



Chapter One
**Key opposition
actors**

This is one chapter of
Rights at Risk: Observatory on the Universality of Rights Trends Report 2017
To access the full publication, please visit www.oursplatform.org

Background

Imperatives for the future include...[t]o take energetic action within the NGO process to blunt or prevent new assaults on family integrity; to identify, protect, and help advance existing “friends of the family” within the U.N. Secretariat; to “place” such friends in positions of current or potential influence within the U.N. Secretariat; and to build an international movement of “religiously grounded family morality systems” that can influence and eventually shape social policy at the United Nations.³

*– Allan Carlson,
founder of the World Congress of Families*

We are witnessing an unprecedented level of engagement of anti-rights actors in international human rights spaces today.

Following their initial foray into the United Nations (UN) arena during the Beijing and Cairo conferences of the 1990s, ultra-conservative actors have been increasingly identifying the international policy area as a target for their organizing and advocacy. The numbers of regressive civil society actors active at the UN who are manipulating arguments based on religion, culture, tradition, and national sovereignty have spiked in recent years. Likewise, intergovernmental and state-affiliated traditionalist actors and blocs have become regular and highly vocal participants on the global policy stage.

To bolster their impact and amplify their voices, anti-rights actors increasingly engage in tactical alliance building across sectors. In the formation of a complex, rising, and evolving anti-rights lobby at the UN, older forms of religious and institutional affiliation continue to cede to the exigencies of shared goals.

Firstly, in what has been characterized as the ‘unholy alliance,’ traditionalist actors from Catholic, Evangelical, Mormon, Russian Orthodox, and Muslim faith

backgrounds have found common cause in shared talking points and advocacy efforts attempting to revert feminist and sexual rights gains at the international level.

Further, anti-rights actors at the UN are uniting across national and regional lines, and across sectors. Specifically, we have observed strengthening links between regressive civil society, religiously-defined intergovernmental entities, conservatively-oriented States and regional blocs. The coalition forged between the Holy See, ultra-conservative Civil Society Organizations, such as Family Watch International, and Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to oppose comprehensive sexuality education as a component of sexual rights is but one example.

Such alliances are no accident; indeed, the modus operandi of initiatives like the World Congress of Families is to create ongoing platforms for connection, networking, and collective strategizing. Organizations, such as C-Fam, have long signaled their desire to foster an allied conservative State bloc to undermine human rights at the United Nations.⁴

In the formation of a complex, rising, and evolving anti-rights lobby at the UN, older forms of religious and institutional affiliation continue to cede to the exigencies of shared goals

This section examines a number of key actors who currently operate at the United Nations, strategically employing arguments which cite tradition, culture, and religion to pursue their political ends. It also examines the ways in which many regressive actors are working towards the formation of a transnational community of political actors active in undermining rights related to gender and sexuality.

1. Religious / intergovernmental actors

Holy See

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL STATUS

The Catholic Church occupies a uniquely powerful role at the United Nations amongst religious actors. By virtue of its possession of a territorial entity—Vatican City—the Holy See, the government of the Roman Catholic Church, claims that it qualifies as a State with the right to attendant privileges in international policy spaces. In this sphere it plays dual roles as a religious institution and a political actor.

Vatican City is the world's smallest 'city-State', with a size of 108.7 acres (0.44 square km) and a population of less than 600 people.⁵ It is governed by the Holy See, which operates within the international community as the juridical personification of the Church.⁶ The Holy See consists of the Pope and the Roman Curia, or the set of departments and institutes that assist the Pope in running the Church.

Vatican City does not meet the criteria of a nation-State under international law. It does not possess a permanent population, a defined territory, an independent government or formal capacity to enter into relations with other States—all of which are necessary qualifications for a State as a person of international law under the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States.⁷ Nonetheless, the Holy See has been awarded Permanent Observer status at the United Nations by operation of custom.⁸

**Vatican City
does not meet
the criteria of a
nation-State under
international law**

**Nonetheless, the
Holy See has been
awarded Permanent
Observer status at
the United Nations**

In its engagement at the United Nations, the Vatican does not present itself as a 'Catholic' actor. It instead characterizes itself as a State-like entity with universal citizenship, playing the necessary role of providing a moral voice in the international realm.

The Vatican plays a key role in advancing an anti-rights agenda in human rights fora to which other conservative actors may not have access

As a Permanent Observer since 1964, the Holy See is entitled to rights of attendance and representation at the UN much greater than those of NGOs, although somewhat less than those given to a full State Member. Thus, the Holy See is normally invited to attend UN conferences—such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the Conference on Population and Development—and participate therein with all the privileges of a State regarding the formal proceedings, including the right to vote. As these conferences operate by consensus, the Holy See's designation endows it with significant power to influence the outcomes. During the Beijing Conference on women, for example, the Holy See was influential in blocking references to women's right to control their sexuality and their fertility.


The Holy See has legal jurisdiction on a par with Member States to negotiate, sign, and ratify UN-sponsored international law treaties. Using official privileges, it also engages actively in negotiations throughout the sessions of the General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Security Council, and the commissions of the Economic and Social Council. Due to its heightened status, as well as a long, established, and interventionist history in UN negotiations, the Vatican plays a key role in advancing an anti-rights agenda in human rights fora to which other conservative actors may not have access. Civil society initiatives, such as the See Change campaign, have

advocated for the UN to treat the Holy See as a religious body rather than a State, and thus have criticized the disproportionate impact and role of the Holy See in shaping human rights norms and standards.⁹

Generally, the Holy See has not taken advantage of its special status to bind itself to international human rights standards. Despite its ability to join international treaties and its commitment to global poverty eradication, the entity has not yet ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Nor has the Holy See ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) or the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It has ratified only four UN human rights conventions: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, and its Optional Protocols¹⁰); the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CAT); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CRD); and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Even here, however, the Vatican places reservations on the treaties it has ratified,¹¹ and strongly resisted the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child during its February 2014 review.¹²

In practical terms, the Holy See refers to the Vatican's representatives at international fora, with foreign affairs run out of its Secretariat of State located in Rome.¹³ A number of papal councils support the Pope's international advocacy, including—until recently—the Pontifical Council for the Family, which is centrally involved in the Holy See's engagement in rights related to gender and sexuality.¹⁴ The Council's objectives were to "ensure that the rights of the family be acknowledged and defended even in the social and political realm," and to support and coordinate initiatives to "protect human life from the first moment of conception and to encourage responsible procreation."¹⁵ In 2006, the Council stated that "never before has the natural institution of marriage and the family been the victim of such violent attacks."¹⁶

In October 2015, Pope Francis announced his intent at the Synod of Bishops on the Family¹⁷ to replace the Council with a new Dicastery for the Laity, Family, and Life, effective September 2016. The new department is expected to “maintain the dignity and basic good of the Sacrament of marriage” and work so that “the family institution may always fulfill its proper functions within the Church and society.”¹⁸ Together with informing the Holy See’s policy positions on rights related to gender and sexuality in human rights fora, the Dicastery will work with the Pontifical Council for Life, which is responsible for many of the Church’s positions on abortion, contraception, in-vitro fertilization (IVF), and euthanasia, as well as the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, which is based in Rome and with affiliates in Benin, Brazil, India, the United States, Mexico and Spain.¹⁹



The Holy See has consistently opposed the right to equality, instead embracing the concept of the ‘complementarity’ of men and women

BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT AT THE UN

The Holy See has been highly active in UN negotiations on rights related to gender and sexuality since the 1990s, taking a consistently conservative stance in relation to issues of women’s human rights, sexual rights, reproductive health and rights, and sexual rights. The Holy See has consistently opposed the right to equality, instead embracing the concept of the ‘complementarity’ of men and women. It frequently promotes women’s value—her ‘natural’ role—as based only on her status within a family context, such as a mother or wife.

With respect to contraception, at the UN level the Holy See regularly works to scale back language. Its representatives have repeatedly “refused to endorse” contraception, including for use in HIV/AIDS prevention programs, and have spoken out against emergency contraception in the context of wartime rape.²⁰

Especially at the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the Holy See has fought hard against the right of women to choose abortion. At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Holy See objected to the phrase “unwanted pregnancy”, arguing that it implies pregnancy is a negative experience, which is inconsistent with the Church’s notion of womanhood.²¹ The Holy See has criticized comprehensive sexuality education and objected to the provision of sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents, seeking instead to promote ‘parental rights.’²²

The Holy See first became visible in anti-rights advocacy at the United Nations—and inspired Catholic and other Christian Right religious and civil society organizations to operate at the international level—during the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994. The Vatican spearheaded concerted opposition to the draft program, which has been described as a “full court press against abortion involving the Vatican diplomatic service, the Roman Curia, and bishops around the world.”²³

Motivated by the potential recognition of a right to abortion as a part of reproductive rights, the Holy See launched a high-level international campaign prior to the Cairo negotiations: the Pope wrote to each head of state, and called in all ambassadors to the Holy See in Rome to explain the Vatican’s position.²⁴ The Vatican also called upon Bishops’ conferences around the world to pressure their governments to oppose pro-abortion language in the Cairo outcome document. Finally, Vatican representatives abroad were instructed to develop alliances with Catholic and Muslim countries that opposed abortion.²⁵

EVOLVING RHETORIC

While the Holy See’s mission has communicated a consistent conservative position on issues related to

gender and sexuality at the UN, the Vatican has been dynamic in the ways it presents its arguments. It increasingly relies upon ‘secularized’ technical claims and purportedly empirical evidence, frames reproduction and sexuality in the context of ‘the family’, and strategically reframes human rights norms to reflect its own regressive position.²⁶

The Vatican increasingly relies upon ‘secularized’ technical claims and purportedly empirical evidence

To justify its positions on contraception and reproductive health and rights, the Vatican increasingly resorts to scientific or ‘technical’ arguments concerning population dynamics, such as the pressures of old-age support rates²⁷ on governments. More than ever,²⁸ the Holy See tends to employ a unitary and strictly defined concept of ‘the family’ as an overarching principle to articulate its moral positions concerning sexuality and reproduction. This involves strategic employment of the comments on family as set out in article 16 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), which states that, “men and women of full age...have the right to found a family.”

Ignoring subsequent human rights texts, including those on marriage and diversity of families around the world,²⁹ the Holy See, alongside other anti-rights actors and allies, misleadingly focuses its attention on the third clause of the article. They employ the text, “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State,”³⁰ to argue for human rights protection of a strictly patriarchal and heteronormative conception of family. The Holy See then calls for greater recognition of this narrow conception of family in cultural, political, fiscal, and social policy. That the Vatican does not focus critique on non-nuclear family arrangements outside of Western cultures, and adopts a

'compassionate' attitude towards 'incomplete' families (such as grandparents raising children), highlights that its attack is ultimately focused on expressions of women's and sexual dissidents' autonomy and free choice.

In the days of the Cairo and Beijing conferences, the Vatican's rhetoric at the United Nations was couched in explicitly religious language and prescription of personal moral responsibilities. It has since shifted to language in a secular register, citing dignity, duties, and responsibilities to influence negotiations and international policy. For example, the Holy See now calls for agreements that uphold the 'dignity' and 'rights' of the couple³¹ that "promote a responsible kind of personal liberty,"³² and "create the social conditions which will enable them to make appropriate decisions in the light of their responsibilities."³³ With respect to the latter, the Vatican's language on 'social responsibility' is implicitly or explicitly contrasted with 'selfish individuality,' harnessing the power and appeal of the social justice critique of capitalism and liberalism.

