Chapter 4: Anti-Rights Actors

CitizenGo

– Naureen Shameem
AWID

Mission and History

Founded in August 2013 and headquartered in Spain, CitizenGo is an anti-rights platform active in multiple regions worldwide. It describes itself as a “community of active citizens who work together, using online petitions and action alerts as a resource, to defend and promote life, family and liberty.” It also claims that it works to ensure respect for “human dignity and individuals’ rights.”

Anti-Rights Actors Across the Globe and their vast web of connections

Anti-rights actors engage in tactical alliance building across lines of nationality, religion, and issue, creating a transnational network of state and non-state actors undermining rights related to gender and sexuality. This visual represents only a small portion of the global anti-rights lobby.

oursplatform.org
According to CitizenGo, its core aim is to foster citizen participation and it describes the internet and information technology as vital tools to achieve this goal.\textsuperscript{224}

The organization – avowedly “working from a Christian perspective”\textsuperscript{225} – calls for respect for the right to life “from the moment of conception to its natural end”; the right to religious freedom; the right to marriage “understood as the union between one man and one woman”; the right to educate one’s own children; and the right to work and to “economic initiative and the ownership of private property.”\textsuperscript{226}

CitizenGo is intimately linked to HazteOir, a Spanish organization founded in 2001 by Ignacio Arsuaga, the President of CitizenGo. They share a common founder, address, multiple board members, and tactics – with HazteOir more frequently working on the national level, and CitizenGo transnationally. Arsuaga, a lawyer, was drawn into internet advocacy in the 1990s, including during his time at Fordham Law School in New York City. There he “became familiar with the American [US] grassroots movements and studied specifically their lobbying activities and the tools they used for citizen involvement in politics and the public arena.”\textsuperscript{227} He was inspired by MoveOn.org to create HazteOir and CitizenGo.\textsuperscript{228}

HazteOir became particularly visible in 2010 with the group’s well-publicized “Right to Life”\textsuperscript{229} campaign and mobilization – bringing hundreds of thousands of protestors to the streets of Madrid – against a Spanish bill to liberalize abortion laws.\textsuperscript{230} The group’s full name on its web site reads, “Make yourself heard, victims of the gender ideology.” This underlines the common stance of both organizations.

Notably, the Spanish Ministry of the Interior withdrew HazteOir’s declaration of public interest – its charity status first instituted in May 2013 – in February 2019\textsuperscript{231} after the Spanish government ruled that the organization had taken actions that had had the “effect of denigrating or undervaluing other conceptions about the family, gender identity, childhood education” and that could be considered “attacks against certain people, groups and entities.”\textsuperscript{232} Among other examples, the verdict referred to one of HazteOir’s many anti-rights campaigns – a bus touring Spain featuring a portrait of Adolf Hitler wearing a cap with a “feminist symbol” and the hashtag #StopFeminazis, alongside the slogan “repeal the gender laws.”\textsuperscript{233}

Budget, Board Members, and Size

CitizenGo’s budget in 2018 and 2019 was around $2.6 – 2.7 million USD. In both years, the largest portion of the organization’s budget was spent on campaigns.
CitizenGo functions as a membership platform and claims to have over 9 million members.\textsuperscript{238} It is largely funded by online donations from its members, estimated at tens of thousands of Euros per month.\textsuperscript{239} Among CitizenGo and HazteOir’s donors are executives of companies such as IBM, Eulen, and Nestle,\textsuperscript{240} alongside billionaire Esther Koplowitz and the founder of El Corte Inglés, the biggest department store group in Europe, Isidoro Álvarez.\textsuperscript{241} While CitizenGo frames its donation model as “small donations” from individual members, sources indicate the amount donated by Eulen was 20,000 Euros, while those of Koplowitz and Alvarez each amounted to 10,000 Euros.\textsuperscript{242} During an investigation by openDemocracy, founder Ignacio Arsuaga reportedly told an undercover reporter that Patrick Slim, son of the Mexican oligarch Carlos Slim, donated 40,000 Euros to CitizenGo.\textsuperscript{243} The same investigation reported that a senior Vox official compared CitizenGo to a “Super PAC” for the party.\textsuperscript{244} Arsuaga also talked to the undercover reporter about how to get around campaign finance laws.\textsuperscript{245}

HazteOir has approximately 40 employees and 50 volunteers,\textsuperscript{246} while CitizenGo has multiple country and regional liaisons and employees, such as Ann Kioko, Campaigns Director for CitizenGo Africa.\textsuperscript{247} CitizenGo’s board members include Ignacio Arsuaga (founder and president), Blanca Escobar, Luca Volonte, Brian Brown, Gualberto Garcia, Alexey Komov, Alejandro Bermudez and Carlos Polo,\textsuperscript{248} while the CEO of the organization is Alvaro Zulueta.\textsuperscript{249} The majority are well-networked within anti-rights circles and organizations worldwide, as described below.

### Thematic Focus

CitizenGo hosts campaigns on popular themes in the anti-rights universe, with a particular interest in abortion (employing a misleading “right to life” discourse\textsuperscript{250}); surrogacy; freedom of religion;\textsuperscript{251} “the family”;\textsuperscript{252} education (particularly comprehensive sex education,\textsuperscript{253} homeschooling and “parents’ rights”\textsuperscript{254}); and anti-LGBTQI activities.

#### Abortion

CitizenGo and HazteOir have a significant emphasis on undermining reproductive justice, with abortion as a central preoccupation. The platform has hosted online petitions and offline actions and campaigns to attack rights and access to abortion in a number of countries – including Spain, Italy, Malawi, Kenya, Nigeria, Mexico – and in global multilateral spaces, such as the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);\textsuperscript{255} the UN’s Commission on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue (USD)</th>
<th>Expenses (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$2,658,071.20\textsuperscript{234}</td>
<td>$2,947,072.29\textsuperscript{235}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$2,709,525\textsuperscript{236}</td>
<td>$2,649,216.68\textsuperscript{237}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CitizenGo and Hazteoir have a significant emphasis on undermining reproductive justice, with abortion as a central preoccupation

Surrogacy
CitizenGo also works to erode reproductive rights and to push its monolithic and heteronormative conception of “the traditional family” by focusing on the practice of surrogacy, which it describes as “offensive to human dignity,” and “rob[bing] children of a natural family.” The platform’s petitions similarly advocate against access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) – or “test tube babies” – and access to contraceptives. CitizenGo has hosted petitions and actions on this theme in several countries, including Kenya, Canada, and Cambodia.

Religious Freedom
Employing another common anti-rights discourse, CitizenGo appeals to freedom of religion and describes it as under threat. As discussed in the previous OURs human rights trends report, a number of anti-rights actors in human rights spaces have taken up this discourse of religious freedom in order to justify violations of rights related to gender and sexuality, and violations of the universality of rights.

Notably, CitizenGo and other ultra-conservative actors attempt to appropriate and redefine religious freedom in a way that directly and radically contradicts the purpose of the right – they suggest that the right to freedom of religion is intended to protect a religion rather than those persons who are free to hold or not hold different religious beliefs. They then go on to suggest that religious liberty is threatened and undermined by outside forces and other human rights (particularly those related to gender, sexuality and reproduction).

CitizenGo attempt to appropriate and redefine religious freedom in a way that radically contradicts the purpose of the right

In this way the anti-rights narrative around freedom of religion aims to co-opt human rights language, to shift the subject of rights, endowing already powerful institutions, states, and ideologies with even more power. By flipping this discourse, anti-rights actors aim to shift the right to religious freedom from a “shield against religious imposition” into a “sword of right-wing Christian hegemony.”

Read more on the co-optation of freedom of religion in the first edition of this report

www.oursplatform.org
As anti-rights actors are increasingly doing at the national level, CitizenGo often seeks to use this redefined discourse of religious freedom to attack the rights of people whose sexuality and gender identity and/or expression are non-conforming. For instance, a campaign in support of a UK-based conversion therapy organization, framed around “respect for freedom of religion.” They also advocate for new mechanisms and officials at the multilateral level to espouse and institutionalize their interpretation of religious freedom, such as a new Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom at the European Parliament.

Employing a victimization framing is popular amongst anti-rights and far-right movements. CitizenGo espoused this when it asked “how the EU will protect Christians” as “Christians are the main victims of religious persecution” in Europe. This strategy is underlined by the organization’s online action against the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion in 2020. Following his report to the Human Rights Council on gender equality and religious freedom in which he emphasized that freedom of religion and non-discrimination are mutually reinforcing rights, CitizenGo described the UN mandate on religious freedom as an attack on religious freedom.

The Family

Alongside “life and freedom,” CitizenGo includes “the family” as one of its central foci. Indeed, at the World Congress of Families, founder Ignacio Arsuaga was awarded the title: “Man of the year in defense of the natural family.”

In recent years, anti-rights actors have pivoted to language on the family, or the “natural” or “traditional family.” The discourse on the family functions as a seemingly innocuous and secular umbrella term that actually houses and perpetuates multiple patriarchal and heteronormative anti-rights positions. The US Christian Right’s focus on the “traditional family” has enabled it to forge global alliances with other fundamentalist movements. An alliance of 25 states launched the Group of Friends of the Family in 2015 and is devoted to mainstreaming this restrictive conception of family in the UN.

Education

CitizenGo’s campaigns and actions also frequently revolve around themes of education – in opposition to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and in favour of religious homeschooling, with reference to what they describe as “parental rights.” However, the notion of “parental rights” has no support in existing human rights standards; it is a new category that anti-rights actors like CitizenGo are attempting to construct.

The Holy See and Christian Right are opposed to children’s rights, as protected in binding
legal standards like the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as they perceive them as threatening to their hierarchical and traditional concept of the family. Under this view, children’s rights and autonomy undermine the “natural” role of parents, and thus CitizenGo and others push out a faux narrative of “parental rights” to justify the violation of children’s rights under international law.

**CITIZENGO AND OTHERS PUSH OUT A FAUX NARRATIVE OF “PARENTAL RIGHTS” TO JUSTIFY THE VIOLATION OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS**

For CitizenGo, a main focus here is blocking CSE, placed in opposition to parents’ rights to be the first educators of children. The platform has hosted online petitions and campaigns opposing access to CSE both at the global level – directed at UN bodies – and in multiple countries, including South Africa and Kenya, where the campaigns manager described CSE as “more destructive than Boko Haram or Al-Shabaab.” Another petition, directed at Kenyan Ambassador Amina Mohamed, seeks to stop implementation of a CSE curriculum on the grounds that it “encourages acceptance and exploration of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities,” “promotes abortion” and “disrespect for parents and religious and cultural values,” trains children to advocate for their sexual rights, and promotes sexual counselling, information or services to minors without parental consent.

**Rights of LGBTQI People**

CitizenGo has employed several shock tactics to further their anti-LGBTQI agenda. In March 2017, the organization parked a “freedom bus” in front of UN headquarters during the CSW, an action that was described by them as “a reaction to the LGBT world.” The bus was covered with the slogan: “It’s biology: boys are boys, and always will be. Girls are girls, and always will be. You can’t change sex.” After launching at the CSW, it then toured – accompanied in many cases by protests – in several countries over the next year, including Chile, Germany, France, and Italy. As part of its campaign opposing a proposed law in Spain against discrimination based on sexual orientation in August 2017, CitizenGo also flew a bright orange plane declaring its opposition. Even the children’s show Sesame Street was the target of a boycott action by the group for “indoctrinating fans...with toxic views of sexuality” and for “pander[ing] to the forceful voices of the LGBT lobby.”

**Regions and Religious Affiliation**

As highlighted above, both CitizenGo and HazteOir were founded in Spain – HazteOir in 2001 and CitizenGo in 2013. CitizenGo aims to work internationally. The platform hosts campaigns in 12 languages, claims to influence institutions, governments, and organizations in 50 countries, and has team members located in 15 cities on three continents.
Most frequently, the platform hosts its activities in Europe, Africa, and Latin America, and in global and regional multilateral spaces like the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the European Union. In Latin America, CitizenGo has been involved in online petitions against abortion decriminalization, CSE and LGBTQI rights. The bus tour mentioned above stopped in Colombia, Chile and Mexico. It has also organized an anti-LGBT march in Mexico, bringing together ultra-conservative Catholic groups, and participates regularly at the OAS General Assembly.

