington, DC for additional support

Opportunities for Engagement

- Leverage existing mechanisms as the basis for outreach
 - Use the development of the annual U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Report as an opportunity to reach out to embassies and provide input on human rights concerns
 - Invite embassy officers to events or to visit projects to increase understanding and align interests
 - After meeting embassy officials, consider inviting them to sign up for your organization's newsletter and social media platforms to stay abreast of relevant issues
- Discuss with the embassy how it could help when there are concrete areas for cooperation rather than only raising issues when they've become a problem and/or without identifying potential next steps to take
- Leverage the convening power of embassies to advance shared interests
 - Discuss with the embassy whether they could host a multi-stakeholder convening online or in-person
 - After you build a relationship with a particular embassy, attend embassy events
- Embassies can support human rights defenders
 - Each U.S. embassy has an officer covering human rights
 - Embassies can encourage host governments to engage constructively with civil society
 - Embassies can help connect at-risk human rights defenders with resources for emergency assistance; they can also help defenders through diplomatic engagement
- Leverage embassies to raise the visibility of critical and timely issues
 - Engage embassies to exert international pressure domestically or in international fora
 - Consider asking officers to attend court hearings related to human rights concerns