As exemplified by its discourse on the family, in its advocacy at the UN the Vatican has in recent years become more strategic by frequently referring to re-interpreted human rights instruments. The Holy See regularly attempts to set up a 'battle of rights,' such as presenting abortion rights as in opposition to the right to life, and setting child and youth rights to comprehensive sexuality education against 'parental rights.'³⁴ These approaches echo the talking points and negotiating techniques of such anti-right civil society training materials as Family Watch International's UN Resource Guide.

The Vatican's language on 'social responsibility' is implicitly or explicitly contrasted with 'selfish individuality,' harnessing the power and appeal of the social justice critique of capitalism and liberalism

The Holy See regularly attempts to set up a battle of rights, such as presenting abortion rights as in opposition to the right to life

COORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

As the mimicry in rhetoric noted above suggests, the Holy See has established strong links with many anti-rights civil society organizations active at the United Nations, especially amongst Catholic CSOs. Recently, the Vatican has broadened its appeal through its self-proclaimed role as the international “voice of conscience,” and given its special access in policy spaces. Thus, it has taken on a leading and coordinating role of conservative Christian and Catholic proponents of ‘the family’ and opponents of ‘gender ideology’ at the UN.³⁵

Christian Right organizations in the United States who were active on the domestic level and who had previously ignored international fora made public statements of support of the Vatican

Galvanized by the publicity around the Holy See’s first concerted foray into rights related to gender and sexuality at the ICPD, Christian Right organizations in the United States who were active on the domestic level and who had previously ignored international fora made public statements of support of the Vatican³⁶ and began to engage the UN.³⁷ In the following year in Beijing, for instance, the U.S. anti-rights groups Concerned Women for America and Focus on the Family attended the World Conference to lend a hand to the Holy See’s efforts to curtail abortion and other rights. Today we can see how these links persist, most visibly in the number of public UN events co-hosted by the Holy See and Christian Right civil society.

In many ways, the Vatican also instigated conservative links not only across institutional and regional lines, but across religions. The Holy See’s outreach and coordination with conservative Muslim-majority

countries, such as Iran and Libya, to develop a unified front against reproductive rights during the Cairo negotiations first established the connections that have evolved into a dynamic interfaith orthodox alliance at the UN.³⁸

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

STATUS AND STRUCTURE

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, formerly known as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is the second-largest intergovernmental organization in the world, after the United Nations itself. The OIC is composed of 57 Member States, but this may increase to 58 if Liberia’s November 2016 bid to join the OIC is approved. There are also five OIC Observer States, the most recent of which is Russia.³⁹ The Organization has a Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations.

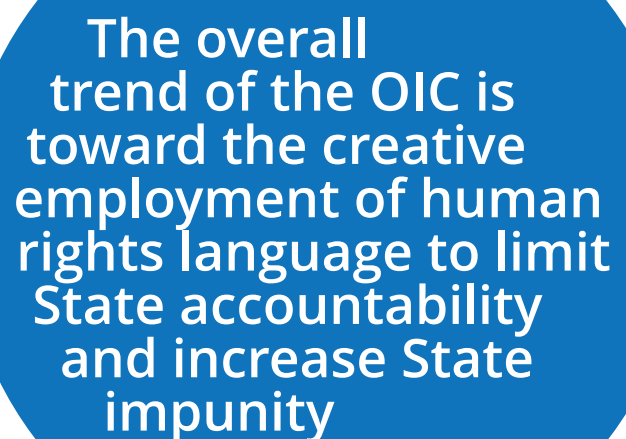
There have been several shifts in leadership of the OIC in the recent past, which point to changes in the organization’s culture and policy bent. The former secretary general of the organization, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu—a Turkish national and academic described by some internally as relatively ‘moderate’ or a ‘reformer’—was replaced in 2014 by İyad bin Amin Madani, a Saudi national who formerly served as a member of its Shura Council,⁴⁰ as Minister of Hajj,⁴¹ and as Minister of Information and Culture. The Organization’s headquarters are now located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Madani subsequently resigned in late October 2016 citing health reasons two days after Egypt’s Foreign Affairs minister condemned remarks he made that were perceived to be mocking Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.⁴² Yusuf al-Othaimen, nominated by Saudi Arabia and a former Minister of Social Affairs, became secretary general in November 2016.⁴³

The Organization, which was founded in September 1969, describes itself as the “collective voice of the Muslim world” that aims to “safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony.” The OIC’s relationship to institutionalized religion, however, is very different from the Holy See’s.⁴⁴ Not all OIC Member States have Muslim-majority populations, nor do the governments of all Member States define themselves as ‘Islamic.’ The Organization is at its heart an alliance of States and has no formal ties to doctrinal authorities or doctrinal authority of its own, nor does it employ religious institutional figures in any position of power. Its constituent nation-States feature a broad and often conflicting range of policies with respect to the role of religion in public life and the State, religious interpretations, and schools of thought.

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

On a surface level, the OIC appears to have made a number of moves towards greater engagement—and a change in positioning and rhetoric—with respect to human rights and women’s human rights over the past decade. However, like most conservative actors who are involved in international human rights fora, the overall trend of the OIC is toward the creative employment of human rights language to limit State accountability and increase State impunity; create loopholes in human rights protection based on arguments citing religion, culture, or national sovereignty; and develop a parallel and conservative human rights regime fashioned out of co-opted human rights norms.

From its initial foray into the field of human rights, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI), the OIC has subsequently worked to evolve its framework, developing a new Charter, a Covenant on the Rights of Children in Islam, and working towards the development of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), and a subsidiary program on women’s and children’s rights.



The overall trend of the OIC is toward the creative employment of human rights language to limit State accountability and increase State impunity

The OIC was sharply criticized for the Cairo Declaration, approved by the Organization in 1990⁴⁵ and still the organization's primary human rights document, albeit not binding for Member States. The Declaration was developed in large part in reaction to the UDHR, which was perceived as a Western and imperialist document;⁴⁶ however, the text of the CDHRI actually reinforced a number of rights and norms enshrined in the UDHR, the ICCPR, and the ICESCR, such as that of human dignity.⁴⁷ Similarly, rights are declared to have a universal character, and described as fundamental.⁴⁸ The Declaration features an anti-discrimination clause⁴⁹, the right to life⁵⁰, the prohibition of genocide⁵¹, and the right to marry⁵²; in addition, it includes due process rights,⁵³ a right to equality under the law⁵⁴, and rights to property⁵⁵ and privacy.⁵⁶ The Declaration also includes a general right to education and to health⁵⁷, the right to work⁵⁸, and the right to a clean environment.⁵⁹

However, the Cairo Declaration features several exclusions. It does not include a right to freedom of religion and conscience, nor to free assembly or association. The CDHRI omits the UDHR's requirement for free consent in marriage.⁶⁰ The Declaration also makes no mention of minority rights, the rights of detainees, the right to a nationality, the right to vote, trade union rights, the right to social security and to strike, and the right to participate in cultural life (all of which are, in contrast, included in the UDHR).

Crucially, the document also evokes an undefined (and seemingly unitary) conception of 'Islamic shariah' as the foundation of the human rights included therein, and employs 'shariah' to justify sweeping exceptions on universal human rights. The CDHRI states that the "Islamic Shariah" shall be the sole reference for the "explanation or clarification" of the rights contained in the Declaration⁶¹, and recognizes individuals' freedom and right to a dignified life *in accordance with* the "Islamic Shariah."⁶² Additional references to the "shariah" and its principles can be found throughout the text.⁶³

The document can be critiqued in many ways from a human rights perspective. Firstly, it is restrictive, as above, and undermines the universality of the rights it describes. In several cases it conflicts with established human rights law, with respect to equality and non-discrimination, for example. The Declaration suggests distinct sets of rights and duties for women⁶⁴, and outlines a differentiation of gender roles by giving husbands the duty of maintenance and welfare of the family.⁶⁵ It also does not provide for a general right to work for all.

The Cairo Declaration suggests distinct sets of rights and duties for women, and outlines a differentiation of gender roles by giving husbands the duty of maintenance and welfare of the family

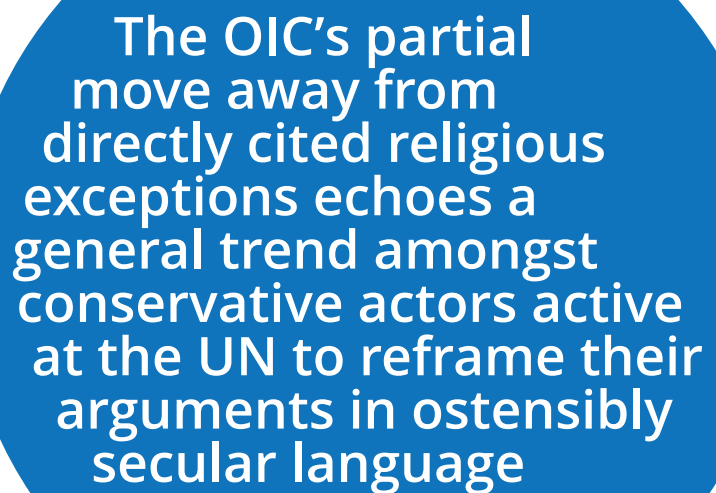
Further, since the Declaration does not define what it means by "shariah" in this context, its restrictions on rights are themselves ambiguous and flexible, dependent on a given government's interpretation of the concept. This gives State leaders exceptional influence in determining their own human rights commitments to their nationals. Thus, the Declaration empowers governments over individuals,⁶⁶ and therefore fails to provide a framework for accountability.

In subsequent years, the OIC sought to revisit and, to some extent, revise its textual approach to human rights as an institution, although it has not yet developed an alternative to or an update on the Cairo Declaration in its breadth. In 2005, however, the OIC approved its second authoritative⁶⁷ statement on rights, the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam.⁶⁸ To some extent, the Covenant moves away from a reliance on "shariah" and exceptions on the basis of religion. It does continue to cite "shariah," but does not establish the concept as a guiding

force in interpretation of the document. The text also refers to practices that States have justified regarding 'shariah' in international human rights spaces, urging States to make efforts to "end actions based on customs, traditions, or practices that are in conflict with the rights and duties stipulated in this Covenant."⁶⁹

The OIC's partial move away from directly cited religious exceptions echoes a general trend amongst conservative actors active at the UN to reframe their arguments in ostensibly 'secular' language. The themes of the document also reflect many of the emerging preoccupations of religious right actors who are working internationally. The Covenant follows up on a general OIC commitment to focus on issues related to women, children, and 'the family.' Its main objectives are: to care for and strengthen families, and "to establish the conditions in which Muslim children can be proud of their nation, country, and religion."⁷⁰ In this way, the Covenant emphasizes the key role of the 'traditional family' and religious values in protecting the rights of the child, privileging the role of collective bodies, such as the nation and the family.

Also in 2005, as part of a larger reform of the OIC, the organization launched a Ten Year Programme of Action, finalizing an amended Charter in 2008 and establishing the IPHRC in 2011. The then-Secretary General, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, declared that this "new approach, in the objectives of the Charter" would mark "a great step forward in adapting to global human rights values" and would involve "closer alignment of principle to the international instruments and the practices of other regional or intergovernmental organizations."⁷¹ In 2011, the OIC also co-sponsored a UN resolution on religious discrimination⁷², which seemed to signal a move away from its multi-year anti-defamation agenda (outlined below).



The OIC's partial move away from directly cited religious exceptions echoes a general trend amongst conservative actors active at the UN to reframe their arguments in ostensibly secular language

Yet the following years have been troubling for most observers of the OIC's engagement with human rights. Universalist or liberalizing tendencies present at the beginning of the IPHRC project seem to have been overtaken by relativist and regressive inclinations. As of today, the OIC's fledgling human rights institutions lack monitoring and enforcement capacity and are focused outwards to the actions of non-Member States.