In Africa, CitizenGo’s activities have increased since 2018. It has co-sponsored an anti-abortion March for Life in Kenya and an event on “the family” at Christian University in Uganda. They have also put up billboards defending parental authority in Nairobi and coordinated attacks against LGBTQI and SRHR civil society organizations in Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) and Kenya. They led an anti-abortion campaign against Marie Stopes International in Kenya and Malawi and launched a petition against “promotion of the LGBT agenda” at the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

HazteOir and CitizenGo have links to the far-right Mexican group El Yunque. CEO Alvaro Zulueta is reportedly an El Yunque member, and until mid-2019, board member Luca Volonte was chairman of the ultra-Catholic think tank Dignitatis Humanae Institute.

Tactics

Online Petitions and Harassment

Online petitions are a core tactic of CitizenGo and HazteOir – as highlighted above, founder Ignacio Arsuaga was inspired by the progressive petition platform MoveOn.org. Most petitions are directed at one or more public officials, and in those cases the platform is set up to send all signatures – frequently numbering in the thousands or tens of thousands – directly to the targeted parties via email. This mode of action is similar to that of other anti-rights actors, such as Family Watch International, whose less frequent online petitions are also automatically sent directly to officials. Petitions that are deemed potential “global priorities” by the platform are translated into seven languages for maximum reach.

In 2019, CitizenGo – working with the Kenya Christian Professionals Forum and the Kenya Christian Doctors Association – created an online petition targeting the Kenya National Board of Statistics to mobilize against a new census recognition of intersex individuals. Calling on insidious anti-rights discourses, the petition claims that this move would “deconstruct the Kenyan social fabric ... in order to introduce the deviant ideologies
of transgenderism and homosexuality” and goes on to claim that intersex persons are individuals living with a disability who must be recognized as either male or female.299

In 2018, CitizenGo coordinated with other anti-rights groups – including the Coaliția pentru Familie, an association of about 30 Romanian non-governmental organizations – who organized to push for a referendum in Romania to ban same-sex marriage. The platform hosted a petition calling on the “people of Romania” to support the referendum to “protect man-woman marriage, the natural family, children and the common good of society.”300 The petition received 36,768 signatures, and 93 percent of those participating in the referendum voted yes301 – however, due in part to the efforts of activists to organize a boycott of the referendum, the anti-rights effort failed, as the referendum was held invalid upon not reaching the 30 percent turnout needed.

In June 2020, CitizenGo hosted a petition directed at the Ambassador of Spain to the United States, criticizing Black Lives Matter (BLM) activists’ removal of public statues, such as that of Christopher Columbus.302 The petition described BLM as advancing “cultural Marxism” and seeking “to erase the Hispanic footprint in the United States.”303

Another example of CitizenGo’s use of the petition tactic took place in late 2019 when CitizenGo Africa started a petition to ban the distribution of a textbook included in the CSE curriculum in Kenyan schools. It argued that the book encouraged an “indoctrination agenda” and rape culture, and that it has “also been associated with gay activists whose agenda is very clear.”304 After the online petition gathered approximately 5,000 signatures, the group then hand-delivered the petition to the Ministry of Education in Nairobi. In response to the petition, the publishers recalled the book and apologized.

In a significant escalation of its tactics, CitizenGo has also been accused of harassment linked to its petitions.305 At the 2019 CSW, the group came under the spotlight for targeting Deputy Ambassador Koki Muli Grignon, the CSW session facilitator. In an attempt to block inclusion of rights related to gender and sexuality in the CSW Agreed Conclusions, CitizenGo hosted a petition which reached 161,425 signatures.306 As a result of a feature which enabled the petition’s signatories to send an automated message to Grignon’s personal cell phone, the facilitator then received thousands of anti-abortion messages in 12 languages during the CSW, and was forced to suspend negotiations and leave the UN building in New York City to obtain a new phone number.307 This harassment was condemned by various civil society groups and several member states. Muli Grignon told news sources that this harassment made
it “totally impossible to work,” and that “the UN should be a safe space – nobody should be intimidated.”

She later reported the harassment to the UN’s security office and the US mission to the UN. Remarkably, CitizenGo followed up on their harassment by putting up another petition two months later to attack Muli Grignon for speaking out, calling for her to be removed from her position as Deputy Ambassador.

Campaigns and Mobilization

CitizenGo and HazteOir emphasize online-to-offline actions to boost impact. It is common practice for them to hand-deliver online petitions and lists of signatures to targeted officials, often accompanied by a press conference, as with the CSE petition in Kenya. As their Global Campaign manager highlights, CitizenGo ultimately aims to use petition signatures as a lobbying tool to meet with targets to convince them of the petition’s message and impress upon them the alleged people power they demonstrate. They also communicate with members about offline actions to further the goals of their petitions and to foster a sense of community.

In 2016, CitizenGo and HazteOir – together with the Instituto de Política Familiar, a civil organization whose stated mission is to “promote and defend the family” – co-organized an anti-gay march in Mexico City together with the Instituto de Política Familiar in 2016. Earlier that year, CitizenGo bussed supporters across the border from Spain to France when its ally organization, La Manif Pour Tous, organized large protests against a marriage equality bill.

Ahead of European Parliament elections and Spain’s national elections in 2019, CitizenGo reportedly told openDemocracy that it was working to drive voters towards far-right parties like Vox. Describing posters and advertisements developed by CitizenGo later that year, founder Arsuaga stated, “this is something we haven’t made public, but in Spain we’re going to launch a campaign before the general elections” where CitizenGo would “show bad things that have been said...in favour of abortion or in favour of LGBT laws” by the leaders of parties that Vox was running against.

The group has organized a number of anti-abortion campaigns. In Kenya in 2017, for instance, CitizenGo kicked off a campaign against Marie Stopes International, calling on the Ministry of Health to curtail the organization’s advertising and ban their activities in the country. After 5,000 signatures were collected, and other lobbying undertaken, Marie Stopes was
banned from providing any services related to abortion in November 2018. The ban was lifted the next month after feminist groups campaigned against the ban, arguing that it was unconstitutional. CitizenGo also claimed credit for similar raids on Marie Stopes clinics in Malawi, Niger, Tanzania, and Nigeria in 2019. In Nigeria, feminist organizations responded with a social media campaign under the hashtag #EndWarOnNigerianWomen. Also in 2019, CitizenGo launched an anti-abortion campaign in Poland – its largest action in the country thus far.

Spectacle and Shock Tactics

“What we do is confront – confront the radical left, confront politicians, confront anyone who is against our values.”

Echoing global trends in the far right, shock and spectacle are core tactics for CitizenGo and HazteOir. The aim is media coverage, attention, and wider dissemination of their messaging and disinformation. As they state, “the more they talk in the media about what we do, the more power they give to us.”

Discussing its longstanding “freedom bus” campaign, CitizenGo claimed:

“We wanted to start a reaction... provoking some sort of reaction, this is the way to highlight the reality.”

Their goals in employing spectacle are double: the initial rash of publicity and attention is often followed by protest, counter-actions, and critique by feminist and other progressive movements. CitizenGo seeks to then repackage the critique – with mixed results – into a victimization narrative in an attempt to win sympathy and members. Primarily, the group looks to boost attention for its campaigns with large and preferably mobile photo ops – buses, planes, and billboards featuring bright colours and provocative imagery and language.

CitizenGo’s bright orange bus featuring slogans like “boys have penises, girls have vulvas, don’t be fooled” first toured Spain. The slogan was designed to appeal to the public to deny the existence of transgender and intersex people. Such tactics reinforce ignorance and position transphobia as “common sense,” making the public space hostile for trans and intersex people. The bus was ultimately banned in Barcelona, Madrid, and Pamplona by city authorities. The bus also toured countries in Latin America. In Guadalajara, activists draped the bus in rainbows and tried to halt the progress of the vehicle in Santiago. CitizenGo then toured the bus in multiple cities in the United States – including in New York City in front of United Nations headquarters – where it was met with protests led by feminist, queer and trans rights activists. CitizenGo then launched
a black bus featuring an image of Hitler in lipstick to travel the streets of Madrid as part of a campaign “against gender ideology.” This iteration was covered with the slogan: “It is not gender violence, it’s domestic violence. Gender laws discriminate against men.”

At the CSW in 2019, CitizenGo parked another bus in front of the UNICEF building. This bus featured a large orange fetus and the words: “Let me live!”

CitizenGo employs similar shock tactics via their use of billboards. In one instance, the group put up a series of billboards in Rome with a black and white image of a pregnant woman’s stomach, declaring: “abortion is the prime cause of femicide in the world.” The billboards were posted in advance of a “March for Life” planned in Rome around the 40th anniversary of abortion being made legal in Italy.

Media Engagement

Media engagement is central to CitizenGo’s tactics, as one can see from their focus on courting media attention with the spectacle and shock value of their public actions. In the words of a staff member: “[i]f you control the media, you have the power – you control the culture of the next generation.”

In addition, CitizenGo frequently plans press conferences around the in-person delivery of their petitions. In 2015, the founder of CitizenGo and HazteOir also became editor of Actuall, a media site whose mission is “to promote the participation of citizens in the defense of human rights, from conception to natural death.” In this way, CitizenGo can directly disseminate media content for anti-rights organizations and activists.

Trainings

CitizenGo co-organizes and participates in the training of anti-rights activists together with partners such as the US right-wing cadre school Leadership Institute, which teaches “conservatives of all ages how to succeed in politics, government, and the media.” In July 2017, CitizenGo worked with the Leadership Institute to organize anti-rights training camps in Europe, bringing together 140 individuals from Mexico, Nigeria, the UK, the US, Kenya, and several European countries.

CitizenGo also organized a four-day training in Rome in July 2018 to help local anti-rights groups support “the natural family, life, and liberty.” Key topics included “gender ideology, attacks against marriage and the family, the persecution of Christians in the East” and “the violation of freedom of opinion in the West.” In 2019, CitizenGo organized a training for delegates in advance of the CSW and coordinated a joint leadership summit, again including the Leadership Institute, to workshop strategies and campaigns on “how to influence the public process.”
In politics there are no empty spaces – if you’re not there, somebody else will be."  

CitizenGo has become increasingly visible and engaged at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva over the past three years, and now has a regular spokesperson and presence there. HazteOir has held ECOSOC civil society consultative status at the UN since 2013, which means that it can attend UN sessions, hold side events, make statements, attend member state negotiations, and interact regularly with state delegates.

In 2019, for instance, CitizenGo/HazteOir made a number of oral statements espousing anti-rights positions in both the March session of the interactive dialogue for the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion and the June/July session of the interactive dialogue for the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). They focused on their reinterpretation of the right to freedom of religion and belief, on the purported threat of “gender ideology,” and claimed that individuals opposing the rights of LGBTQI people are being “harassed.”

They make statements through the Universal Periodic Review process where different states are reviewed on human rights grounds on a rotating basis to challenge abortion, “gender ideology” and the rights of LGBTQI+ communities. CitizenGo has made statements during the reviews of Spain, El Salvador, and Chile – among others.

The organization also looks to make statements, where possible, during negotiations. When civil society was invited to provide input during negotiations on the 2019 HRC resolution on child, early and forced marriage, their spokesperson took the opportunity to push CitizenGo’s anti-abortion agenda, calling for the resolution sponsors to “take into account the right to life of everyone, born or unborn.”

Their regular presence in Geneva enables them to engage in lobbying efforts with UN treaty monitoring bodies, such as the Human Rights Committee. For instance, CitizenGo/HazteOir worked with a number of other anti-rights actors to advocate for the inclusion of an anti-abortion reframing of the right to life in the Committee’s General Comment 36 on the Right to Life. Their efforts were ultimately unsuccessful.

