

US Global Standing Plummetes as Trump Threatens Human Rights at Home and Abroad



By Julia Conley | [Common Dreams](#)

The United States' global standing has plummeted under the Trump administration, according to Human Rights Watch's (HRW) annual report and an international Gallup survey regarding the country's reputation as a world leader.

The "authoritarian populist agenda" promoted by President Donald Trump along with lawmakers in several European Union countries, and those leaders' promotion of xenophobia and racism, has left a vacuum that leaders including Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Xi Jinping of China have taken advantage of, asserting their own anti-rights agendas.

Trump "displays a disturbing fondness for rights-trampling strongmen," wrote Kenneth Roth, executive director of HRW, in

his [introduction](#) to the group's World Report 2018. The report details the president's [warm relations](#) with Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte, who has spearheaded a "war on drugs" that's killed thousands; and [Turkish leader](#) Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has waged attacks on his opponents and the press.

Meanwhile, Roth wrote, "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson largely rejected the promotion of human rights as an element of U.S. foreign policy while more broadly reducing the role of the U.S. abroad by presiding over an unprecedented dismantling of the State Department," as possible reference to the [departure](#) of 60 percent of department's career diplomats since Trump took office.

The administration's abandonment of human rights, Roth added, "makes it much more difficult to stigmatize these authoritarian leaders when Trump says these are great guys."

The report also denounced the president's threats to human rights within the U.S., noting that "Trump has targeted refugees and immigrants, calling them criminals and security threats; emboldened racist politics by equivocating on white nationalism; and consistently championed anti-Muslim ideas and policies," and cataloging his administration's threats to women's rights and Americans' right to healthcare as well.

As HRW praised "France, the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Ireland, and even tiny Liechtenstein" as largely resisting the pull of anti-human rights agendas in recent years, Gallup's new [World Poll](#) also exhibited a shift away from looking to the U.S. as a global leader.

In former President Barack Obama's last term, the annual poll found that 48 percent of those surveyed approved of U.S. leadership, compared with a new low of 30 percent under Trump.

The previous low of 34 percent was reached in George W. Bush's last term after an eight-year presidency in which he launched the illegal invasion of Iraq and oversaw a global economic

collapse. Trump achieved the new low after just one year in office.

“It is clear that based on the trajectory of what the world thinks of the U.S., many of the U.S. alliances and partnerships that the Trump administration considers a ‘great strength’ are potentially at risk,” wrote Julie Ray on Gallup’s blog post regarding the report.

U.S. leadership is now on nearly equal footing with that of China in the eyes of those surveyed, and ranks just above Russia, while Germany was seen as the top global power.

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