The OIC's fledgling human rights institutions lack monitoring and enforcement capacity and are focused outwards to the actions of non-Member States

The IPHRC has thus far failed to develop any major initiatives to promote and protect human rights in its constituent States. The Commission meets yearly, and consists of 18 human rights 'experts'—six from Arab Member States, six from Asian Member States, and six from African Member States—all of whom are elected for a period of four years. The statutory goal of the IPHRC is to "advance human rights" and to "support Member States' effort to consolidate civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights."

Changes in leadership reflect a hardening of stances since 2014. Madani, who replaced Ihsanoglu, has been described as a 'strong relativist' with respect to human rights.⁷³ Madani stated that the OIC was considering "limitations on freedom of expression, gender equality" and "applying human rights in accordance with the OIC Member States' constitutional and legal systems," highlighting his prioritization of untrammelled State sovereignty at the expense of universal human rights.⁷⁴ Madani has argued that there are aspects of the UDHR that are "beyond the normal scope of human rights and clash with Islamic teachings" and has criticized freedom of speech on the grounds of defamation of religion.⁷⁵

The leadership of the IPHRC has also shifted since 2011. The position of chairperson, formerly held by Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, an Indonesian academic and women's rights activist, has now shifted to Mohammed Kawu Ibrahim, a Nigerian diplomat. Ibrahim has stated that the Commission will now use the "richness of Islamic values and traditions to nurture a new human rights culture," which suggests that the IPHRC's current focus is on articulating a parallel human rights system based on a particular conservative interpretation of Islam as an alternative to universal human rights.

Many OIC leading states increasingly see human rights as a threat to their power both internally and regionally and want to address this threat proactively

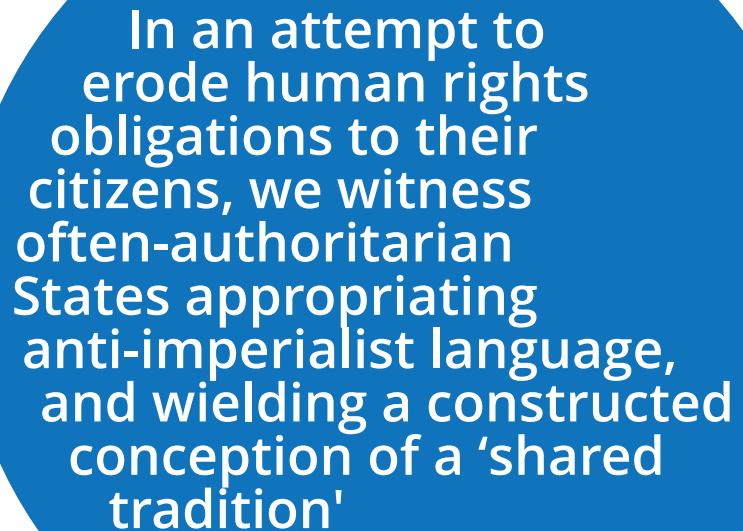
One key explanation for this landscape of ambiguity and regression is that the OIC's human rights initiatives run counter to the interests of a number of authoritarian governments involved in the organization. Many OIC leading states increasingly see human rights as a threat to their power both internally and regionally and want to address this threat proactively. For instance, OIC country host Saudi Arabia has been particularly active since the revolutions and uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in undermining movements for greater democracy and popular empowerment within the region.⁷⁶ It seems likely that Member States are using the OIC as a tool in this strategy to reinforce existing power hierarchies—to subvert, reappropriate, and thus contain human rights on the domestic and international levels.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT AT THE UN

The OIC frequently employs arguments citing religion on the international stage. Several of the leading nations influential in its work are currently autocratic in nature, and strategically employ references to religion and claims to represent the values of 'the Muslim world' to bolster their social and political power on a domestic level and to gain legitimacy in multilateral spaces. In many ways, the organization is an example of the clear-eyed strategic use of religious fundamentalist arguments by government officials in service of geopolitics, as they jockey for regional and global power. In an attempt to erode human rights obligations to their citizens, we witness often-authoritarian States appropriating anti-imperialist language, and wielding a constructed conception of a 'shared tradition.'

Utilizing these strategies, the OIC first rose to visibility at the UN as an advocate of the regressive series of 'defamation of religion' resolutions at the Human Rights Council (HRC) between 2002 and 2010. Beginning as an effort to combat "defamation against Islam," the OIC developed a wider coalition amongst conservative States by broadening the focus of its campaign to "defamation of religion," with several resolutions on this issue passing by majority vote in the HRC.

Described as a blasphemy law⁷⁷ on the international level, the 'defamation' resolutions sought to impose additional restrictions on individuals' freedom of expression to protect 'religion' from criticism. The initiative came to an end following a four-year consultation and initiative led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Office released the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence in 2012. The Rabat Plan aimed to resolve the defamation of religion impasse



In an attempt to erode human rights obligations to their citizens, we witness often-authoritarian States appropriating anti-imperialist language, and wielding a constructed conception of a 'shared tradition'

by clarifying State obligations to prohibit incitement to hatred at the same time as it protected the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion.⁷⁸ The Plan was accompanied by a series of yearly resolutions—beginning with resolution 16/18 in 2011—on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, and stigmatization of, discrimination, and incitement to violence against persons based on religion or belief.⁷⁹

In 2014, 2015 and 2016, the OIC sponsored a new series of resolutions at the Human Rights Council on ‘protection of the family.’ The Member States of the organization have largely coalesced in opposition to HRC resolutions on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2011, 2014, and 2016, and have also opposed the inclusion of references to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in several resolutions at the General Assembly.

2015–2016: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A key focus of OIC advocacy at the United Nations over 2015 and 2016 has been the series of ‘protection of the family’ resolutions at the HRC, described in more detail below. ‘The family’ has been a central preoccupation of the OIC in international policy spaces in general and a focal point for collaboration with other anti-rights actors, including Christian Evangelical CSOs. Member States were also active in the lobby both to ‘mainstream’ family in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in pushing for a dedicated goal on the family.

As mentioned above, the OIC was active in efforts to undermine the 2016 resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity at the HRC. All Member States of the OIC, with the exception of Albania, voted against the SOGI resolution or abstained. The organization released a statement outlining its strong opposition to the resolution and its creation of a UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, arguing that “the notion of sexual orientation is alien to the international human rights norms and standards as well

as against the fundamental precepts of not only Islamic but many other religious and cultural societies.”⁸⁰ According to Secretary-General Madani, adoption of the resolution constituted the imposition of “one set of values and preferences on the rest of the world and counteracts the fundamentals of universal human rights” and respect for “national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds.”⁸¹

As the June 2016 HRC session wrapped up, the OIC also spearheaded hostile amendments to undermine the language and intent of the resolution, with Pakistan proposing 11 amendments to the text on behalf of the organization.⁸² While proposed amendments to remove specific language on SOGI and replace it with other categories of discrimination were rejected, several hostile amendments to the preambular paragraphs of the resolution were successfully included in the final text.⁸³

The successful amendments reflect the relativist tendencies of the OIC discussed above. Four amendments invoked the ideas of respecting “regional, cultural and religious value systems,” “domestic debates,” “sovereign priorities,” and expressed concern around “concepts pertaining to social matters including private individual conduct.”⁸⁴ The amendments also attempted to present the main content of the resolution as an imposition and as disruptive to the joint development of human rights norms, stressing the need to “maintain joint ownership of the international human rights agenda” and to consider human rights in an “objective and non-confrontational manner.”⁸⁵ This language, discussed in greater detail below, is deeply antithetical to the foundational principle of the universality of rights.

2. Civil society organizations

Introduction

In an unexpected shift in traditional dynamics at the UN, there has been a substantial increase in conservative religiously-affiliated non-State actors involved in the international human rights arena.⁸⁶ This trend can be understood as a form of backlash against the gains of feminists and other progressive actors.

In what appears to be a conscious attempt to replicate the organizing methods and level of engagement of feminist and progressive civil society in transnational policy spaces, anti-rights civil society organizations are moving into New York and Geneva to further a very different agenda.

In terms of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) accreditation⁸⁷, the majority of such regressive civil society organizations are Christian Evangelical or Catholic in orientation.⁸⁸ Most of the anti-rights CSOs active in international human rights spaces were founded in or are based in the United States, although their rhetoric often claims to speak with the 'collective voice' of the global South.

In fact, the bulk of United States based religiously-affiliated conservative CSOs now operating at the UN have long been active on the domestic front in U.S. 'culture wars,'⁸⁹ targeting women and individuals who are non-conforming in their gender identity, expression and/or sexual orientation.⁹⁰ Ironically, given their

In what appears to be a conscious attempt to replicate the methods of progressive civil society, anti-rights organizations are moving into New York and Geneva

Most of the anti-rights CSOs active in international human rights spaces were founded in or are based in the United States, although their rhetoric often claims to speak with the 'collective voice' of the global South

tactical appropriation of anti-imperialist discourses at the United Nations, a number of the CSOs highlighted below—including the Family Research Council, World Congress of Families, and United Families International—have been and continue to be involved in attempts to export the United States ‘culture wars’ abroad, particularly in an attempt to shape national policies regarding sexuality and gender identity in several African, Eastern European, and Latin American countries.⁹¹ In the Latin American context, these activities coexist with a longer history of struggle between ultra-conservative and emancipatory discourses around sexuality and gender with the Vatican/Catholic Church significantly influencing outcomes.

Many in the network of U.S. anti-rights civil society organizations made the transition from outsiders to insiders through President Bush’s courting of the religious right at the international level

As the section below highlights, religious right civil society organizations working at the United Nations increasingly join forces in a cross-denominational conservative coalition that hopes to achieve common goals related to ‘life, family, and nation.’ For U.S.-based organizations, their capacity to organize, influence, and build cross-regional coalitions received a boost during the George W. Bush administration (2001-2009) that has yielded an ongoing effect.

Many in the network of U.S. anti-rights civil society organizations made the transition from outsiders to insiders through President Bush’s courting of the religious right at the international level. Under Bush, Christian Right activists were included as official representatives on U.S. delegations to UN conferences, such as the World Summit on Children.⁹² United States

religious right civil society benefited from increased access, institutionalization, and lobbying power in negotiations on rights for women, children, and individuals with non-conforming gender identity, expression and/or sexual orientation.

In the same period ultra-conservative actors in the U.S. built relationships with counterparts abroad. For instance, at the 2002 UN Special Session on Children, the U.S. led a coalition of majority Catholic and Muslim countries, including Sudan, Iran and Pakistan, to oppose draft language recognizing ‘various forms of the family’ and reproductive health services for adolescents.⁹³ The relationships initiated then form the basis of today’s ongoing strategic alliances with conservative allies on the State level and across religious lines.⁹⁴ With the new U.S. administration under Donald Trump and Vice-President Michael Pence—who describes himself as a “devout Evangelical”—it is highly probable that U.S. anti-rights CSOs will be again endowed with greater access, power, and inclusion in the determination of United States foreign policy. At the time of writing, the new administration had already reinstated and expanded the ‘Global Gag Rule,’ a policy that prohibits U.S. funding from going to any international organization that administers, counsels on, advocates for, or mentions abortion; and it has defunded the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).⁹⁵

Traditionalist civil society actors working to influence international human rights today are also more unified at the international level than the domestic

Traditionalist civil society actors working to influence international human rights today are also more unified at the international level than the domestic. While the relationship between the Protestant and Catholic Right is

uneasy within the United States⁹⁶, in UN venues Catholic, Mormon, and Evangelical organizations and individuals now largely act as a unified bloc. An ongoing project, anti-rights CSOs increasingly focus on coalition building and training as part of their operations. In turn, networks are developed to further collaboration at the international, regional, and national levels.