CitizenGo, along with anti-rights allies like Family Watch International, participates in lobbying activities at the CSW. They coordinate with delegations to urge states to block language on CSE, sexual and reproductive rights and health, abortion,
and sexual orientation and identity. At the CSW, CitizenGo shifts its approach, using new tactics to shock, intimidate, harass, and pressure delegates and officials, as well as feminist and progressive civil society. Foremost amongst those are the large anti-trans and anti-abortion tour buses parked outside of the UN. CitizenGo links these actions with petitions targeting CSW negotiations. In 2019, the bus included a link to a CitizenGo petition – which gathered 161,427 signatures. After the Agreed Conclusions were finalized, the group claimed “victory” at the UN, as the final document made no reference to the right to abortion. Alongside other anti-rights actors like FWI and C-Fam, CitizenGo also organizes side events and film screenings at the CSW to more widely broadcast their discourses.

CitizenGo looks to influence decision-making in several other UN spaces as well. In April 2019, after US President Donald Trump's announcement that the country would stop funding the World Health Organization amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the platform hosted a “defund the WHO” petition, calling on other leaders of G20 states to do the same. CitizenGo is now also targeting the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and in May 2020, the platform focused in on the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) with a petition to “defeat the pro-abortion lobby’s agenda” at the session.

CitizenGo first attempted to participate at the UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) summit in 2019 in Nairobi. This was the 25th anniversary of the first ICPD in Cairo and its Programme of Action. CitizenGo then worked with anti-rights allies like the World Youth Alliance and Family Watch International to plan a counter “pro-family summit.” While conference attendance was poor, they did garner some media attention around their actions.

CitizenGo is also engaged at the European Parliament, where they worked to appoint a Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom that they support. In addition, they campaigned to oppose the introduction of the “Estrela report,” which requires member states to provide CSE in schools and to ensure access to safe abortions. CitizenGo is also highly active in the Inter-American regional system.

Coordination and Links with other Anti-rights Actors

CitizenGo is extensively networked with a number of anti-rights actors around the world. They work alongside the US-based Family Watch International and C-Fam at the UN, with the Leadership Institute in its trainings, and with local organizations through their campaign work. A closer look at the organization’s board members maps out a number of additional anti-rights connections:
Ignacio Arsuaga
- Founder of CitizenGo and HazteOir
- Board member of the Political Network for Values, a global alliance that promotes cooperation on anti-rights values and agendas among legislators and other political actors from countries around the world
- Serves an advisory role on mass mobilization and crowdfunding for Agenda Europe, a professional advocacy network that seeks to roll back human rights in Europe
- Linked with far-right Spanish party Vox
  - Publicly endorsed Vox and described them as “my friends”
- Long-time ally of the World Congress of Families
  - Received an award at the 7th international WCF conference
  - Speaker at multiple WCF conferences
  - CitizenGo has co-organized several WCF conferences, e.g., the 2019 international conference in Verona, Italy

Brian Brown
- Board member of CitizenGo
- President of the International Organization for the Family, now the parent organization for the World Congress of Families
- Founder and president of the US-based National Organization for Marriage
- Founder of ActRight, an ultra-conservative US-based online platform for crowdfunding and online action

Luca Volonte
- Board member of CitizenGo
- Former chairman of Dignitatis Humanae Institute, a Catholic fundamentalist think tank associated with Steve Bannon, US President Donald Trump’s former top adviser
- Director General of the Novae Terrae Foundation, an Italian anti-rights group
- Board member of the International Association for the Family

Gualberto Garcia
- Board member of CitizenGo
- Director of the US-based International Human Rights Group, an anti-rights group active in the OAS General Assembly
Alexey Komov
- CitizenGo board member
- Russian representative of the World Congress of Families, organized the Moscow summit
- Close associate of Konstantin Malofeev, a billionaire who runs the Russian right-wing Tsargrad TV channel associated with the Russian Orthodox Church
- Linked with Matteo Salvini and the far-right Lega party in Italy

Alejandro Bermudez
- CitizenGo board member
- Director of ACI Prensa, a Catholic media company based in Peru

Carlos Polo
- CitizenGo board member
- Latin America Director of the anti-rights Population Research Institute

Alvaro Zulueta
- CEO of CitizenGo
- Reportedly a member of El Yunque, a secretive far-right Catholic sect based in Mexico
- Also linked to Crusaders of Christ the King, a fundamentalist fraternity associated with El Yunque

CitizenGo and HazteOir are members of Agenda Europe and the pan-European anti-abortion initiative One of Us. The group also receives advice on fundraising and technology from a member of ActRight with links to the Trump campaign and the US Tea Party movement.

CitizenGo appears to have multiple links with far-right parties in Europe. In addition to Arsuaga publicly endorsing Spain’s Vox, he has said that CitizenGo met with the party’s senior officials to share campaign plans. The platform subsequently put out posters and advertisements against candidates from other parties. A Vox official also told an undercover reporter that supporting CitizenGo financially could help Vox “indirectly,” stating that “we are actually currently totally aligned.” Arsuaga has also said that CitizenGo is in contact with far-right parties Fidesz in Hungary and Lega in Italy, along with “some contact” with the far-right AfD in Germany, and that CitizenGo informs these parties of its campaign strategies.
Alliance Defending Freedom

– Naureen Shameem
AWID

Mission and History

“Alliance Defending Freedom seeks to recover the robust Christendom theology of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries. This is ... desperately crucial for cultural renewal.”

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) is a powerful anti-rights actor. Founded in the United States, but now active in multiple regions, it has been described as the “800-pound gorilla of the Christian right.” Since 2016, ADF has been designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLO).

ADF was founded in 1994 by a group of ultra-conservative Evangelical Christian leaders linked to a number of domestic anti-rights groups including: James Dobson of Focus on the Family; Bill Bright of the Campus Crusade for Christ; Don Wildmon, founder of the American Family Association; Larry Burkett of Crown Financial Ministries; Merlin Maddoux of the Point of View radio program; and James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries.

In large part, its founders created ADF to oppose the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a progressive impact litigation group working across the United States. In his book, The ACLU vs America, ADF’s co-founder and past president Alan Sears claimed that the ACLU “has used its huge war chest over the years” to “bully public officials into removing any vestige of America’s traditional Judeo-Christian heritage.”

Today ADF is the largest anti-rights legal force in the US. Their Global Initiative has the aim of “obtaining the same kind of legal successes internationally”

According to its mission statement, ADF “exists to keep the doors open for the Gospel by advocating for religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, freedom of speech, and marriage and family.” The group describes itself as a faith-based legal advocacy organization.

In its statement of faith, ADF holds that: “we believe God creates each person with an immutable biological sex – male or female,” that “God designed marriage as a unique conjugal relationship joining one man and one woman in a single, exclusive life-long union, and God intends sexual intimacy only to occur within that relationship,” and that all human life must be respected and protected “from conception to natural death.”
Its impact in the US has been significant. Some argue that the group is chiefly responsible for the country’s rightward jurisprudential shift around religion in the public sphere. ADF supported the criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct in the landmark Lawrence v Texas case, the judgment of which ultimately ruled such laws unconstitutional. ADF has pressed school districts to adopt its model policies prohibiting trans students from using facilities in accordance with their gender identities, and is well known for litigating to oppose abortion and LGBTQI rights, and support homeschooling, “parental rights” and “the family.”

ADF has also been involved with several recent landmark Supreme Court cases undermining rights and entrenching anti-rights conceptions of religious freedom. For example, Burwell v Hobby Lobby, which allowed corporations to opt out of contraceptive coverage for women on the basis of religious belief; Masterpiece Cakeshop v Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which found in favour of a baker who refused to sell a cake to a same sex-couple; and NIFLA v Becerra, which found that deceptive “crisis-pregnancy centres” are not required to supply women with information on abortion. ADF claims that it has played a part in 60 “victories” at the US Supreme Court.

ADF International has expanded significantly over the past decade. In 2012, the organization opened its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. This was followed in 2015 by offices in Geneva, Switzerland, to further the organization’s work at the UN Human Rights Council and Brussels, Belgium, to support the group’s work at the European Union. In 2016, ADF International opened an office in Strasbourg, France, to deepen its work at the ECHR and at the Council of Europe. It went on to open another office in London, United Kingdom, in 2017.

ADF International has been engaged in several countries and regional and global fora since 2010. That year, for instance, ADF International assisted with the A, B and C v Ireland case at the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) focusing on the right to abortion. In 2011, ADF International again intervened at the ECHR in the high-profile secularism Lautsi v Italy case, where the court ruled for Italy, finding that states can place religious symbols (like the cross) in public school classrooms, and that this does not constitute indoctrination in a particular faith. And in 2018, ADF International lobbied the Senate in Argentina, providing “expert testimony” against the proposed bill to legalize abortion.
Budget, Board Members, and Size

Skyrocketing from its budget of $14 million USD in 2002, ADF now has substantial resources at their disposal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue (USD)</th>
<th>Expenses (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$55,187,996</td>
<td>$54,685,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$60,949,232</td>
<td>$57,262,574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of 2017, ADF International also had an advocacy and operations budget of €3,754,822 (around $4.4 million USD). Data from publicly available annual financial filings in the US show ADF’s spending in Europe has greatly increased over the past decade as well – going from $321,302 USD in 2010 to $2,629,632 USD in 2016, for instance. It also spends hundreds of thousands of euros on lobbying EU officials – with its annual EU lobbying budget sitting around €200,000-€299,000 in the period 2017-2020.

In its 2017 Annual Report, ADF International stated that it has 580 “ongoing legal matters” in 51 countries and 50 team members in eight countries. The organization also expands its influence and reach through the over 2,400 law students that it has trained since 2000 at its Blackstone Legal Fellowship.

Michael P. Farris is the current President and CEO of ADF and ADF International, and Paul Coleman is the Executive Director of ADF International. Farris was previously head of Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority in Washington State and founded the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). The HSLDA’s mission states that it relies on “parental rights” and religious freedom and works to counter regulations around homeschooling. It has also promoted constitutional amendments to ban marriage equality. Farris also founded the evangelical Patrick Henry College.

ADF’s board members include:

- **Terry Schlossberg**
  - Previously Executive Director of Presbyterians Pro-Life, a nonprofit corporation made up of members and pastors of the Presbyterian Church
  - States that she has “been an ardent pro-life advocate for decades”

- **Seth Morgan**
  - Board member of the Ohio family policy council for Focus on the Family
Mark Maddoux\textsuperscript{426} 
- One of the original founders of ADF 
- Vice-President and CFO for International Christian Media

John Rogers\textsuperscript{427} 
- Director of Operations for US Campus Crusade for Christ

Ruth Ross\textsuperscript{428} 
- Serves on several Canadian boards, including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association 
- Former Executive Director of Christian Legal Fellowship of Canada

Scott Scharpen\textsuperscript{429} 
- President and founder of the Scharpen Foundation, whose primary work is operating a “pro-life mobile pregnancy clinic” 
- The clinic was a party to the recent US Supreme Court case\textsuperscript{430} on crisis pregnancy clinics contesting the requirement to advise women on free and low-cost abortion services\textsuperscript{431} litigated by ADF 
- Previously served as board chairman of parentalrights.org\textsuperscript{432}

Michael Whitehead\textsuperscript{433} 
- Has volunteered as an allied attorney for ADF on several occasions, for instance filing an amicus brief to the US Supreme Court in *Masterpiece CakeShop* (mentioned above)

Thematic Focus

**Religious Freedom**

A central theme for ADF is the right to religious freedom. While ADF International highlights violence against Christian minorities\textsuperscript{434} and the issue of blasphemy laws and their implementation,\textsuperscript{435} their discourse is misleading, misappropriating the right to freedom of religion to justify violations of rights related to gender and sexuality and the universality of rights and belief, and overlooking the rights of non-Christian religious minorities. This is a common discourse amongst anti-rights actors.\textsuperscript{436} One element of this narrative is to misleadingly suggest that the right is intended to protect a religion rather than protect people, who are free to hold or not hold different religious beliefs. As the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and belief has expressed on multiple occasions, the right protects believers, not beliefs.\textsuperscript{437}
that are necessary to protect the “fundamental rights and freedoms of others.” It also puts aside that the right may not be relied upon to justify discrimination against women, as stated in the Human Rights Committee’s General Comment 28.

Earlier in briefs opposing marriage equality, as in the aforementioned Lawrence v Texas case, ADF counsel used arguments supporting continued criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct stating that “it clearly is” reasonable “to believe that same-sex sodomy is a distinct health problem” as well as a number of arguments depicting LGBTQI people as promiscuous and unfit to parent. Today, when it comes to themes of sexual rights and marriage equality, ADF has now strategically pivoted to anti-rights arguments around the rights to freedom of religion (or speech), as in Masterpiece Cakeshop.

A number of ADF briefs now construct a legal narrative that asserts that Christians are under threat of persecution from the advance of rights related to gender, sexuality and reproduction, and that attempt to justify “religious exceptions” which allow impunity for discrimination. Here again, the anti-rights discourse on freedom of religion adopts a familiar tactic – co-opting rights language to shift the subject of rights and endow already powerful ideologies with more power.

ADF International continues this trend of misusing the right to religious freedom. For instance, in its white paper entitled: “The UN’s Failure to Promote and Protect Religious Freedom,” ADF critiques UN bodies such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for its work combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It claims that the OHCHR “has chosen to focus massive resources” on “‘rights’ that are not recognized” rather than the right to freedom of religion, and calling on states to cease funding OHCHR initiatives “until it returns to its core obligations.”

Abortion

ADF has a substantial focus on abortion and restricting access to reproductive justice. To illustrate, ADF International has at least 60 submissions and lobbying documents devoted to the subject, including over 50 submissions to the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for numerous countries. It frequently frames its anti-abortion efforts around a few core discourses, such as the “right to life from conception to natural death,” as well as by promoting the “conscientious objection” of health professionals to abortion services, and co-opting progressive critiques of sex-selective abortion.

As discussed in the first OURs human rights trends report, a number of anti-rights actors seek to appropriate the human right to life in service of an anti-abortion mission. This framing is misleading and a strategic site from which to ground an anti-abortion norm. Evoking threats to life elicits a strong emotive reaction and in international human
rights law the right to life is a binding legal standard and cannot be violated under any circumstances. As part of an overall tactical shift over several years, arguments opposing rights related to reproduction, gender, and sexuality have moved from explicitly religious to ostensibly “secular.” The Vatican and allies like ADF seek to couple the right to life set out in human rights law with its own doctrinal caveat that life begins at the moment of conception – which ADF mirrors in its own statement of faith above. But the notion that the human right to life begins at conception has no support outside of some doctrinal texts and Christian Right talking points. No universal human rights instrument has provided that a right to life applies before birth.

For example, ADF International joined with a number of anti-rights organizations to try to influence the UN Human Rights Committee, the body which oversees the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to change the interpretation of the right to life included in the treaty through its General Comment 36. Their efforts were unsuccessful, as the Committee’s final text of General Comment 36 affirmed that the right to life is applicable from birth, not earlier.

ADF also seeks to restrict access to reproductive rights and health through the misleading argument – and series of cases – of “conscientious objection” of health care providers in a number of countries, including Norway. ADF also tries to cloak its anti-abortion agenda by co-opting feminist and progressive concerns around sex-selective abortion. Rather than addressing the structural and systemic issues which contribute to the preference for boys and the stigma around girls, the organization seeks to limit access to abortion. Towards this end, ADF launched the “Vanishing Girls” campaign in India in 2018.

ADF also seeks to restrict access to reproductive rights and health through the misleading argument – and series of cases – of “conscientious objection” of health care providers in a number of countries, including Norway. The group has also used the trope of describing abortion as “genocide,” supporting the defense of a German activist who compared abortion to the Holocaust and accused specific doctors of murder, and opposing a rape survivor’s appeal on the post-20-week abortion ban in India.

“Parental Rights”

ADF also seeks to propagate the misleading discourse of “parental rights” to justify its advocacy against comprehensive sex education (CSE) and in favour of religious homeschooling. As discussed in the first OURs human rights trends report, a number of anti-rights actors are attempting to construct a new category of “parental rights” to justify the control of children and violation of their
rights under international law, but which has no support in existing human rights standards.

**ADF SEEKS TO PROPAGATE THE MISLEADING DISCOURSE OF “PARENTAL RIGHTS” TO JUSTIFY ADVOCACY AGAINST COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND IN FAVOUR OF RELIGIOUS HOMESCHOOLING**

For example, ADF International took a German case supporting homeschooling – restricted in Germany – to exercise the litigants’ “parental right to raise their children in line” with “their religious convictions” to the European Court of Human Rights in 2017.\(^{458}\) The group also engaged in substantial communications around the case, including factsheets and a video.\(^{459}\) ADF's ostensible advocacy on behalf of parents stands in contrast to their efforts to harm parents and families that differ from a patriarchal heteronormative model. The group has argued on multiple occasions that same-sex parents are unfit. Citing flawed research that claims children with same-sex parents have emotional problems,\(^{460}\) they have described such children as “all hav[ing] one thing in common – they craved the love and presence of their missing mother or father.” They have also claimed that children with a lesbian or gay parent are more likely to be raped than are those with heterosexual parents.\(^{461}\)

**Surrogacy**

Recently, another focus for ADF is in opposing surrogacy, an area increasingly of interest for several anti-rights actors. Here, anti-rights groups seek to instrumentalize feminist critiques – around issues like economic marginalization, reproductive labour in a globalized market, and bodily autonomy and integrity – towards their anti-reproductive rights agenda. As can also be seen with their opposition to such practices as in vitro fertilization and same-sex parenting, the real objective behind this focus is to restrict families to their vision of the heterosexual, “traditional,” “biological” family.

**IN OPPOSING SURROGACY, ANTI-RIGHTS GROUPS INSTRUMENTALIZE FEMINIST CRITIQUES - AROUND ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION, BODILY AUTONOMY AND INTEGRITY - TOWARDS THEIR ANTI-REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AGENDA**

In this vein, ADF International has sponsored side events on the theme of surrogacy at the UN. At a side event at the Human Rights council in 2019,\(^{462}\) ADF International partnered with La Manif Pour Tous, a French organization that opposes same-sex marriage and “gender theory,” and claims to defend the “traditional family.” In the same year, ADF International also produced a lobbying brief entitled “Surrogacy: the commoditization of children and women.”\(^{463}\)
Opposition to LGBTQI rights

In line with the anti-rights focus on religious control over human sexuality and reproduction, ADF has a significant interest in restricting sexual rights around the world – although it increasingly seeks to cloak this strategically in language of freedom of religion or freedom of speech.

ADF Founder Alan Sears co-authored The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today which argued that eliminating anti-sodomy laws would lead to the overturning of “laws against pedophilia, sex between close relatives, polygamy, bestiality and all other distortions and violations of God’s plan.” The ADF authors also claimed that the “radical homosexual activist community has adopted many of the techniques used in Nazi Germany,” including waging “a war of propaganda, just as Hitler did so masterfully.” Speaking at the 2012 World Congress of Families conference, Sears also stated, “in the course of the now hundreds of cases the ADF has now fought involving this homosexual agenda, one thing is certain: there is no room for compromise with those who would call evil ‘good’.”

After ADF’s advocacy was unsuccessful in the Lawrence v Texas case, mentioned above, which sought the criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct, the group’s “Foreign Threats” website page urged supporters to contribute to ADF’s international efforts to “help stop devastating rulings” like Lawrence worldwide.

In 2013, ADF published a memo in support of Russia’s “gay propaganda” law, which legalized discrimination based on sexual orientation, claiming that it would protect “the psychological or physical well-being of minors.” In 2016, the organization filed legal arguments before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Alberto Duque v Colombia, opposing a partners’ claim to the pension of his deceased (same-sex) partner. The court, however, ruled in favour of Duque.

In 2017, ADF also intervened in a case at the European Court of Human Rights that challenged European laws requiring the sterilization of transgender citizens seeking recognition of their preferred gender, Garçon and Nicot v. France. ADF argued against the three transgender petitioners, stating “equal dignity does not mean that every sexual orientation warrants equal respect,” and citing “human rights imperialism” in this French case. Here the court also ruled in favour of the petitioners. ADF was also previously involved in the Belize Supreme Court case on the decriminalization of same-sex sexual conduct. Belize Action, a local anti-rights organization stated that lawyers supplied by ADF (as well as C-Fam) were
assisting them in their opposition to striking down the colonial-era law, which carried a sentence of 10 years.

At the UN, ADF frequently advocates against rights related to gender and sexuality, where they commonly resort to a misleading anti-rights discourse on “fundamental freedoms.” Increasingly, anti-rights actors attempt to use the language of the universality of rights to subvert its principles. They use references to “universal” or “fundamental” rights not to describe the entirety of indivisible and interrelated human rights to be treated equally and with the same emphasis, but (in a reversal) to delineate and describe a subset of human rights as truly fundamental, whilst other rights – generally rights related to gender and sexuality – are framed as “new,” optional or subject to state discretion. ADF’s lobbying documents argue, for example that the UN’s “focus on SOGI distracts from promoting universally agreed, fundamental rights and violates state sovereignty,” and argues that UN bodies have “drifted...to the promotion of unrecognized ‘rights’.”

Regions and Religious Affiliation

ADF was founded in the United States by Alan Sears; it has four offices in the country, with its headquarters located in Scottsdale, Arizona. ADF International has offices in Switzerland, Mexico, Austria, Belgium, France, and the UK, and “ADF India” works with allied lawyers in New Delhi. They also claim to work “alongside a large network of

According to ADF International, as of 2017 it had 580 “ongoing legal matters” in 51 countries. They work at the UN, where they have held ECOSOC accreditation since 2010; and at the OAS; the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR); the EU; the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR); and at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and previously the Council of Europe.

ADF has been involved in Slovakia, where it worked in support of an anti-same sex marriage referendum. ADF also supported a referendum opposing same-sex marriage in Romania. It has intervened in a Costa Rican IACHR case on marriage and gender identity, and engaged in activities in Ireland, Italy, Argentina, India, Belize, Germany, Norway, France, Russia, and Colombia, among others.

ADF defines itself as a Christian organization, clearly highlighted in its statement of faith, and states that it was founded by 30 Christian leaders. The organization has overwhelmingly represented Christian clients, and is historically associated with the Evangelical movement, but also includes Catholic representation.
Tactics

Strategic Litigation

As ADF states, the foundational objective of its strategy is to “impact and reshape our culture” by promoting “key changes in the worldwide legal culture.” Using strategic litigation – also called impact litigation – the organization’s goal goes beyond winning the case at hand and obtaining remedies for the client. Instead, the key objective is to create broader changes in society by focusing on one case exemplifying a wider trend. Individual cases are selected towards that goal – to change legislation, policies, and practice; raise public awareness of an issue and give it a bigger platform; and set legal precedents which will shape law going forward. In keeping with these goals, strategic litigation is usually accompanied by media engagement, communications, and public outreach materials to signal-boost. In the series of cases previously described – and beyond – ADF’s ultimate goal is to promote lasting anti-rights shifts in paradigms, cultural narratives, laws and policies in countries and multilateral bodies all over the world.

Lobbying and Model Legislation

Lobbying and direct involvement with the development of legislation are another core tactic for ADF, both at the national level and in global and regional multilateral spaces. As noted above, ADF’s lobbying budget is substantial.

It produces lobbying briefs and white papers on its areas of focus, including one critiquing the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as briefs on surrogacy, freedom of religion, critiquing hate speech laws, and on “protecting religious freedom in times of COVID-19.” Its materials also include sustained critiques of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and IPPF, “The Rise of Faux Rights.”