In the following section, we examine several of the most active ultra-conservative religiously-affiliated civil society actors engaged in international human rights advocacy over 2015 and 2016. Given the results of the recent U.S. election, it is likely that their influence and impact will rise sharply in the near future; indeed, as of early 2017, we have already seen their impact.⁹⁷

World Congress of Families

“You can imagine what the world would look like if the purveyors of today’s culture get their way: abortion on demand, marriage abandoned, gender redefined, parental rights eliminated, religious liberty abandoned, commercial surrogacy mandated, the elderly and infirm killed in the name of “compassion”...”⁹⁸

– World Congress of Families

BACKGROUND, MISSION, AND KEY OBJECTIVES

The World Congress of Families (WCF)⁹⁹ was launched in 1997 by the conservative Christian scholar Allan Carlson as a project of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society. Carlson argued that heterosexual, procreative marriage is the “bulwark of ordered liberty” and that its preservation and promotion is the sole path to preventing a future marked by “catastrophic population decline, economic contraction, and human tragedy” brought on by feminism, socialism and secularism.¹⁰⁰

In 2016, Brian Brown, the director of the National Organization for Marriage, was chosen as the new President of the WCF.¹⁰¹ The National Organization for Families, which is currently developing an international branch,¹⁰² was established to work against the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States.

The World Congress of Families describes its mission as to “help secure the foundations of society” by uniting and empowering leaders worldwide to support and defend:

- i. the natural family “founded on marriage between a man and a woman”;
- ii. “parental rights” and the welfare of children, “including their need for both a mother and a father”;
- iii. the dignity and “sanctity of all human life from conception”; and
- iv. freedom of speech, religion, and conscience.

Fundamentally, the World Congress of Families defines itself as a “pro-family” organization, specifically positioning itself as defending what it defines as the “natural family.” The WCF describes the natural family as a “totally self-evident expression,” that signifies a “natural order to family structure that is common across cultures.”

Emphasizing its heteronormative and patriarchal structure in a usefully vague manner, the WCF states that the natural family “precludes incompatible constructs of the family as well as incompatible behaviors among its members.” The Congress supports criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct and is listed as an anti-LGBT hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.¹⁰³

The World Congress of Families (WCF) is also the instigator of the World Family Declaration, a statement and advocacy tool launched in 2014 and endorsed by a coalition of anti-rights civil society actors.¹⁰⁴ The WCF draws its organizational principles and goals from the Declaration, holding that “the family exists prior to the

State and possesses inherent dignity and rights which States are morally bound to respect and protect.” Further, the World Congress of Families calls on officials and policymakers “to immediately establish policies and implement measures to preserve and strengthen marriage and family.”¹⁰⁵

The WCF's central objective is to develop and sustain a worldwide network of anti-rights 'pro-family' organizations, scholars, State officials, and conservative religious actors

The WCF carries out its work through a number of different programs, which are outlined below; however, its central objective is to develop and sustain a worldwide network of anti-rights 'pro-family' organizations, scholars, State officials, and conservative religious actors. Their stated aim is to build an international movement of “religiously grounded family morality systems” that can influence and shape policy at the United Nations.¹⁰⁶

REGION AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION(S)

The World Congress of Families, which has announced an upcoming name change to the International Organization of the Family¹⁰⁷, is based in Rockford, Illinois, and is affiliated with the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society.

While the WCF has significant links worldwide, headquarters staff are all North American, and eight of twelve members of its Board of Directors are also based in the United States. Other Board Members include:

Ignacio Arsuaga, the Spanish founder of conservative online petition and mobilization

platforms CitizenGo¹⁰⁸ and HazteOir¹⁰⁹

Alexey Komov, WCF's Russian representative, founder of the Russian CSO FamilyPolicy¹¹⁰, connected to the Russian Orthodox Church, Russian government, and linked to two prominent Orthodox Russian billionaires funding much of WCF's work in the region: Vladimir Yakunin and Konstantin Malofeev¹¹¹

Vicente Segu Marcos, director of La Fundacion in Mexico, which advocates for “family values and religious freedom”

Luca Volontè, former Italian politician, leader of the (Christian) Union of the Center, founder of the Novae Terra Foundation,¹¹² and author of such pieces as ‘European Resistance to Cultural Suicide’¹¹³

In terms of religious affiliation, while the founder of the WCF is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the organization defines itself as inter-faith (in practice, Catholic and Christian), as “an alliance of orthodox believers, based on their commitment to Judeo-Christian values and the natural family.”¹¹⁴

PROGRAMS

The World Congress of Families pursues several programs. Their work includes:

- i. Research;
- ii. Knowledge production and dissemination through a devoted academic journal, *The Family in America*¹¹⁵, which will soon be called *The Natural Family: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, and a related news service;
- iii. A partnership program and related newsletter;
- iv. Lobbying at the United Nations “to defend life, faith, and family”; and
- v. WCF international and regional conferences.

The WCF thus issues a regular stream of declarations, ‘social science’ publications, policy papers, and newsletters declaring and disseminating its messaging. Together with United Families International, the WCF recently co-authored the third edition of the massive UN Negotiating Guide¹¹⁶, a comprehensive text that advises anti-rights—including ‘pro-life’—actors on negotiating tactics, key talking points, and ‘consensus language’ to further their advocacy at the United Nations.

To further its work disseminating and amplifying pseudo-scientific arguments in defence of regressive claims, the Congress recently developed MARRIpedia, an online “social science encyclopedia on all matters related to family, marriage, religion, and sexuality.”¹¹⁷ This database project aims to streamline and synthesize the body of misleading ‘social science’ work from a growing set of conservative religious academics into concise entries that facilitate wider dissemination and use in lobbying at the international and national levels.

As aforementioned, however, the most significant contribution of the World Congress of Families to the constellation of regressive religiously-affiliated actors active in international human rights spaces is its convening power, and its associated networking and training role. Since 1997, WCF has convened ten international conferences, which it describes as the “Olympics” of social conservatism¹¹⁸, held in Prague, Geneva, Mexico City, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Madrid, Sydney, Moscow¹¹⁹, Salt Lake City, and Tbilisi. It also convened and provided logistical and financial support to a much greater number of regional conferences (outlined below) throughout this time.



Since 1997, WCF has convened ten international conferences, which it describes as the “Olympics” of social conservatism

COORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

As of September 2016, the World Congress of Families has 35 organizational partners, which are based in various countries around the world.

North America

- Alliance Defending Freedom
- Christian Broadcasting Network
- Christian Film and Television Commission
- Ethics and Public Policy Center
- Family First Foundation
- Family Watch International
- Fellowship of St James
- Grasstops USA
- Home School Legal Defense Organization
- Human Life International
- Lighted Candle Society
- National Center on Sexual Exploitation
- National Organization for Marriage
- Population Research Institute
- REAL Women of Canada
- The Ruth Institute
- United Families International

Europe and Russia

- Cristiani – Luci sull’Est (Italy)
- Christian Concern (UK)
- CitizenGo (Spain)
- Novae Tarrae Foundation (Italy)
- ProVita (Italy)
- Associazione per la Difesa Dei Valori (Italy)
- Sanctity of Motherhood program (Russia)
- Dveri (Serbia)
- Georgian Demographic Society (Georgia)

Australasia

- Dads4Kids (Australia)
- Endeavour Forum (Australia)
- Family First New Zealand

Latin America

- Latin American Alliance for the Family
- Red Familia (Mexico)

Africa

- Family Policy Institute (South Africa)

Transnational/International

- Bruderhof Communities
- Heartbeat International
- Worldwide Organization for Women

To carry out its operations, especially its yearly conferences, a substantial part of the WCF’s budget comes from membership dues contributed by its partners. The combined annual budget for WCF’s partner network amounts to over \$200 million.¹²⁰ The WCF claims that its partner network reaches over 50 million people worldwide.¹²¹

The World Congress of Families has made progress toward its goal of extending links to anti-rights civil society, State, and religious institutional actors worldwide through its international and regional conferences. The 2015 Salt Lake City World Congress was hosted by the Sutherland Institute, a conservative think-tank, and featured presentations from the Church of Latter-Day Saints; the Russian Orthodox Church’s Department of Family and Life; the anti-abortion Catholic Priests for Life; the Foundation for African Culture and Heritage; the Polish Federation of Pro-Life Movements; the European Federation of Catholic Family Associations; the UN NGO Committee on the Family; and the Political Network for Values, among many others.¹²²

The 2016 World Congress in Tbilisi, Georgia was organized by the Georgian Demographic Society, and speakers included the leader of the Party of Socialists in the Republic of Moldova and representatives from the Polish Parliament; FamilyPolicy; the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies; and HatzeOir, among others.¹²³

2015 AND 2016: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

World Congress of Families IX in Salt Lake City, United States: October 27-30, 2015

- 3,300 delegates attended from over 60 countries
- Plenary on “Pro-Family and Pro-Life Victories at the United Nations,” featuring speakers from C-Fam, Family Watch International, the UN NGO Committee on the Family, and the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (Nigeria)
- Training for delegates on networking and coalition building; media; fundraising; strategic planning; use of social media for maximum impact; hosting a WCF conference, etc.
- For the first time, five regional meetings convened during the WCF: Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Australia/Asia¹²⁴

World Congress of Families X in Tbilisi, Georgia: May 15-18, 2016

- Theme: Civilization at the Crossroads: The Natural Family as the Bulwark of Freedom and Human Values
- Over 2,000 delegates attended from over 50 countries
- Organized by investment firm banker Levan Vasadze
- Georgian Patriarch Ilia II gave a blessing to the convening—first WCF convening in an Orthodox country—and George W. Bush sent a letter of welcome and support
- Presentation from Susan Roylance of the Howard Center on ‘Family Policy, as impacted by United Nations Treaties and Conference Documents’

Regional Conferences:

- Chisinau, Moldova: March 2015
- Belgrade, Serbia: April 2015
- Auckland, New Zealand: May 2015
- Tbilisi, Georgia: May 2015
- Orlando, United States: September 2015
- Port Harcourt, Nigeria: October 2015
- Christ Church, Barbados: April 2016
- Salta, Argentina: June 2016

- Nairobi, Kenya: September 2016
- Belgrade, Serbia: September 2016

Launch of MARRIpedia (see above): October 2015

Launch of the publication, website, and lobbying tool on “how the family as a unit can help achieve the SDGs,” *Family Capital and the SDGs*¹²⁵, together with United Families International, at the UN Habitat III conference in Quito in October, 2016.

Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam)

C-Fam is a Catholic organization based in the United States, with offices in New York and Washington, D.C. It operates primarily in multilateral spaces.

BACKGROUND, MISSION, AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Formerly the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, the Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam) was founded in 1997 to “monitor and affect the social policy debate at the United Nations and other international institutions.”¹²⁶ Since two months after its inception, it has been headed by the prolific and controversial¹²⁷ former journalist Austin Ruse.

C-Fam’s mission is to “defend life and family at international institutions” and to publicize what is described as an ongoing debate on these issues at the UN level. The organization’s stated vision is “the preservation of international law by discrediting socially radical policies at the United Nations” and other international policy spaces.¹²⁸ C-Fam’s mission and objectives are centred around this framing of a ‘proper’ (ultra-conservative) conception of international law as endangered by what they frequently refer to as ‘radical feminist ideology.’ Interestingly, they argue that the United Nations and other international mechanisms themselves hinder this ‘true’ understanding of international law, harming the family in the process.