ADF has regular staff working to lobby at the UN Human Rights Council, the EU, the OAS, and other multilateral bodies. It is particularly involved in the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, where it makes submissions for a substantial number of countries, including Rwanda, Nepal, Myanmar, Lebanon, Georgia, the Maldives, Malawi, Libya, Belarus, Turkey, Lesotho, Kyrgyzstan, the Gambia, El Salvador, Malaysia, Egypt, Tuvalu and many others. This can be particularly harmful where there is limited capacity amongst national civil society to produce UPR reports, as ADF’s submission can carry undue weight in the absence of other reports. Their submissions focus largely
on their thematic areas, highlighted above, particularly opposing abortion\textsuperscript{503} and CSE\textsuperscript{504} and promoting the status of churches.\textsuperscript{505}

ADF also drafts and promotes anti-rights model legislation on issues like the rights of trans people. In 2017, ADF sent its model “physical privacy policy,” which advocated against the right of transgender students to use bathroom facilities that align with their gender identity, to school districts across the US.\textsuperscript{506} As so-called “bathroom bills” surged in numbers through the year, one report found that at least 10 of 28 anti-trans state “bathroom bills” introduced or active in 2017 had language resembling ADF’s model policy – and that at least two school district policies also had language mirroring ADF’s.\textsuperscript{507}

Campaigning and Communications

ADF also engages in campaigning and communications. In 2018, for instance, the organization launched its “I’m Human, Right?” campaign around the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.\textsuperscript{508} The campaign included events in NYC, Brussels, Geneva, and New Delhi, a campaign video,\textsuperscript{509} social media engagement, a photo campaign, and an open letter to the UN’s Secretary-General promoting the “Geneva Statement” – a text which aims to co-opt the concept of universality to narrow down the scope of human rights.

The photo campaign featured a number of young people – who appear to be members of ADF’s training programs – each holding up “I’m Human, Right?” signs with their name and statements such as, “I believe marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman” and “I believe it’s wrong to force someone to do something they think is morally wrong.”\textsuperscript{510}

As highlighted above, ADF has also been involved with campaigns to support referenda against same-sex marriage in countries like Romania and Slovakia. The group frequently produces press releases, videos, and explainer briefs to support its strategic litigation and campaigns, and engage the media. Their “media reference guide”\textsuperscript{511} includes a list of “use” and “don’t use” terms – such as “abortion, infanticide and killing of the innocent” instead of “termination of pregnancy”; “cross-dressing, sexually confused” instead of “transgender”; “pro-life, pro-family, pro-children” instead of “anti-abortion, anti-reproductive rights”; “advocating/promoting promiscuity/immorality” rather than “safe education, safe sex, responsible sex”; and “sexually mutilated male/female, self-proclaimed male/female, biological male/female” instead of “intersex person.” ADF also has a content partnership with the Brussels-based Euroactiv media site.\textsuperscript{512}

Training

Training is a central tactic for ADF, as it allows them to significantly increase their reach and impact by growing and strengthening a large cadre of affiliated lawyers and advocates. Through their programs, ADF claims that it is “transforming the legal system by equipping Christian attorneys and law students to defend religious freedom.”\textsuperscript{513}
At the international level, ADF runs the Areté Academy, a one-week training program that includes “biblical worldview training.” The organization states that its European Leadership Academy includes training in “strategic cultural engagement and spiritual formation” alongside professional development and “substantive legal and political instruction.” ADF holds sessions of the academy in multiple regions – in 2021, Areté Academy Asia will be held in Bangkok, Thailand; Areté Academy Europe in Vienna, Austria; and Areté Academy Latin America in Santiago, Chile.

Additionally, ADF International offers the Veritas Scholarship, a year-long fellowship program which promises “full immersion” into the ADF International team in Europe. Alliance Defending Freedom also hosts the ADF Summit on Religious Liberty for “Christian attorneys around the globe...to equip attendees to effectively advocate for religious liberty, the sanctity of life, and marriage and family.” The organization claims that more than 2,000 lawyers from nearly 50 countries have participated in the summit.

ADF also holds the Young Lawyers Academy for recent law school graduates and new lawyers, and targets college students with its Law School Prep Academy for students preparing to start law school. Finally, its Blackstone Legal Fellowship, which ADF claims has trained more than 2,400 students from law schools in 21 countries, trains law students and then places them in internships with law firms, government bodies, and think tanks. The program includes seminars and talks from senior staffers from anti-rights organizations like Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council, and one testimonial from a former Blackstone Fellow stated that the program “unveiled the scale of the attack against truth and... also gave the battle plan and weapons necessary to fight back.”

ADF itself benefits substantially from this network of training cohorts and its allied attorneys mentioned above, estimating over a million pro bono hours. ADF-trained and affiliated lawyers also frequently go on to government, judicial, and other positions of power.

Grants

ADF started with the goal to fund work congruent with its anti-rights foci, and it continues to do so. The organization claims that it has provided lawyers with more than $52 million USD in grant awards, funding them to take up cases, amicus work and “advocacy-related projects” around “religious freedom, the sanctity of life, or marriage and family.”
Engagement at the UN and other Multilateral Spaces

ADF is active at the UN, carrying out a number of lobbying activities. The group has held ECOSOC civil society consultative status there since 2010. In recent years, it has become especially visible at the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

ADF International has a regular presence at the HRC, with two Geneva-based UN officers and London and New York-based staff also attending Council sessions. Their ongoing presence in Geneva also allows them to engage in lobbying activities targeting UN treaty monitoring bodies like the Human Rights Committee.

ADF has also become more deeply embedded in UN mechanisms of late. It is involved in the NGO Committees on Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) in Geneva and New York, and it now holds the position of chair of the New York NGO Committee on FoRB. It has long been involved in lobbying at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), where ADF states they are committed to preserving “protections for pro-life states” and to “encouraging countries to rollback abortion references in UN documents.”

ADF also hosts side events with anti-rights allies at the CSW, such as an event in 2020 entitled: “The Many Harms Coming from Abortion after Cairo and Beijing,” with the Holy See, C-Fam, and the Heritage Foundation. Together with national-level partners, ADF also typically submits statements at the CSW.

ADF is engaged in a double strategy at the UN – it works actively and increasingly in these spaces and at the same time seeks to undermine or defund many UN mechanisms, such as the OHCHR, treaty monitoring bodies, UN Special Procedures,
and UNFPA.\textsuperscript{535} It also attempts to reshape the human rights system and norms to promote an anti-rights agenda that furthers impunity, undermines equality, and makes human rights the province of the few rather than all.

ADF International is also active in cases before regional bodies like the ECHR and the IACHR and has become highly involved in the OAS General Assembly. It has several staff members registered at the EU,\textsuperscript{536} and was also engaged at the Council of Europe. Recently, however, given ADF’s widespread advocacy opposing the Istanbul Convention Against Gender-based Violence,\textsuperscript{537} the Council of Europe removed ADF from its NGO group.\textsuperscript{538}
Anti-rights Funding Trends

The significant growth in the budgets of groups like CitizenGo and ADF point to the vast resources made available for anti-rights actors. Yet, the sheer size of their budgets is not enough to guarantee the success of their agendas. Rather, it paints a complex context in which advancements in feminism and human rights are often won against extremely well-funded and powerful opposition.

Key funding sources for anti-rights agendas include: 1) ultra-conservative grant-makers and private donors; 2) religious institutions; 3) businesses and corporations; and 4) funding from other organizations.

Ultra-conservative Grant-makers and Private Donors

In many jurisdictions, private donors to anti-rights organizations are allowed a high degree of anonymity. The amounts of money fueling anti-rights agendas without any transparency is a major issue in its own right. For instance, US-based organizations who define themselves as non-profits are not required to disclose the names of private donors in their public filings – and in a major loophole, those groups who register themselves as “churches” do not need to file even the limited funding disclosures required of other organizations.

Donations from private donors and ultra-conservative grant-makers are a substantial part of the resources of anti-rights groups. The Qatar Foundation, which belongs to the royal family of Qatar, finances the Doha International Institute for Family and Development, as an example. Two major ultra-conservative foundations in Russia are the Istoki Endowment fund, which is led by the Russian businessman Vladimir I. Yakunin, and the St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation, created by businessman Konstantin Malofeev. Both foundations finance projects that aim to promote “traditional values,” a common discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church, and have links to the World Congress of Families. In the US, anti-LGBTQI work has been funded by the Witherspoon Institute and the Bradley Foundation.

Advancements in feminism and human rights are often won against extremely well-funded and powerful opposition.
to anti-rights organizations and projects is The Gathering. The Gathering is an annual donors conference that meets every September and dates back to the 1980s. The largest donor player in The Gathering is the National Christian Foundation (NCF).

The evangelical NCF, the eighth-largest charity in the US, claims that it has given out more than $13 billion USD in grant money since 1982 – in 2015, for example, it gave out $960 million in grants. Between 2015 and 2017, the NCF donated at least $56.1 million to 23 groups identified by the SPLC as hate groups, including Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and the Family Research Council. Inside Philanthropy lists the Heritage Foundation, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Focus on the Family as other recipients of NCF funds and describes NCF as “probably the single biggest source of (US) money fueling the pro-life and anti-LGBT movements over the past 15 years.”

NCF is a donor-advised fund – donors can recommend that the fund disperse money to the groups of their choice, and are able to donate to the NCF anonymously. A few of NCF’s donors include David Green, the billionaire founder of the Hobby Lobby chain of crafts stores – the corporation who took their refusal to cover contraceptive coverage for their employees to the Supreme Court. Other major NCF donors include the Maclellan Foundation, which has donated over $100 million to NCF; the Bolthouse Foundation (who donated $9.6 million in 2017); the family foundation of Republican donor Foster Friess (donated $2.5 million in 2017); the Free Family Foundation (donated $1.5 million in 2017) and the JSC Foundation, run by heirs of the Coors beer company.

Businesses and Corporations

We can see fiscal links between corporations and anti-rights organizations above, namely Hobby Lobby and the JSC Foundation, linked to the Coors beer company. Recently, one of Italy’s leading prosecco companies has also been linked to anti-rights agendas; in 2019, Villa Sandi was a sponsor of the World Congress of Families event in Verona, Italy. WCF, an anti-rights group, hosted far-right politicians in Verona from Italy’s Lega party along with representatives from France’s National Rally, Hungary’s Fidesz, and Germany’s AfD.

Brazzale, an Italian dairy company, also sponsored the 2019 WCF conference – its chief executive has spoken at previous anti-abortion events such as the 2018 Festival of Life in Verona, and the 2017 March for Life in Rome. Shamrock Foods, a US based dairy company, has also previously acted as a corporate sponsor for WCF, as has the Polish oil company Orlen.

A report by Popular Information, together with Progressive Shopper, also examined donations from corporations to politicians espousing anti-sexual rights positions and policies. Between 2017 and 2018, they estimate that AT&T donated $2,755,000 USD
to this end; **UPS** donated $2,366,122 USD; **Comcast** donated $2,116,500 USD; **Home Depot** donated $1,825,500 USD; **General Electric** donated $1,380,500 USD; **FedEx** donated $1,261,500 USD; **USB Corporation** donated $1,094,750 USD; **Verizon** donated $1,022,803 USD; and **Pfizer** donated $959,263 USD. 559

**Several religious institutions who have been linked to anti-rights agendas also own their own businesses, which may fund anti-rights work.** The Catholic Church, for instance, owns the **Institute for the Works of Religion** (i.e. the “Vatican bank”), which manages funds for approximately €7,000 million. 560 Locally, the Church administers a series of businesses such as private Catholic schools or properties which it rents for commercial purposes. In Chile, the **episcopate of the Catholic Church** declared an annual income of almost $16 million USD in 2016, with 22 percent of this coming from real estate rents. 561 The **Russian Orthodox Church** has state permission to generate and manage its own businesses. 562 It owns the Sofrino plant, one of the largest production sites in the country where they make everything from candles to icons, books and church utensils. Churches also run businesses linked to telecommunications in some countries. For example, in Brazil, Christian churches have bought and administered television and broadcasting channels for several years, and in Russia, the Orthodox Church has owned the Spas television channel since 2007. 563

### Public and State Financing

Anti-rights actors access public funds and state support in different ways. **In some cases, they are employed by state-funded institutions (as in the case of religious institutions). In other cases, anti-rights groups may present themselves as neutral organizations who provide aid or relief to marginalized communities.** For instance, the ultra-conservative group Portal de Belen – one of the main organizations who mobilized against the legalization of same-sex marriage in Argentina in 2010 – has been granted funds by the government of the province of Córdoba for their “pregnancy-support” shelters. These service low-income pregnant women with the objective of preventing them from obtaining abortions. 564

**ANTI-RIGHTS GROUPS MAY PRESENT THEMSELVES AS NEUTRAL ORGANIZATIONS WHO PROVIDE AID OR RELIEF TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) receives funding from the European Parliament, and anti-rights groups in Poland receive state funding. In 2017, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in Croatia granted a three-year institutional development grant of approximately €55,000 to In the Name of the Family, the anti-rights group who led the referendum against marriage equality. 565 In another example, the US federal government funded Obria, a chain...
of anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy centres,” sending them $5.1 million USD in 2019.\textsuperscript{566}

Inter-organizational Funding

International transfers between ultra-conservative organizations around the world is another major trend in the anti-rights funding landscape. Financial support from Russia\textsuperscript{567} has been identified in Eastern and Central European countries with large Orthodox churches, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia; or countries with strong political links, such as Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic.\textsuperscript{568} Anti-rights organizations in the US also offer funding to churches to oppose sexual rights in Uganda,\textsuperscript{569} Kenya, and Nigeria,\textsuperscript{570} often disguised as humanitarian or development-related aid,\textsuperscript{571} or through direct donations to key religious leaders.\textsuperscript{572}

Case Study: Anti-rights Funding in Europe

As openDemocracy has documented,\textsuperscript{573} in the past decade anti-rights groups based in the United States have significantly increased their spending in Europe, pouring at least $50 million USD towards regressive agendas in the continent.\textsuperscript{574}

The top three groups, based on public filings between 2008 and 2018, are the \textbf{Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA)};\textsuperscript{575} the \textbf{American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)}\textsuperscript{576} – whose affiliate, the European Center for Law and Justice, is highly active in anti-rights strategic litigation across Europe;\textsuperscript{577} and the \textbf{ADF}.\textsuperscript{578} In this period, BGEA channeled at least $23.3 million USD to support work in Europe, while the spending of ACLJ – founded by televangelist Pat Roberson in 1990 – was $13.5 million USD, and ADF’s disclosed spending in Europe was $15.3 million USD.\textsuperscript{579}

The anti-abortion \textbf{Human Life International}, which describes itself as the “largest international pro-life organization in the world,” was also a major spender in Europe, sending at least $2.8 million USD in this period,\textsuperscript{580} including in Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. The \textbf{Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty}, which brings together anti-rights and neoliberal activists, has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from \textbf{Koch family foundations}\textsuperscript{581} and spent at least $2.1 million USD in the region over this period.\textsuperscript{582} The Acton Institute has an office in Rome and has collaborated in Italy with the Dignitatis Humanae Institute – linked to CitizenGo, and of which Steve Bannon is a trustee.

Other US-based groups transferring funds into Europe include \textbf{Heartbeat International}, which supports anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy centres,” and who spent at least $191,000 USD in this period.\textsuperscript{583} Heartbeat International’s latest filings say it funds activities in Croatia, Spain, and Italy, where it works with the Movimento per la Vita. The \textbf{Leadership Institute}, linked to CitizenGo,\textsuperscript{584} has also spent more in Europe than in any other region – more than $804,000 USD.\textsuperscript{585}
Also amongst the key spenders is the US branch of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), an ultra-conservative transnational Catholic movement that describes itself as “on the front lines of the Culture War...defending the values of tradition, family, and private ownership.” The movement has spent over $100,000 USD in Europe since 2010 and has been linked to a group in Poland that has helped the far-right Law and Justice party develop policies.

Amongst a number of other anti-rights activities, the funding from this set of actors has funded a network of “grassroots” anti-abortion campaigns in Italy and Spain and supported campaigns against sexual rights in the Czech Republic and Romania. Focus on the Family, the Home School Legal Defense Association, the Population Research Institute, the International House of Prayer, and Family Watch International are amongst the other anti-rights groups engaged in transcontinental funding flows.

A cross-party group of over 40 Members of the European Parliament also called on the European Commissioner on regulation and transparency to look into the influence of “US Christian fundamentalists...with the greatest urgency” in 2019. However, these groups are not required to disclose the names of their overseas recipients under US law, nor the identities of their own funders, or the details of the activities they fund. Thus, the $50 million USD figure is likely an underestimate of the resources that anti-rights actors have transferred into the region in recent years. Groups like Liberty Counsel, which supported a campaign for an anti-same-sex marriage referendum in Romania, has registered as a “church auxiliary” and thus no longer discloses information on major international contributions. Similarly, Focus on the Family has declared itself a church, avoiding disclosure requirements like the largest funder above, BGEA – which re-registered as an “association of churches” in 2015.

A review of the lobbying of a number of groups at the European Parliament and European Commission highlights the considerable budgets that European anti-rights groups are devoting to influence these multilateral spaces. According to the EU transparency register, 21 anti-rights think tanks, NGOs and other entities – most of which are from Poland, Austria, Belgium, France, Spain, or Switzerland – currently spend €2.1 to 3.1 million per year lobbying the EU.

The Vatican is the largest individual spender in this group – one of its units, the Commission of the Episcopates of the EU (Comece) spends €1.25 million per year to influence EU institutions. The Swiss-based International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL), with close links with European and US anti-abortion groups, also spends €200,000 to 300,000 per year, and the anti-abortion umbrella group One of Us spends €100,000 to 200,000 per year in lobbying the EU. Also, Ordo Iuris,
whose mission is the “protection of human life from conception until natural death,” and the “protection of the identity of marriage and family,” spends €25,000 to 50,000 per year.\(^597\)

As highlighted in the section on CitizenGo, sources also indicate that some European anti-rights groups are also “trying to import a controversial US-style ‘Super PAC’ model of political campaigning,” which can allow for unregulated flows of funding to influence elections and support extremist parties.\(^598\) For instance, an official from the far-right Vox party told an undercover reporter that supporting CitizenGo financially could help Vox “indirectly.”\(^599\)

Alliance Defending Freedom: Funding Flows

**Funding of ADF**

ADF is able to keep its own funding sources under wraps using the same legal disclosure loopholes mentioned above. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit\(^600\) registered in the US, it is not required to disclose the names of its funders, its overseas recipients, or details of the activities they fund in their tax filings. Indeed, on its website, ADF explicitly promises its donors secrecy, stating that the group will never “make available your name or information related to your gifts.”\(^601\)

Its tax filings list several multi-million-dollar contributions – approximately $60 million USD between 2012 and 2017 – that seem to come from individuals, but with names withheld.\(^502\) In addition to individual donations, ADF receives funding from charitable foundations, which must be disclosed on donors’ tax returns.

Prominent ADF donors include the family of Betsy DeVos, the former US Secretary of Education,\(^603\) including her brother Erik Prince, founder of the mercenary military firm, Blackwater.\(^604\) The Edgar and Elsa Prince Foundation, which lists DeVos as vice-president, has donated more than $1 million USD to ADF since 2002.\(^605\) The group also receives significant funds from the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation.\(^606\) Another donor is Greg Gianforte, a US Congressman from Montana, infamous for being elected despite his pre-election assault on a reporter.\(^607\)

A significant amount of ADF’s funding comes from the National Christian Foundation (NCF) – mentioned above. NCF’s status as a donor-advised fund allows for less transparency, as contributors to the Foundation can shield their identities from public view. Between 2008 and 2015, ADF received $77.6 million USD from NCF,\(^608\) and from 2015 to 2017, it took in an additional $49.2 million USD from the Foundation.\(^609\) NCF’s own donors include David Green of Hobby Lobby, the Maclellan Foundation, the Bolthouse Foundation, Foster Friess, the JSC Foundation, and the Free Family Foundation.

Several other donor-advised funds are big ADF funders. For instance, the largest charity in the US, the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund,\(^610\)
together with the Schwab Charitable Fund\textsuperscript{611} and the Vanguard Charitable Endowment Fund,\textsuperscript{612} gave nearly $2.7 million USD to ADF over 2016 through 2018.\textsuperscript{613} It was also funded in this period by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.\textsuperscript{614}

Anti-rights actors may enjoy lack of transparency and legal loopholes, but their funding can and has been challenged. ADF previously received funding – in the region of $1 million USD – through the sales of specialty license plates,\textsuperscript{615} and through Amazon’s AmazonSmile online charitable giving program,\textsuperscript{616} before the state of Arizona and Amazon removed the group from its programs after activist exposure and pressure.

ADF: Global Expansion of the U.S. Christian Right ‘Legal Army’
$21.3 million since 2008

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) is a legal advocacy and training group founded in the United States and active globally. It was recognised as “one of the most influential groups” driving the Trump administration’s backlash against sexual rights.* ADF misuses concepts such as freedom of religion to justify discrimination and threaten rights. Since 2018, ADF has spent at least $21.3 million across five continents, supporting campaigns and legal initiatives against the rights of women and LGBTIQ people.

* https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/alliance-defending-freedom

Source: Figures are taken from publicly available US financial records of ADF from the years 2008-2018, as compiled by openDemocracy 50.50, and reported on at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/trump-us-christian-spending-global-revealed/
ADF’s Funding of other Anti-rights Actors

As one of the key funders of anti-rights activities in Europe, in the years 2008 to 2018, according to openDemocracy, ADF transferred at least $15,294,738 USD towards activities in Europe.\(^{617}\) The group also reportedly provides a significant amount of funding towards anti-rights activities in other regions: it channeled at least $3,220,427 USD into Canada and Mexico in this period;\(^{618}\) $352,144 USD into Central America and the Caribbean;\(^{619}\) $617,800 USD into South America;\(^{620}\) $12,600 USD into Russia and post-Soviet states;\(^{621}\) $46,300 USD into the Middle East and North Africa;\(^{622}\) $137,284 USD into East, West, Central, and Southern Africa;\(^{623}\) $1,497,303 USD into South Asia;\(^{624}\) and $159,955 USD into East Asia and the Pacific.\(^{625}\)

A large proportion of its international spending is listed as “legal advocacy and training” services and “grants to foreign recipients,” as well as a number of grants labeled “cash scholarships for law school” for unnamed recipients. ADF has also provided donations to groups such as the Home School Foundation; Morality in Media; the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which also focuses on anti-rights strategic litigation; and the Claremont Institute, an ultra-conservative think tank.\(^{626}\)
In recent decades, feminist and transfeminist scholarship and activism have transformed and radically expanded society’s understanding of gender and of the freedom to live in one’s body and identity without violence and discrimination.627

Today, the human rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people are under threat – not only from fascists and fundamentalists opposed to gender equality and sexual rights overall, but also certain individuals and groups associated with feminism and women’s rights. While the attacks on trans people and their rights in the name of feminism date to the late 1970s,628 in recent years this discourse has gained traction, particularly in the UK, North America, and Australia, as well as in some countries in Latin America and Europe, and in international spaces.629

These actors question the very identity of trans people, present the rights of trans people as contradictory to the rights of cisgender women, and lobby against legislation that would secure their human rights. They are often part of campaigns that rely on sensationalism and fearmongering, and the harassment of trans people, particularly those who are in the public eye.