The organization’s aims include re-establishment of this ‘proper understanding’ of international law, as well as ‘protection of national sovereignty’¹²⁹ and the dignity of the human person.

C-Fam is highly interested in building an anti-rights alliance active in UN spaces; Ruse has stated that he was inspired by the Holy See’s coalition-building efforts at the Cairo conference in 1994, and subsequently set out to

foster and grow the formation of a bloc of socially conservative State delegates to oppose the legalization of abortion and the inclusion of other rights related to gender and sexuality.¹³⁰ Ruse describes the religious right’s project at the United Nations as the defence of three sovereignties: nation, church, and family.¹³¹

PROGRAMS

While it occasionally joins other religious right organizations in conservative amicus briefs for regional legal fora, C-Fam’s focus in the international human rights arena is primarily in lobbying, media, information dissemination, and movement building.

The organization has been involved and highly visible at the UN, and particularly at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), since its inception. Since 1997, C-Fam operates a ‘CEDAW Watch’ program that operates to undermine the work of the CEDAW Committee, monitoring and reporting on the Committee in order to “provide policy-makers...with the information they need” to “protect their national laws from the harmful effects of the activist committee.”¹³² C-Fam also coordinates numerous parallel events yearly at the CSW with anti-rights actors to amplify its skewed conception of human rights and to network with potential allies.

The organization’s influence is also largely due to its online and mail-out presence. As an organization with a strong focus on strategic communications, C-Fam produces multiple weekly critiques of UN processes and progressive actors engaged in international and regional human rights spaces, and disseminates these weekly in a newsletter entitled *Friday Fax*. The newsletter has an alleged readership of more than 400,000.¹³³ In part because of its links to other U.S.-based religious right civil society organizations, as well as its high level of visibility, C-Fam has also spearheaded several campaigns. Most recently, it launched the Civil Society for the Family campaign in April 2016,¹³⁴ which is discussed in more

detail below.

C-Fam also has a youth wing, which is a subset of the organization called the **International Youth Coalition (IYC)**.¹³⁵ Inspired by a 2010 conference on youth sponsored by the UN Population Fund (UNPF) in Mexico, the initiative began by drafting and circulating a 'Youth Statement to the UN and the World'¹³⁶ at the conference.

The IYC was formally launched at a founding conference and week of training in July 2011, featuring anti-abortion activists Lila Rose of Live Action and Kristan Hawkins of Students for Life as key speakers. The coalition states that it aims to counter the view that youth worldwide support "legal and accessible abortion, CSE [comprehensive sexuality education] for children as young as ten years old, and policies encouraging homosexuality, promiscuity, and premarital sex."¹³⁷

The IYC describes itself as "youth defending life and family around the globe," and aims to offer a forum for youth (defined as below the age of 30) to educate their peers on and "challenge cultural norms that attack the dignity of the human person." The coalition's objective is to defend 'traditional values' and to ensure these values have significant influence on future generations.¹³⁸

In its Youth Statement¹³⁹, the IYC claims that parents are the primary educators of young people; that the rights of youth are based on their evolving capacities and must be balanced with the rights and duties of parents; and that "the full and proper expression of one's sexuality can only be realized in the total life-long and selfless commitment founded on love and rooted in the natural institution of marriage."¹⁴⁰ The statement also cites anti-rights talking points on abortion and gender, claiming that "present day youth are survivors...by virtue of our being born at all," that men and women are 'complementary' and that gender is not a social construct.¹⁴¹



C-Fam's mission is centred around its framing of a 'proper' conception of international law endangered by 'radical feminist ideology'

COORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

C-Fam is an offshoot of the hardline anti-rights civil society group Human Life International (HLI), whose founder, Paul Marx (a Catholic priest), has claimed that the United States' pro-choice movement is led by Jews "perpetrating another Holocaust."¹⁴² Because of these and similar positions, HLI was unsuccessful in its bid for ECOSOC status at the UN, and subsequently set up C-Fam as its UN lobbying arm. C-Fam was also instrumental in founding the conservative World Youth Alliance.¹⁴³

C-Fam prioritizes relationships with State delegates. Under Ruse's leadership it has worked to develop a friendly bloc of conservative State delegates at the UN¹⁴⁴, and to amplify the UN lobbying and activities of fellow religious right CSOs through its Friday Fax.

To some extent Austin Ruse's extreme rhetoric has weakened public links between the Holy See and the Catholic CSO in recent years; however, they continue to coordinate on UN events. C-Fam led the campaign to maintain the Holy See's special status at the UN,¹⁴⁵ countering a progressive call for the Vatican to be treated as a religious institution rather than a State on the international level.¹⁴⁶ C-Fam's senior vice president for research and director of its International Organizations Research Group also previously served as a member of the Holy See delegation to the Commission on Population and Development, and on the U.S. domestic level Ruse is a member of the Founders Circle of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast.

In addition, C-Fam collaborates on conservative initiatives with likeminded CSOs and State delegates. Most recently, C-Fam spearheaded the creation of Civil Society for the Family, a new coalition and platform developed "to confront the growing international threat against the family" posed by "overreach by international institutions."¹⁴⁷

As of November 2016, the coalition had 178 members, with an organizing committee comprised of C-Fam (U.S.), the Family Research Council (U.S.), CitizenGo and HazteOir (Spain), Human Life International (U.S.), the European Centre for Law and Justice (France), the Institute for Family Policies (Spain), the Institute for Legal Culture (Poland), the Novae Terrae Foundation (Italy), Derecho a Vivir (Spain), the National Organization for Marriage (U.S.), and the TransAtlantic Christian Council (Netherlands).¹⁴⁸

C-Fam has directly linked the creation of Civil Society for the Family to the regressive campaign against the human rights of people with non-conforming sexual orientation, describing the initiative as the "first pro-family coalition to explicitly push back against UN entities attempting to redefine the family to include same-sex relations."¹⁴⁹

In reality, the Coalition appears to have been formed primarily to deploy a new declarative advocacy tool into the anti-rights conversation at the UN: *The Family Articles*¹⁵⁰ (also the official platform of the Coalition). The Articles aim to forward the 'protection of the family' language¹⁵¹, which has been on the rise amongst conservative actors at the United Nations since 2014, and state that relations between individuals of the same sex are neither equivalent nor entitled to such protections.¹⁵² The Articles also claim that "the best available social science validates the exceptional status of the family in international law,"¹⁵³ and articulate their beliefs regarding UN entities and mandate holders with respect to the family:

The UN secretariat, agencies, treaty bodies, and other mandate holders are bound to assist Member States in fulfilling their obligations toward the family as defined in international law, and following the directions of UN Member States,¹⁵⁴

and,

Acts and declarations by UN entities and mandate holders that treat relations between individuals of the same sex as equivalent or analogous to the family, including acts and declarations purporting the existence of international human rights obligations on the basis of “sexual orientation and gender identity” are *ultra vires* and cannot give rise to binding legal obligations on sovereign States. Such acts and declarations are not based on valid interpretations of international law and policy, and cannot contribute to the formation of new customary international law.¹⁵⁵



**C-Fam
collaborates on
conservative
initiatives with
likeminded CSOs
and State
delegates**

Russia is a supporter of the initiative, writing to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in the context of the International Day of Families in May 2016 that the Coalition describes “attacks on the institution of the traditional family...as outright pressure bordering on ‘totalitarian measures’” and that “we have often heard calls from our partners to ‘listen to the voice of civil society.’ We believe that the position...on the subject of family values in this case is no exception.”¹⁵⁶ The Russian representative to the OSCE went on to call for the OSCE Chairperson to “take due account of the subject of the family” in the agenda of the organization, including the Human Dimension Committee.¹⁵⁷ He also demanded that the specialist OSCE executive structures take the issue up in their work, and recommend a future OSCE event to “share experiences on supporting the institution of the family” and “defending motherhood.”¹⁵⁸

2015 AND 2016: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

In addition to its regular production of op-eds and calls to action through its Friday Fax throughout the period of review, C-Fam sent a delegation and helped conduct training of conservative activists at the Commission on the Status of Women, and organized parallel and side events at the UN.

In May 2016, C-Fam co-sponsored a High-Level event entitled “United Nations for a Family-Friendly World,” together with Family Watch International, the Foreign Service Fellowship,¹⁵⁹ and the Group of Friends of the Family,¹⁶⁰ a new bloc composed of 25 States. At the event:

- Supporting organizations included regressive CSOs, such as the Family Research Council, Human Life International, CitizenGo and HazteOir, and Derecho a Vivir.
- Ruse announced the creation of Civil Society for the Family, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus presented the Group of the Friends of the Family (GoFF) Statement in Support of the Family,¹⁶¹ whilst GoFF delegates pushed for the UN to emphasize ‘pro-family’ policies in the implementation of the SDGs.
- Presenters launched an anti-rights advocacy tool and document promoted by the UN Family Rights Caucus (a civil society-led group), called “A Declaration on the Rights of Children and their Families: A Call from the Children of the World.”¹⁶²

C-Fam co-sponsored an event with the Civil Society for the Family and the Group of Friends of the Family State bloc (led by Belarus) in October 2016, which was entitled “The Rights of the Child: Parents, Science and Experience.”¹⁶³ Speakers argued that sexual and reproductive autonomy and anti-discrimination measures protecting same-sex couples undermine the rights of children.¹⁶⁴

At the 2015 CSW, C-Fam co-organized an anti-abortion side event with the Holy See and International Youth Forum featuring Live Action founder Lila Rose, one of the key instigators in the purported ‘sting’ operation into Planned Parenthood’s abortion services.¹⁶⁵ C-Fam also worked with the Holy See and WOOMB International¹⁶⁶ on an event “exposing the dangers of assisted reproductive technologies.”

C-Fam hosted a particularly controversial panel at the 2016 CSW alongside REAL Women of Canada, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) International, Human Life International, the Family Research Council, and the Irish anti-abortion organization Family and Life on ‘Political Correctness and Gender Ideology,’ featuring Austin Ruse, Stella Morabito of the Federalist, and Michael Walsh (author of a book called *The Devil’s Pleasure Palace*). The panel argued vociferously and inventively against the human rights of trans individuals, claiming that their right not to be discriminated against constitutes a violation of freedom of expression and leads to a society in which civil and political rights as a whole are undermined, inevitably leading to totalitarianism.

Family Watch International

Family Watch International (FWI) is based in the United States, in Gilbert, Arizona. It is a Mormon-led organization.

BACKGROUND, MISSION, AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Family Watch International (FWI), another Christian Right organization highly active in international human rights spaces, was founded in 1999 and claims to have members and supporters in over 170 countries. The stated mission of FWI is to “preserve and promote the family, based on marriage between a man and a woman as the societal unit that provides the best outcome for men, women and children.”¹⁶⁷ FWI is designated an anti-LGBT organization by the Southern Poverty Law Center in their categorization of hate groups in the United States. The organization has ECOSOC status at the United Nations, where it operates under the name of Global Helping to Advance Women and Children.

Key stated objectives of the organization at the UN include 'education', family policy advocacy, and research. FWI argues they have been particularly effective in "uncovering evidence of how the UN system is being manipulated"¹⁶⁸ to impact national laws that "promote abortion, prostitution, homosexuality, promiscuity, and the sexualization of children."¹⁶⁹

Family Watch International works primarily on the international front and keeps a low national profile in the United States. The CSO is also one of a number of organizations, such as Human Life International, who have worked to export U.S. 'culture wars' to African countries, including Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda.¹⁷⁰

Sharon Slater, the former president of United Families International, where she took on a leading lobbying role at the UN, co-founded and heads FWI.

PROGRAMS

FWI is an activist lobby and advocacy organization, engaging in:

- Information dissemination through its regular Family News Wire
- Knowledge production and analysis
- Monitoring and tracking of developments on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in human rights spaces
- Multimedia advocacy
- Multi-level lobbying at the UN, and
- Regular training of anti-rights civil society and State delegates.

The organization also initiates and leads multi-organizational anti-rights initiatives, such as the UN Family Rights Caucus.



Family Watch International is one of a number of organizations who have worked to export U.S. 'culture wars'

In its programs, FWI argues that Christian family values are under attack and need to be defended globally. The organization's efforts focus on topics, such as marriage, abortion, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer) rights—advocating, for instance, for conversion therapy—comprehensive sexual education, and religious freedom.

Family Watch International develops and circulates a wide range of detailed policy briefs on their focus topics.¹⁷¹ Their materials, claiming support from social science and international law, set out negotiating tactics and key discourses to be used for anti-rights lobbying at the United Nations, which are discussed further below. Among others, these materials include:

- "Threats to National Sovereignty: UN Entities Overstepping Their Mandates"¹⁷²
- "Binding Obligations of States to Protect the Family"¹⁷³
- "An Analysis of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda: The Hidden Threats to Life, Family and Children"¹⁷⁴
- "What You Need to Know About Homosexuality"¹⁷⁵
- "Traditional Marriage is Essential to a Healthy Society"¹⁷⁶
- "The Relentless Push to Create an International Right to Abortion"¹⁷⁷

In many cases, FWI pairs its policy briefs and their dissemination with calls to action and online petitions, e.g. advocating against comprehensive sexual education in 'Stop the Sexualization of Children!'¹⁷⁸ It also produces short and accessible 'documentaries' promulgating these arguments, which are circulated online and at UN events and trainings.¹⁷⁹ One recent documentary is entitled, "The War on Children: The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda," and accompanies a petition that states that multiple UN agencies are implementing, promoting and/or funding "comprehensive CSE programs that

sexualize children and take away their innocence." Further, these programs "are designed to change all of the sexual and gender norms of society" and "openly promote promiscuity, high-risk sexual behavior and sexual pleasure even to very young children."¹⁸⁰

Most extensively, the organization has put together, and regularly updates, a sweeping anti-rights UN Resource Guide. *The Resource Guide to UN Consensus Language on Family Issues* is disseminated through meetings (including the World Congress of Families), trainings, and online, and is used to train State delegates and fellow conservative CSOs. The 2013 Guide¹⁸¹ is 90 pages in length, and discusses general techniques for conservative delegates and lobbyists to "negotiate a more family-friendly outcome document," as well as specific sections on 86 focal areas or 'policy issues'.

These include, among others:

"Various forms of the family": FWI highlights UN language on various forms of the family existing in different cultural, social, and political systems, but then recommends that advocates share information to "give governments reason to promote the traditional family structure of mother/father and children," such as a quote from the Institute for American Values claiming that "[a]ny deviation from the traditional married family structure generally leads to such things as poverty, crime, violence...and other problems that world governments must spend millions of dollars trying to fix," where, "[f]rom a purely economic perspective, there are enormous tangible costs to society that emanate from family breakdown."¹⁸²

Abortion: the Guide argues that "in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning," and states that "many UN agencies and treaty bodies (e.g., United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), and the CEDAW Committee) are promoting abortion

for population control purposes” which is said to “[go] against the policies developed by the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action.”¹⁸³

Sovereignty: in this section, FWI argues against inclusion of “other status” in discrimination provisions, arguing that while all individuals are “entitled to the same fundamental human rights *regardless of fixed characteristics* such as race, color, sex or national origin,” that “rights should never be granted based on sexual behavior or preferences”¹⁸⁴ because to interpret a UN treaty to protect sexual orientation “undermines the entire UN negotiation process and is an assault on national sovereignty.”¹⁸⁵

“Child’s right to parental care”: the Guide quotes UN language citing the right to know and to be cared for by his or her parents, then goes on to flag the “growing trend among lesbians and unmarried women” to use “sperm fathers to gain children,” as “there is now a strong current of thought that it is irresponsible to aid in the begetting not only of fatherless children but also of children who can never know who their fathers were.”¹⁸⁶

FWI also develops and disseminates other anti-rights activist guides and publications at its training meetings, such as those originating from its Stand for the Family campaign.¹⁸⁷ The organization circulated “Protecting Children from the Sexual Rights Revolution” at the Family Rights Leadership Summit during the 2015 World Congress of Families in Salt Lake City. This 105-page “family defense handbook for parents and policymakers,” authored by Sharon Slater, includes talking points and ‘scientific’ facts to support what FWI describes as “pro-family, pro-life positions...before a State or national legislature or at the United Nations or other policymaking venues.” The introduction boasts that “a number of the talking points in this book have been used successfully at the United Nations by UN diplomats.”

FWI argues that Christian family values are under attack and need to be defended globally

This 105-page “family defense handbook,” includes talking points and ‘scientific’ facts to support what FWI describes as “pro-family, pro-life positions”

The contents of this publication focus on defending “man/woman marriage”; stopping the “war on our children,” attacks on Planned Parenthood¹⁸⁸, protecting “parental rights,” homosexuality and same-sex attraction, “understanding gender identity and transgender issues,” the comprehensive sexuality education ‘agenda,’ “negative impact of abortion on girls,” abstinence, the family planning contraception ‘agenda,’ the “dangerous youth political participation agenda,” and “understanding the sexual rights agenda.” With respect to the latter, FWI has stated that UN entities are “aggressively promoting broad sexual rights that are harmful...especially to children,” and that these “alleged ‘rights’...undermine the family, the rights of parents, respect for religious and cultural values,” and also “compromise the health and innocence of children.” FWI goes on to call upon States to “hold accountable those UN agencies and officials who overstep their mandates by promoting sexual rights” and “pressuring countries to accept these alleged rights.”¹⁸⁹

The handbook is a follow-up to the 2009 publication “Stand for the Family: A Call to Responsible Citizens Everywhere,”¹⁹⁰ which memorably described the CEDAW Convention as a “radical anti-mother, anti-life UN Treaty—dubbed the ERA [U.S. Equal Rights Amendment] on steroids.” Stand for the Family also forwarded arguments countering the “homosexual agenda” and talking points on “powerful groups manipulating the UN system to undermine families worldwide,” “alternative family structures” causing children negative outcomes, and arguing that “radical sexual ideologies” are being taught to children through UN programs.

Linked to these detailed policy and negotiating manuals, Family Watch International plays a key role in organizing regular training for civil society and UN delegates. FWI sponsors a yearly Global Family Policy Forum for diplomats that focuses on tactics to negotiate conservative outcomes on social and ‘family issues,’ and how to resist language to affirm rights related to gender and sexuality at the UN. Additionally, the organization works to train CSOs around the world on anti-rights

language and techniques regarding abortion, marriage, homosexuality, sexuality, and ‘other issues affecting the family’.

The 2015 Family Rights Leadership Summit at which ‘Protecting Children’ was launched is one of several closed-door events (and one of a series of events at the World Congress of Families) that bring together CSOs with UN delegates to equip them with the language, tools, and strategies of the U.S. Christian Right’s agenda.¹⁹¹ FWI follows up on these trainings and its networks through its lobbying efforts at the UN, for instance, by sending training participants who are State representatives at the Human Rights Council letters to promote and advocate for their support of regressive resolutions or amendments.¹⁹²

FWI has stated that UN entities are “aggressively promoting broad sexual rights that are harmful... especially to children”

In 2014, FWI helped found the UN Family Rights Caucus, an initiative it now chairs. The Caucus, a group of organizations and individuals “dedicated to defending and protecting the traditional family at the UN,” has been keenly involved with the recent rise of ‘protection of the family’ resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council. The initiative claims to represent government and religious leaders alongside civil society and individuals. Key members also include C-Fam, Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality (JONAH), and the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH).¹⁹³

In its Declaration to the Human Rights Council, the Caucus advocated against clear articulations of human rights protections for individuals who experience violence in family settings, calling on the HRC to “resist pressures

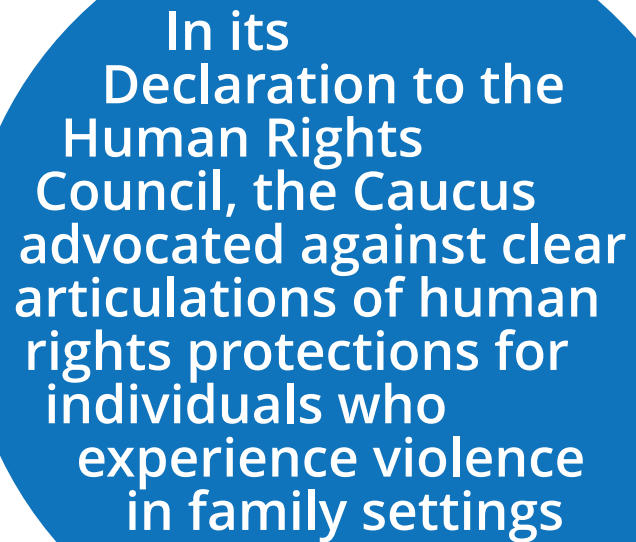
to focus solely on individual rights to the detriment of the family unit,” and stating that as family violence is “the exception rather than the rule,” references to it undermine the family.¹⁹⁴ The Caucus also called upon the Council to “allow nations to address the family according to their own national legislation” rather than universal human rights standards, and to “aggressively resist attempts to force various forms of the family.”¹⁹⁵

COORDINATION/ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

Family Watch International partners with a number of Christian Right civil society organizations in lobbying and advocacy activities at the UN, including the UN Family Rights Caucus and together with the World Congress of Families.

The FWI actively seeks State partners across religious and political boundaries through its training efforts, speaking engagements, and outreach. At the CSW, the organization recently collaborated with delegations from Nigeria, Qatar, Syria, Saint Lucia, and Iran¹⁹⁶, with the Group of Friends of the Family State bloc, and with the Forum Azzahrae for Moroccan Women.

In 2008 FWI was invited to give private briefings to the UN delegates in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the African Group, and to subsequently ‘institutionalize’ these briefings and hold them regularly to prepare delegates in these blocs to “protect the family” in further UN negotiations.¹⁹⁷ FWI has also coordinated publicly with other CSOs, the Holy See, and State delegations—including through coalitions with the OIC—on statements and counter-statements on issues related to gender and sexuality at the UN General Assembly.¹⁹⁸



In its Declaration to the Human Rights Council, the Caucus advocated against clear articulations of human rights protections for individuals who experience violence in family settings

2015 AND 2016: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

In addition to its training activities at the World Congress of Families Leadership Summit and in coordinating the Global Family Policy Center, Family Watch International was active in lobbying activities at the UN.

In particular, FWI was active in furthering the ‘protection of the family’ agenda¹⁹⁹ at the Human Rights Council, targeting State delegates with a letter campaign forwarding a sustained defence of the resolution at the 32nd session in June 2016. FWI was also highly active in HRC negotiations on the Promotion of Maternal Mortality, Morbidity and Human Rights resolution at the 33rd session in September 2016, preparing and circulating a mark-up of the text during negotiations (with the Magdalene Institute) that aimed to undermine universal human rights protections with regard to reproductive and sexual health from the final document.