One core argument of this discourse is that women are oppressed on the basis of sex, not gender, hence some such feminists identifying themselves as “gender critical.” This argument disregards the complexity of what makes up gender identity and mimics the patriarchal reduction of women to biological reproductive functions. It ignores feminist scholarship on sex as assigned and as more complex and diverse in biological reality than a male/female binary. It also erases the diverse gendered and sexual identities found in many indigenous cultures and pre-colonial societies, obscuring the fact that masculinity/femininity are themselves colonial constructs.630

The situation in the United Kingdom is of particular note in terms of the destructive impact this trend can have. Though they tend to be relatively small in size, anti-trans feminist groups and public figures in the UK enjoy a disproportionate amount of media coverage and influence over public discourse and policy.531

Two clear recent examples of this are the reform process surrounding the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA) and the December 2020 High Court decision concerning access to puberty blockers for trans youth. The proposed GRA reforms looked at simplifying the process through which trans people obtain Gender Recognition Certificates (GRC).632 Conservative Christian actors and trans-exclusionary feminist groups represented the bulk of pushback to the GRA reforms.633 The government ultimately decided not to go ahead with the proposed
reforms and implemented only small administrative changes. This was despite the results of the public consultation showing a strong majority in support of the reforms, the depathologization of the process, and self-identification for trans people.634

The December 2020 Bell v Tavistock case ruling has restricted the access of trans adolescents to puberty blockers, severely impacting the right to bodily autonomy for young trans people, as well as undermining the principle of consent and right to bodily autonomy for young people more broadly.635 It is important to note that anti-trans lobby group Transgender Trend was invited to intervene in the case, while no trans-led organization was allowed to do so.636 Transgender Trend is an organization claiming to have no religious or political affiliation, yet is organizing against the “harms of gender ideology for children and young people,”637 a stance almost identical to religious fundamentalists.638 The group is most well-known for distributing resource packs on trans issues to schools, which have been criticized as factually inaccurate and deeply damaging by the Director of Education and Youth of prominent LGBTQI charity Stonewall.639 Furthermore, Dr. Paul Hruz was cited multiple times in the final judgement.640 Dr Hruz is a paediatric diabetes specialist who has no expertise in transgender health.641

Anti-trans feminist discourses and actors have a two-fold connection to fundamentalist and far right forces, particularly the Christian Right, even though some of the actors identify as liberal or Left. Firstly, they produce scholarship that lays the intellectual and cultural foundation on which fundamentalists and the far right build in order to advance anti-rights agendas.642 Secondly, they form political alliances and coalitions to undermine and block progress on trans rights.

Such alliances are most visible in the United States. The conservative Heritage Foundation, which advocates against LGBTQI rights, hosted Julia Beck, a self-defined lesbian radical feminist643 in January 2018, as well as members of Women’s Liberation Front, or WoLF.644 WoLF also has connections with Focus on the Family, a fundamentalist Christian organization.645 In 2017 Focus on the Family and WoLF sent a joint Amicus Brief646 to the Supreme Court intervening in a case about a transgender student wanting to access bathrooms matching his gender identity. WoLF’s board member Kara Dansky also received $15,000 USD in funding from ADF.647

Another example is Hands Across the Aisle which brings together women who identify as radical feminists with conservative Christians who openly advocate against LGBTQI rights around their common goal to fight against what they term “gender ideology.”648 Similarly to WoLF, Hands Across the Aisle submitted an Amicus Brief in a different case concerning access to bathrooms.649 These examples are not an exception, and the alliances between women who identify as feminists and fundamentalist anti-rights actors are a concerning trend to monitor and watch out for.
Let’s Map the Landscape

In this chapter, and in the first OURs Trends Report, *Rights at Risk*, we shared detailed information about key anti-rights actors operating in global spaces.

- What does the mapping of anti-rights actors reveal? How could you use this information to strengthen your responses to anti-rights agendas in your context?
- Who are the main anti-rights actors in your context? Are some of them the same as the actors in these two reports, or are they working with them? What are their strategies?

Resources

Check out the amazing tools at LittleSis.org if you are interested in doing more comprehensive mapping of the anti-rights actors in your context.

We want to hear what you found out!

Please share your reflections with us at rightsatrisk@awid.org or via OURs members’ social media platforms using #RightsAtRisk
Catolicadas, a Powerful Communication Tool to Promote Gender Equality and Sexual and Reproductive Rights

– Lola Guerra and Paula Sánchez-Mejorada
CDD-Mexico

In 2012, Catholics for the Right to Decide – Mexico (CDD – Mexico) created a new communication methodology based on storytelling called Catolicadas. Catolicadas is an animated series which aims to promote reflection and social debate around ethical dilemmas faced by Catholic parishioners – especially young people – from a feminist, human rights, and secular ethics perspective. Through cartoons, Catolicadas presents short stories using simple language and a touch of humour. The series centres around two main characters: Sister Juana, a progressive nun, and Father Beto, a conservative priest.

Catolicadas has been broadcast on social networks since 2012 and, as of the end of 2019, its 113 episodes had more than five million complete views on CDD’s YouTube channel and its Facebook page had more than 350,000 followers. On both platforms, young people between the ages of 13 and 24 make up half of the audience.

CDD’s experience shows the transformative value in building narratives based on faith. Taking up feminist theology and liberating interpretations helps redefine the value and role of women, LGBTQI people, as well as the body, sexuality, and choices about whether or not to become a parent. From this perspective, Catolicadas has been a powerful tool to dispute and deconstruct the messages conservative groups attribute to concepts such as family, life, sex education, and sexual orientation. It also promotes a liberating, pluralistic, and inclusive vision of the Catholic religion and spirituality.

Strategic research and systematic evaluation of Catolicadas, throughout its 10 seasons, have allowed CDD-Mexico to recognize the diversity of audiences and identify their needs in order to develop appropriate content for each. It also demonstrates the effect their messages have had on the beliefs, values, attitudes and practices of the series’ followers.

The data obtained from the last evaluation of Catolicadas (2019) shows that because of the series, 78 percent of respondents, identify with the message “God loves us equally regardless of sexual orientation”; 70 percent state that they have defended a person from the LGBTQI community who was being discriminated against; 57 percent stopped participating in Church-organized activities against abortion or same-sex marriage; 53 percent decided to use contraception to have safer sex; and 53 percent now recognize that the Church cannot discriminate against anyone because of what they think, express, and decide.
Endnotes – Chapter 4: Anti-Rights Actors

221 CitizenGo is a Spanish Foundation, registration number 1582
223 ibid
225 ibid
226 ibid. CitizenGo goes on to advocate that “political authorities and economic agents must promote an economy that serves the individual.”
229 I.e. ‘Derecho a Vivir,’ see e.g. http://www.fides.org/en/news/17651-EUROPE_SPAIN_Right_to_Life_platform_group_formed_to_fight_law_proposed_by_the_government_a_fight_to_save_human_lives_and_for_the_survival_of_our_society
231 HazteOir, El Gobierno retira la declaración de utilidad pública a HazteOir, 5 February 2019. Available at: https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/hazteoir_1_1716147.html
232 ibid
233 HazteOir, HazteOir lanza un autobús con la cara de Hitler y el mensaje “StopFeminazis” y “las leyes de género discriminan al hombre”, 28 February 2019. Available at: https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/hazteoir-autobus-hitler-feminazis-genero_1_1677425.html
236 ibid. $2,234,999.14 went to campaigns, i.e. 84 percent of the overall budget.
237 Political Research Associates, Profile on the Right: CitizenGO, 4 May 2018. Available at: https://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/08/24/profile-on-the-right-citizengo
240 ibid
241 Media.cat, Why has the leak of 15,000 Hazte Oir documents gone virtually unnoticed? 12 April 2017. http://www.media.cat/2017/04/12/que-filtracio-15-000-documents-dhazte-oir-practicament-desapercebuda/. This information was uncovered by an investigation by hackers in May 2017, which also showed HazteOir receiving over €2,000 in 2012 from a multinational technology company.
242 Adam Ramsay and Claire Provost, Revealed: the Trump-linked ‘Super PAC’ working behind the scenes to drive Europe’s voters to the far right, openDemocracy, 25 April 2019. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/revealed-the-trump-linked-super-pac-working-behind-the-scenes-to-drive-europes-voters-to-the-far-right/
243 See Lucas de la Cal, Ignacio Arsuaga, el cerebro del ‘bus del odio’ que hablará en la ONU sobre los derechos de las mujeres, El Mundo, March 2017. Available at: https://www.elmundo.es/cronica/2017/03/06/58b9d19022601d20638b45e4.html
244 See: https://twitter.com/anntmave?lang=en
245 See Lucas de la Cal, Ignacio Arsuaga, el cerebro del ‘bus del odio’ que hablará en la ONU sobre los derechos de las mujeres, El Mundo, March 2017. Available at: https://www.elmundo.es/cronica/2017/03/06/58b9d19022601d20638b45e4.html
Endnotes

251 ibid, p.78
252 ibid, p.59
253 ibid, p.64
254 ibid, p.69
256 See, for example: CitizenGo, No to Abortion at the United Nations CPD, May 2020, https://www.citizengo.org/en-us/node/179829
257 See, for example: CitizenGo, Abortion is NOT a Human Right, November 2018, https://www.citizengo.org/en/166976-abortion-not-human-right
265 CitizenGo: Cyberactivism Confronting the Radical Left, session at World Congress of Families in Verona, March 30, 2019.
266 ibid
270 A list of members of the Group of Friends of the Family is available at: https://unitingnationsforthefamily.org/background-2/organisers/
275 Ms. Mohamed is also the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.
277 Elyse Wanshel, Transphobic ‘Free Speech Bus’ to Tour U.S. With Message of Hate, HuffPost US, 24 March 2017. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/transphobic-free-speech-bus-anti-lgbtq_n_58d3ce1be4b0b22b0d1a5022
278 CitizenGo: Cyberactivism confronting the radical left, session at World Congress of Families in Verona, March 30, 2019.
See: https://www.citizengo.org/en/about-us

ibid


See: https://twitter.com/CitizenGOAfrica/status/996332341856555008


See: https://twitter.com/CitizenGOAfrica/status/1076074078350557185


CitizenGo WCF Verona session, March 30, 2019.


ibid


Maria Herrera Mellado, Petition to Ambassador of Spain to The United States – Santiago Cabanas Ansoarena “Hispanidad is in Danger, Defend It!” CitizenGO, 22 June 2020. https://citizengo.org/es-lat/pt/180567-hispanidad-peligro-defiendela

ibid


Petition previously available at: https://www.citizengo.org/en-eu/node/169163 The page has since been taken down.


311 Javier Villamar speaking at the session *Cyberactivism confronting the radical left*, World Congress of Families, Verona, March 30, 2019.

312 ibid


316 ibid


321 See CitizenGo Poland’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/CitizenGOPolska/ CitizenGo Poland, *Homepage*, http://www.odpoczatku.org/?fbclid=IwAR3IRUmj-E2lwJhjRMJ_AwmNYFba5vV30yG_o4Wou93kw2UpjKLF1zhU


323 ibid

324 ibid

325 As, for instance, when the “freedom bus” was banned in Spain.


332 See CitizenGo’s Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/citizengo/photos/d41d8cd9/2157889124297213/


335 See: https://www.politifact.com/fact-check/2017/jun/06/italy/italian-rhetoric-suggests-beating-women-

336 See: https://www.leadelsipinstitute.org/aboutus/ United States Vice-President Mike Pence is an alumnus of the Leadership Institute.

337 See CitizenGo’s Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/citizengo/posts/1423681521051314


339 CitizenGo session at World Congress of Families, Verona, March 30, 2019.
340 Ruben Navarro, formerly Senior UN Counsel in Geneva for ADF.

341 See, for example, the organization’s statement during the Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 44th session of the Human Rights Council, available at: http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/id-on-sexual-orientation-contd-16th-meeting-44th-regular-session-human-rights-council/6170431678001?term=

342 OHCHR, Basic facts about the UPR, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/BasicFacts.aspx

343 The Human Rights Committee is the body tasked with monitoring the core (and most widely ratified) international human rights treaty, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.


345 For more information on FWI, please see Naureen Shameem, Rights at Risk: Observatory on the Universality of Rights Trends Report 2017, AWID, 2017, pp.120-121


347 The bus parked outside of the UN at the 63rd session of CSW reportedly cost $23,000 USD.


349 For more on C-Fam, please see Naureen Shameem, Rights at Risk: Observatory on the Universality of Rights Trends Report 2017, AWID, 2017, pp.36-40

350 See: CitizenGo Canada, Petition to United Nations Delegates, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canadian Ambassador to The UN “Protect Children and Families at the United Nations!” CitizenGO, 28 February 2019.