Working with partners such as CitizenGo, FWI organized several calls to action during 2015–2016. In July 2015, jointly with the UN Family Rights Caucus, they issued an alert to supporters upon adoption of the ‘Protection of the Family’ resolution during the 29th session of the Human Rights Council, calling on individuals and organizations to engage in an online letter writing campaign, signing letters to 1) thank nations which voted for the resolution; and 2) to urge countries who didn’t support the 2015 resolution to change their position in the future.²⁰⁰

In conjunction with its 2016 CSW event on ‘Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Sexual Rights Versus Sexual Health – An Expose of Harmful Programs’, which was co-sponsored by the Worldwide Organization of Women, Asociación La Familia Importa and Forum Azzahrae for Moroccan Women, FWI launched its new video called ‘The War on Children: The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda’.²⁰¹ During the CSW, the organization issued another alert requesting members and their networks to sign a petition calling on State

delegations at the CSW to “join with likeminded governments in calling for the UN to stop promoting and cease all funding for CSE.”²⁰²

During negotiations at the HRC on the June 2016 resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity, calling for the creation of a new mandate (Independent Expert) on SOGI, FWI once again issued a broad call to action, distributing a list of talking points “highlighting the serious problems” with the resolution and calling on supporters to sign a letter that requested Member States to vote against the resolution.²⁰³

World Youth Alliance

The World Youth Alliance (WYA) was founded in New York, United States, by Anna Halpine who is Canadian. The organization’s headquarters remain in New York City, but the WYA has also founded regional chapter offices in Nairobi, Quezon City, Brussels, Mexico City, and Beirut.

The founder of the WYA, and a number of its key supporters (such as C-Fam) are Catholic, and the organization often co-hosts UN events with the Holy See, but it aims for broader religious alliances and an inter-faith membership.

BACKGROUND, MISSION, AND KEY OBJECTIVES

The World Youth Alliance (WYA) was founded in 1999 by Anna Halpine to “fight against the dehumanizing, anti-life, anti-family trends of an increasingly decadent Western culture,”²⁰⁴ and in response to the successes of the Youth Coalition at the ICPD+5.²⁰⁵ The Alliance today claims to have a million members, although these numbers are difficult to substantiate.

The mission of the WYA is to promote the “dignity of the person” by building a global coalition of young people

able to “articulate, defend and live the dignity of the person in their lives and influence the communities and world in which they live.”²⁰⁶ The Alliance focuses its advocacy on international policy spaces including the United Nations, the European Union, and the Organization of American States. It focuses on education, global health, social development, economic development, and international policy and human rights.²⁰⁷

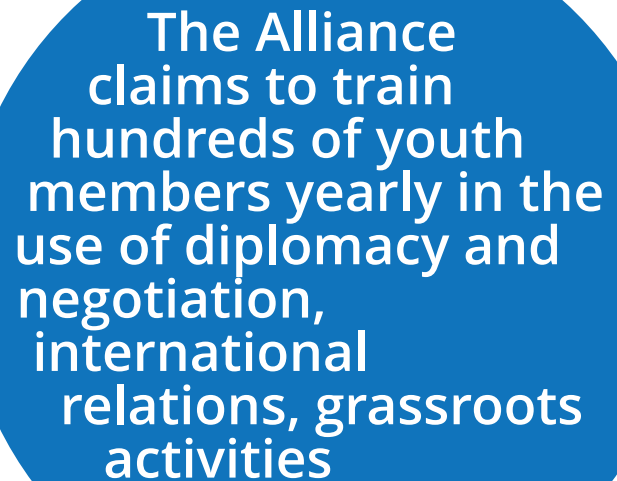
At the UN, the World Youth Alliance participates in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), and the Commission on Social Development.

PROGRAMS

Overall, the World Youth Alliance’s programmatic work is divided into advocacy, education, and cultural engagement. The Alliance claims to train hundreds of youth members yearly in the use of diplomacy and negotiation, international relations, grassroots activities, and message development. It also hosts an internship program to encourage youth participation in its work, and organizes a regular Emerging Leaders Conference.²⁰⁸

At the CSW and the CPD, the Alliance aims to work directly with delegates to influence negotiations. The WYA also organizes an annual International Solidarity Forum at the UN, which brings together WYA civil society members and expert speakers, issuing a joint declaration on the theme of the Forum at its conclusion.²⁰⁹

The Alliance also engages in knowledge production and dissemination, creating fact sheets and white papers²¹⁰ to be used by conservative youth activists operating in human rights spaces. Fact sheets focus on ‘the family’, family planning, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and sexual education, among other topics.²¹¹



**The Alliance
claims to train
hundreds of youth
members yearly in the
use of diplomacy and
negotiation,
international
relations, grassroots
activities**

The WYA also conducts advocacy regarding development, focusing especially on the Latin American context.²¹² They advance entrepreneurship as the solution for development²¹³ and are critical of State interventions in public health—also echoed in their ‘DIY’ approach to women’s health, as below—education and social welfare. To a large extent, this position is shared with neoliberal conservative governments in the region, leading to greater funding for and institutional embedding of the Alliance in these contexts.

COORDINATION/ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

The Alliance has strong links with several Christian Right organizations. The WYA’s co-founder Diana Kilarjian previously worked for C-Fam and was connected to Human Life International.²¹⁴ The organization also works with the Holy See, including to co-host UN events. Halpine remains closely linked to the Vatican, stating that the Pope “has told my generation to build a culture of life. Those are our orders. We’re just following them.”²¹⁵

Additionally, the WYA website is registered to Steve Jalsevac, director of the Campaign Life coalition, and the managing editor of the conservative news website LifeSiteNews.com. Amongst Alliance supporters is Rocco Buttiglione, an Italian politician and ultra-conservative Catholic with a substantial track record of regressive positions on women’s rights, HIV/AIDS, migrants’ rights, LGBTQ issues, and reproductive rights.²¹⁶

2015 AND 2016: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The World Youth Alliance began several new initiatives in 2015 and 2016. During the 2015 Commission on the Status of Women, WYA launched a sister organization, FEMM, a “comprehensive women’s health program to address the global crisis in women’s health.” The program provides women with information on the reproductive

system and hormones, has developed an app to track health and fertility, and opened a pilot clinic at Ohio State University.²¹⁷ Essentially, the goal of the program is to shift the conversation on reproductive health and human rights towards ‘natural family planning’, and both away from and discouraging access to any other form of contraception.

In 2015, the Alliance launched its ‘Human Dignity Curriculum’, developed as a conservative alternative to comprehensive sexuality education

In 2015, the Alliance also launched its ‘Human Dignity Curriculum.’ Developed as a conservative alternative to comprehensive sexuality education, it claims to provide a “new paradigm of health care for adolescents and women.”²¹⁸ The curriculum is being tested at pilot sites in 20 schools in the U.S., including Malta, New York and Bridgeport, Connecticut; public school districts in Texas and Kansas were expected to adopt the program beginning in fall 2016; and pilot locations for the curriculum were being prepared in Croatia, the Philippines, and South Sudan.

The Alliance’s Annual Report states that it created 21 new chapters in schools and universities worldwide in 2015. The WYA’s Certified Training Program certified 250 young leaders in the program in 2016, and the Alliance conducted Emerging Leaders Conferences in multiple regions in 2015 and 2016, with a total of 440 participants in 2015.²¹⁹

Final note

It is notable that, in terms of anti-rights civil society, the current international human rights landscape is dominated by Christian Evangelical, Mormon, and Catholic CSOs with origins in the global North, with the United States being most visible. Another such organization, the Alliance Defending Freedom, has also increased its engagement not only on the regional level in Latin America, but in UN spaces like the Human Rights Council.

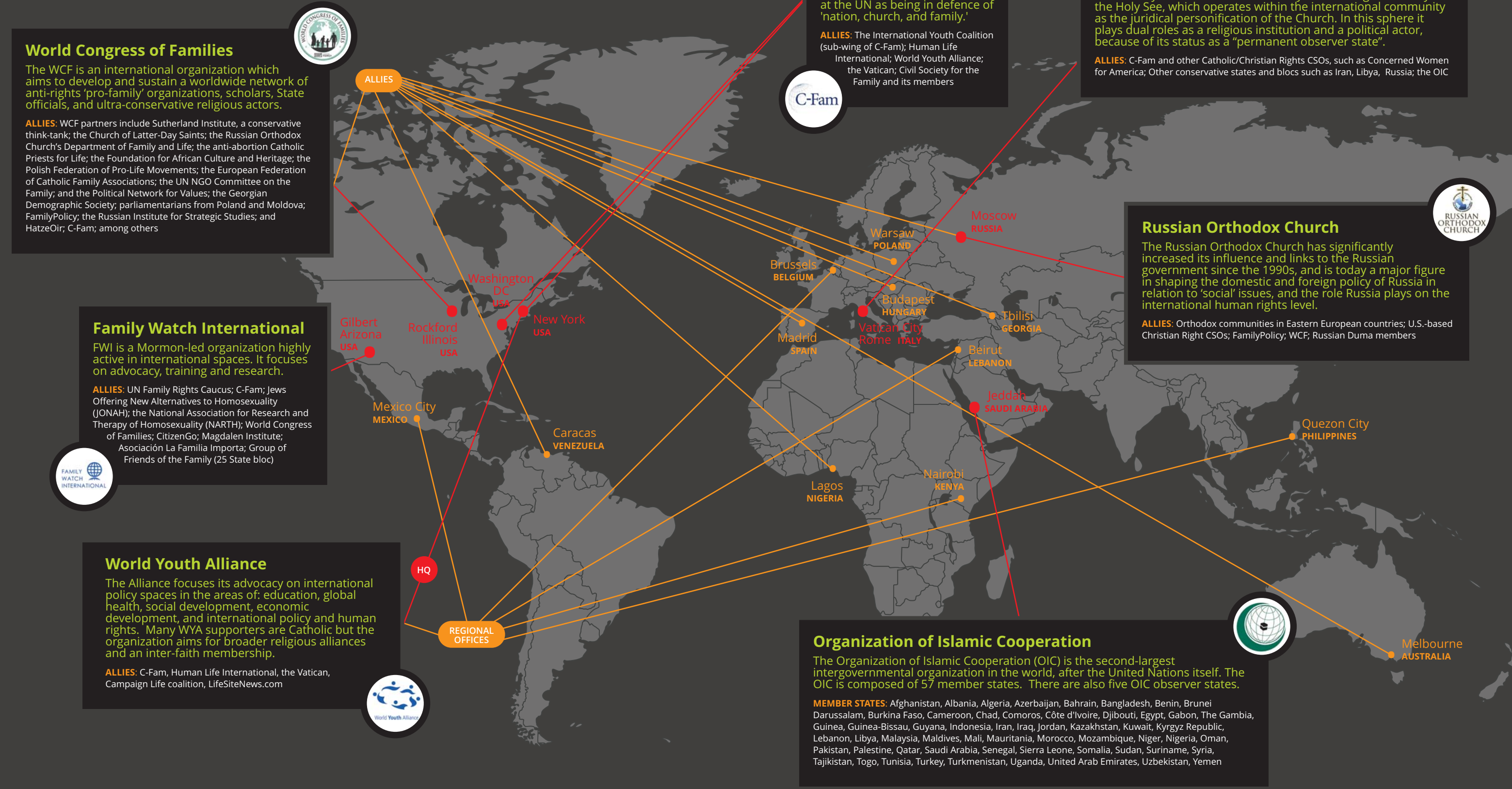
Christian, Evangelical, or Catholic-affiliated NGOs are in the majority amongst faith-defined NGOs with ECOSOC status. In contrast, Muslim or Jewish-affiliated non-governmental actors or Christian-affiliated NGOs from other regions currently play a limited role in lobbying at the UN.²²⁰ This reflects overall CSO trends in which the majority of international non-governmental organizations are based in the global North, and in which a greater percentage of NGOs based in the global South focus on the local/national or regional context.²²¹ It is interesting to note the correlation between both U.S government and CSOs' interests in exporting ideologies and policies worldwide and U.S. Christian-affiliated organizations' higher levels of engagement with and lobbying in the international human rights system to modify its norms and functioning.