353 For more on the Nairobi Summit Commitments on ICPD25, see: http://www.nairobiunsummitcpd.org/


356 See further with regard to anti-rights coordination on General Comment 36 in Naureen Shameem, Rights at Risk: Observatory on the Universality of Rights Trends Report 2017, AWID, 2017, pp.120-121


358 See also: Political Network of Values, Homepage: https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/

359 Agenda Europe, a Vatican-inspired network, consists of over 100 anti-rights organizations from over 30 European countries. Their “Agenda Europe” strategy has been linked to results like the 2016 Polish bill to ban abortion. See further: European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, Restoring The Natural Order, April, 2018. http://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/rtno_epf_book_lores.pdf

360 Jesús Bastante, Las conexiones de Vox con HatzElor, los ‘kikos’ y una docena de obispos españoles, elDiario.es, 7 December 2018. https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/conexiones-vox-grupos-ultracatolicos_1_1799146.html


367 See: https://actright.com/page/aboutus

368 FOIA Research, CitizenGo, 28 April 2019 [Last updated: December 23, 2020]. https://www.foiaresearch.net/organization/citizengo


370 In September 2020, IOF and Volonte together launched The Volonte Report news aggregation website, modeled after the right-wing Drudge Report, for audiences "tired of the Drudge Report's leftward tilt." https://www.volontereport.com/


374 ibid


376 Population Research Institute, Who We Are, https://www.pop.org/simple/who-we-are/. The PRI was founded in the United States and pursues an anti-abortion agenda.


379 Ibid. One of Us was founded in Italy.


381 ibid

382 ibid

383 ibid

384 ibid


Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Alliance Defending Freedom, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/alliance-defending-freedom. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) conducts extensive research into the radical right in the United States, including the coordination of a database of anti-LGBTQI and other hate groups. The SPLC states that “viewing homosexuality as unbiblical or simply opposing same-sex marriage” is insufficient for their hate group designation. Groups on this list go further – e.g., to link being LGBTQI to pedophilia; claiming that marriage equality and LGBTQI communities are dangers to children; that being LGBTQI is itself dangerous; supporting the criminalization of LGBTQI communities; and/or that there is a conspiracy called the “homosexual agenda” at work that seeks to destroy Christianity and the whole of society.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Who We Are, https://www.adflegal.org/about-us


American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Homepage: https://www.aclu.org/


See full text: https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/the-christian-legal-army-behind-masterpiece-cakeshop/


ADF International, Historical Highlights https://adfinternational.org/who-we-are/historical-highlights/

ibid


ADF Legal, Return of Organization Exempt from Tax – form 990, June 2018. https://www.adflegal.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/990%20PUBLIC%20ADF%20June%202018.pdf. See also: https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/541660459 for data on previous years’ budgets for ADF.


LobbyFacts.eu, ADF International, https://lobbyfacts.eu/representative/d7e4b2d8d024c91bcaa74021677d43b/ADF-international

Media Matters, Here are 300 of extreme anti-LGBTQ group Alliance Defending Freedom’s reported 3,300 allied attorneys, 18 February 2019 https://www.mediamatters.org/alliance-defending-freedom/her-are-300-extreme-anti-lgbtq-group-alliance-defending-freedoms – see further for a database of ~300 of these allied attorneys.

Pro bono services can include work on litigation, amicus briefs, media engagement, work on ADF projects, and “aid to legislators and policy-makers – see: https://adflegal.blob.core.windows.net/mainsite-new/docs/default-source/documents/resources/for-attorneys-resources/pro-bono-hour-memo.pdf


Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Legal Training https://adflegal.org/training/blackstone

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Leadership Team https://www.adflegal.org/about-us/leadership


ibid

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Terry Schlossberg, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/terry-schlossberg

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Seth Morgan, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/seth-morgan

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Mark Maddoux, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/mark-maddoux

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), John Rogers, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/john-rogers

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Ruth Ross, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/ruth-ross

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Scott Scharpen, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/scott-scharpen

Mentioned above – NIFLA v Becerra.


“An organization dedicated to preserving the fundamental right of parents to protect the upbringing, care, and education for their children, free from inappropriate government interference.”

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Michael Whitehead, https://www.adflegal.org/biography/michael-whitehead


UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 28. “[Article 18 [of the Covenant] may not be relied upon to justify discrimination against women by reference to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”


ibid

The UN Human Rights Committee has no jurisprudence or interpretive texts that extend the right to life before birth, the preparatory documents for the ICCPR demonstrate that article 6 was not intended to extend its protections prior to birth, and regional human rights jurisprudence also suggests that a fetus does not enjoy the right to life. The UDHR also states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and preparatory materials indicate that “born” was here used intentionally to confirm that the rights set forth in the UDHR are inherent from the moment of birth, not before. For information see p. 63, Naureen Shameem, Rights at Risk: Observatory on the Universal Rights of Persons 2017, AWID.

OHCHR, General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Right to life, https://ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/GC36-Article6Righttolife.aspx. ADF’s submission also argued that the right to life is antithetical to assisted suicide and euthanasia.


The right to life is upheld by several binding, customary and soft human rights instruments, and is a non-derogable human right, as per the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. See e.g., article 6(1) of the ICCPR.


The UN Human Rights Committee has no jurisprudence or interpretive texts that extend the right to life before birth, the preparatory documents for the ICCPR demonstrate that article 6 was not intended to extend its protections prior to birth, and regional human rights jurisprudence also suggests that a fetus does not enjoy the right to life. The UDHR also states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and preparatory materials indicate that “born” was here used intentionally to confirm that the rights set forth in the UDHR are inherent from the moment of birth, not before. For information see p. 63, Naureen Shameem, Rights at Risk: Observatory on the Universal Rights of Persons 2017, AWID.

OHCHR, General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – Right to life, https://ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/GC36-Article6Righttolife.aspx. ADF’s submission also argued that the right to life is antithetical to assisted suicide and euthanasia.


Craig Osten, former ADF staffer, is the co-author of the book.

ibid


468 Equality Matters, This Right-Wing Legal Powerhouse Wants to Make Gay Sex Illegal, Huffington Post, 19 November 2014. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/this-right-wing-legal-powerhouse-wants-to-make-gay-sex-illegal_n_584049f


472 ibid

473 Southern Poverty Law Center, Publication: Dangerous Liaisons, 10 July 2013. https://www.splcenter.org/20130709/dangerous-liasons. The Supreme Court of Belize ultimately struck down the law criminalizing same-sex sexual conduct.


478 Also in New York (to liaise at the UN), Washington D.C., and Lawrenceville.


483 Earlier, in 2015, they claimed to have been involved in over 500 cases in six continents and 41 countries, including Argentina, Belize, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Slovakia, and India. See: Gillian Kane, Latin America in the Crosshairs, Political Research Associates, 13 July 2015. https://www.politicalresearch.org/2015/07/13/latin-america-crosshairs


485 Human Rights Campaign, 10 Things You Should Know About the Alliance Defending Freedom, https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/10_Things_You_Should_Know_About_the_Alliance_Defending_Freedom_-_FINAL.pdf


488 Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), About Us, https://www.adflegal.org/about-us


492 In jurisdictions where ADF lacks standing to litigate directly, it generally files amicus briefs or interventions, or offers legal counsel to local partners.

493 It was listed as between 200,000-299,000 Euros between 2018 and 2019 at the EU alone, see: LobbyFacts.eu, ADF International, https://lobbyfacts.eu/representative/d7e4b2d8d8024c91bca74021677d43b/adf-international.


Endnotes

505 See e.g. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) International, UPR: Georgia (37th Session), https://adfinternational.org/resource/georgia-37th-session/
507 ibid
509 ibid
510 ibid
512 Euractiv, ADF International, https://www.euractiv.com/content_providers/adf-international/
518 Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Legal Training: Young Lawyers, https://www.adflegal.org/training/young-lawyers-academy
520 Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Legal Training: Blackstone, https://www.adflegal.org/training/blackstone
522 ibid
524 ibid
527 Lois McLatchie and Giorgio Mazzoli.
528 For instance, ADF International Executive Director Paul Coleman, and Elyssa Koren, ADF’s director of UN advocacy, both also attended the 41st session of the HRC.
RAW TEXT OF THE IMAGE
Ibid. Shamrock Foods sponsored the WCF’s 2007 meeting in Warsaw.

Ibid. Orlen was also a sponsor of the Warsaw WCF meeting.


See e.g. Shalva Dzidziguri, The Power And Limits Of The Russian Orthodox Church, Forbes, December 2016 https://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2016/12/14/the-power-and-limits-of-therussian-orthodox-church/#668fafa94b35


See e.g., Rebecca Davis, Africa’s new colonists: rabid, anti-gay, American evangelical Christians, Maverick Life, 16 September 2013. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-09-16-africas-new-colonists-rabid-anti-gay-american-evangelical-christians/#.VO8XecYwfOo%

See e.g. http://www.politicalresearch.org/2009/12/01/globalizing-the-culture-wars-u-s-conservatives-african-churches-homophobia/


ibid

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Homepage, https://billygraham.org/. The Association is today led by Graham’s (an evangelical preacher) son, who has said that Satan is the architect of same-sex marriage. The Association channeled over $11 million dollars in disclosed funds to Europe through two US-registered entities.

American Center for Law and Justice, Homepage, https://aclj.org/

European Centre for Law and Justice, Homepage, https://eclj.org/


Ibid. Exact figures from openDemocracy’s analysis of public filings are $23,284,403, $13,540,204, and $15,294,738 for BGEA, ACLJ, and ADF, respectively.

ibid.


For more information, please see the CitizenGo section. Amongst the Leadership Institute’s alumni are U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence.


ibid.

ibid – note the infographic on lobbying expenses of different organizations.


From 2012-2017, ADF reported in its 990 filings a total of almost $60 million in eight separate multi-million dollar contributions from donors with names withheld from public versions of the forms.


This included potential self-identification of gender, removing the need for a medical diagnosis and to provide evidence to a panel.


Sub-regional break-downs were provided by openDemocracy 50.50. The Community Foundation donated $9,415 USD to ADF over 2015-2017.


See, for example, the Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights, drafted by Women’s Human Rights Coalition with signatories from a number of countries. The Declaration was circulated at the Commission on the Status of Women and in other global spaces. The Declaration text and list of signatories is available at: https://www.womensdeclaration.com/en/


For the UK case, see: Sally Hines, Sex wars and (trans) gender panics: Identity and body politics in contemporary UK feminism, The Sociological Review Monographs 2020, Vol. 68(4) 25–43, pp. 32-33. While in the USA, the influence of anti-trans feminists is intrinsically tied to the power of the Christian Right, in the UK, anti-trans feminists are an influential lobby of their own, and while they are not clearly actively enthwined with the fundamentalist right as in the United States, their interests often align in practice.

This included potential self-identification of gender, removing the need for a medical diagnosis and to provide evidence to a panel. Lorna Finlayson, Katharine Jenkins, Rosie Worsdale, “I’m not transphobic, but… ”: A feminist case against the feminist case against trans inclusivity, Verso, 17 October 2018, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4090-i-m-not-transphobic-but-a-feminist-case-against-the-feminist-case-against-trans-inclusivity


636 Stonewall (a prominent British LGBTQI organization) and Mermaids (an organisation that has been supporting trans youths and their families for decades) were actively denied permission to intervene. Vic Parsons, Anti-trans pressure group invited to give evidence in landmark puberty blockers case as Stonewall and Mermaids shut out, 5 October 2020, https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/10/05/puberty-blockers-case-high-court-transgender-trend-mermaids-stonewall-nhs/  
637 See: https://www.transgendertrend.com/  
638 See Page 55, Chapter 3 of this report for more on “Gender Ideology”  
641 A journalist for St Louis LGBT news service BOOM.lgbt contacted the university and was given this information: “Dr Hruz is NOT a member of our DSD team, NOR is he an expert in transgender health as he has never taken care of a transgender person. Dr. Hruz admits that he has not treated any transgender patients, patients with gender dysphoria, conducted peer-reviewed research about gender identity, transgender people, or gender dysphoria; and is not a psychiatrist, a psychologist, nor mental health care provider of any kind, who could speak knowledgeably of transgender health.” Terry Willits, Trans Community Protests University Pediatric Professor, BOOM.lgbt, January 2020. Available at: https://www.boom.lgbt/index.php/news-a/98-localnews/1869-trans-community-protests-university-pediatric-professor  
645 Brianna January and Brennan Suen, As trans Americans face record violence, right-wing media have been flooded with stories attacking trans athletes, Media Matters, 30 October 2019, https://www.mediamatters.org/facebook/trans-americans-face-record-violence-right-wing-media-have-been-flooded-stories-attacking trans-athletes,  