In terms of anti-rights civil society, the current international human rights landscape is dominated by Christian Evangelical, Mormon, and Catholic CSOs with origins in the global North

Key Anti-Rights Actors and their Connections

Traditionalist actors from Catholic, Evangelical, Mormon, Russian Orthodox and Muslim faith backgrounds have found **common cause** in a number of shared talking points and advocacy efforts attempting to **push back against feminist gains** at the international level. Regressive actors are organizing **across lines of nationality, religion, sector, and issue**, towards the formation of a **transnational community** of political actors undermining rights related to gender and sexuality.



World Congress of Families

The WCF is an international organization which aims to develop and sustain a worldwide network of anti-rights 'pro-family' organizations, scholars, State officials, and ultra-conservative religious actors.

ALLIES: WCF partners include Sutherland Institute, a conservative think-tank; the Church of Latter-Day Saints; the Russian Orthodox Church's Department of Family and Life; the anti-abortion Catholic Priests for Life; the Foundation for African Culture and Heritage; the Polish Federation of Pro-Life Movements; the European Federation of Catholic Family Associations; the UN NGO Committee on the Family; and the Political Network for Values; the Georgian Demographic Society; parliamentarians from Poland and Moldova; FamilyPolicy; the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies; and HatzeOir; C-Fam; among others



C-Fam (Center for Family and Human Rights)

C-Fam is a Catholic organization that operates primarily in multilateral spaces, with a focus on lobbying, media, and information dissemination. The organization describes its work at the UN as being in defence of 'nation, church, and family.'

ALLIES: The International Youth Coalition (sub-wing of C-Fam); Human Life International; World Youth Alliance; the Vatican; Civil Society for the Family and its members



The Vatican

Vatican City is the world's smallest 'city-state'. It is governed by the Holy See, which operates within the international community as the juridical personification of the Church. In this sphere it plays dual roles as a religious institution and a political actor, because of its status as a "permanent observer state".

ALLIES: C-Fam and other Catholic/Christian Rights CSOs, such as Concerned Women for America; Other conservative states and blocs such as Iran, Libya, Russia; the OIC



Family Watch International

FWI is a Mormon-led organization highly active in international spaces. It focuses on advocacy, training and research.

ALLIES: UN Family Rights Caucus; C-Fam; Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality (JONAH); the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH); World Congress of Families; CitizenGo; Magdalen Institute; Asociación La Familia Importa; Group of Friends of the Family (25 State bloc)



Russian Orthodox Church

The Russian Orthodox Church has significantly increased its influence and links to the Russian government since the 1990s, and is today a major figure in shaping the domestic and foreign policy of Russia in relation to 'social' issues, and the role Russia plays on the international human rights level.

ALLIES: Orthodox communities in Eastern European countries; U.S.-based Christian Right CSOs; FamilyPolicy; WCF; Russian Duma members



World Youth Alliance

The Alliance focuses its advocacy on international policy spaces in the areas of: education, global health, social development, economic development, and international policy and human rights. Many WYA supporters are Catholic but the organization aims for broader religious alliances and an inter-faith membership.

ALLIES: C-Fam, Human Life International, the Vatican, Campaign Life coalition, LifeSiteNews.com



Organization of Islamic Cooperation

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest intergovernmental organization in the world, after the United Nations itself. The OIC is composed of 57 member states. There are also five OIC observer states.

MEMBER STATES: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen



3. State actors

Russian Orthodox Church

BACKGROUND AND LINKS TO THE STATE

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) has increased its influence and links to the Russian government significantly since the 1990s. Today it is a major figure shaping the domestic and foreign policy of Russia in relation to ‘social’ issues, as well as the role Russia plays in the international human rights arena. Analysts have argued that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ROC and the Russian political regime have worked together in a quest for status at home and abroad. Specifically, the Orthodox Church has capitalized on its State support by promoting “traditional values” to deepen relations with predominantly Orthodox countries.²²²

In the wake of a legitimization crisis in the beginning of the 1990s, a more significant relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church served the Russian government’s desire to strengthen their mandate. Early signs of increased State support for the Church arose in the Religious Freedom Act of 1997, which, in a manner emulated by many anti-rights actors now active at the UN, subverted the language of ‘religious freedom’ to undermine freedom of conscience. The act acknowledged a “special role” for the ROC in Russian society.

In 2009, military chaplains were first introduced in the Russian army. In 2010, a new law on the “Return of Property of a Religious Character Held by the State or the Municipalities to Religious Organizations,” came into force. In 2011, religious faculties and seminars were given governmental accreditation to grant academic degrees. Then, in 2012, Orthodox religion was introduced into school curricula. In mass protests against the national government in the winter of 2011–2012, the Church

provided President Putin with tacit support, a factor that may have led to the warming of relations between Church and State moving forward.

Today the Russian Orthodox Church is a major figure shaping the domestic and foreign policy of Russia in relation to ‘social’ issues, as well as the role Russia plays in the international human rights arena

At the turn of the century, the Russian Federation experienced both a serious socio-economic crisis and an erosion of geopolitical power vis-a-vis the United States and Western Europe marked by the end of the Cold War. It was in this context that religious traditionalism began to grow. This movement coalesced around a new national ideal, one defined in opposition to ‘the West’, with its value deriving from the traditions of the past, and based on a constructed notion of a static, monolithic national culture. A reorientation towards traditionalism benefited both the ROC, through increased social and political power, and the Russian government, which could harness this narrative and bolster its legitimacy through proximity to the symbol of traditional values—the Church.

‘Traditional values’ have a central and broad-based appeal to the Russian Church and State; as such, they have taken on a prominent role in their advocacy regarding international human rights. It also fits into another key trend: the argument of fundamental cultural, social, and civilizational differences from ‘the West’, and an attempted invalidation of universal human rights on those grounds. The revival of ‘tradition’, in turn, is often conflated with conservative religious interpretations and institutions. This can be seen in many of Putin’s speeches,

in which traditional values are conflated with religious values, specifically Russian Orthodoxy.²²³

On the domestic level, the ROC's rising influence, as bound to furthering traditional values, can be traced over the past decade. Regional anti-LGBT propaganda laws were passed as early as 2006.²²⁴ After 11 regional laws had been passed, the federal law prohibiting so-called LGBT propaganda—i.e. showing same-sex relationships as equal to heterosexual relationships—was introduced.²²⁵ Yelena Mizulina, a leading proponent of the law, presented the language of LGBT rights as Western-associated and deviant; she is now the head of the Duma committee on the family.²²⁶

'Traditional values' have a central and broad-based appeal to the Russian Church and State; as such, they have taken on a prominent role in their advocacy regarding international human rights

Similar anti-rights legislation targeting women, girls, and people with non-conforming sexual orientation or gender identity or expression has been successful. In 2010, amendments to the Law on Protection of Children from Information Harmful to their Health and Development restricted information on same-sex relationships that can be included in mass media for children.²²⁷ In 2011, the Russian government began restricting the ability of medical clinics to discuss abortions.²²⁸ The Duma passed a law banning foreign same-sex couples from adopting children in Russia in June 2013, and in February 2014 a government decree banned unmarried individuals from countries where same-sex marriage is legal from adopting Russian children.²²⁹

Following the Pussy Riot protest in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, in 2012 the federal government passed a law

criminalizing 'offending religious feelings', further consolidating the power of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Unfortunately, similar trends are likely to continue. In September 2016, ROC Patriarch Kirill released a statement relaying that the Church had met with anti-abortion campaigners and signed a petition to be handed to President Putin.²³⁰ The petition called for a total ban on abortion. In February 2017 President Putin signed a bill into law decriminalizing certain forms of domestic violence.²³¹ The author of the anti-LGBT propaganda law (who has strong links to the World Congress of Families), Yelena Mizulina, sponsored the decriminalization bill.²³²

TRADITIONAL VALUES IN ROC DOCTRINE

In developing and refining its traditional values agenda for the international stage, the Russian Orthodox Church has operated as a 'norm entrepreneur' playing a key role in human rights debates.²³³

A number of texts and statements indicate that the Church has moved past a wholesale opposition to the concept of human rights as a Western invention

Reflecting other recent shifts worldwide in conservative opposition to human rights norms, the relationship between the ROC's (and Russian government's) notion of traditional values and human rights has evolved since the early 2000s. A number of texts and statements indicate that the Church has moved past a wholesale opposition to the concept of human rights as a Western invention—although remnants of this earlier approach continue—to co-opting the language of rights to shape them into a regressive conception.

Central to this approach is the Church's focus on article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

*in the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.*²³⁴

For example, in 2006 Patriarch Kirill of the ROC declared, "The upholding of moral standards must become a social cause. It is the mechanism of human rights that can activate this return [of spiritual needs to the public realm]." He went on to state, "I am speaking of a *return*, for the norm of according human rights with traditional morality can be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."²³⁵

This approach has allowed the Church to position itself as a leader in norm production, as if it were at the vanguard of a novel understanding of human rights which centres on the importance of morality, duties, and community

This approach has allowed the Church to position itself as a leader in norm production as well as in the transmission and support of traditional values, as if it were at the vanguard of a novel understanding of human rights which centres on the importance of morality, duties, and community.²³⁶ This understanding is still defined against a Western conception of human rights—which includes, for instance, the right of non-discrimination against women, girls, and those with

non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression—but works within the same framework and aims to make gains for traditionalism in the realm of competing understandings.

The ROC thus argues that the source of human rights is "traditional values rooted in all world religions."²³⁷ This framing allows the ROC to widen its norms leadership beyond Russia—bringing in support from some OIC countries, China, and some countries from the African bloc—and to insert the notion of traditional values into human rights advocacy, promoting a unique form of Russian influence in the international policy sphere. This has led to a series of 'traditional values' resolutions at the Human Rights Council and an ongoing discourse grounded in this framing at the UN.

At the HRC, Russia is also at the forefront in putting forward hostile amendments to progressive resolutions, such as maternal mortality; protection of civil society space; human rights defenders working on economic, social, and cultural rights; the right to peaceful protest; and human rights on the internet.

COORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

The Russian Orthodox Church has significant and growing links with conservative actors around the world who are employing arguments based on tradition, religion, culture, and national sovereignty. For those familiar with their joint sponsorship of regressive resolutions, Russia's status of an Observer State with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will not come as an enormous surprise.

The Russian Orthodox Church, supporting Russian objectives to achieve regional influence and dominance, has also boosted its relationships with Orthodox communities in Eastern Europe in particular.²³⁸ Religious fundamentalisms have gained power in countries such

as Poland²³⁹ and Hungary²⁴⁰, creating the basis for greater multilateral collaboration. These changes in national governments have begun to complicate EU bloc positioning in international policy.

Russia still defines itself to some extent in opposition to the United States in international human rights spaces, although it remains to be seen how changes in the U.S. administration in 2017 might shift this dynamic.²⁴¹ There are longstanding connections between many U.S.-based Christian Right CSOs and the ROC and Russian officials. As noted in the section on the World Congress of Families, Alexey Komov, who is connected to the Russian Orthodox Church and founder of the conservative CSO FamilyPolicy, is a board member of the WCF. Komov also co-organized the 2016 World Congress in Tbilisi, Georgia, consolidating connections with the Georgian Orthodox Church.

WCF Managing Director Larry Jacobs made reference to the warm relations between U.S. CSOs and the ROC when he declared in 2013, "The Russians might be the Christian saviors of the world."²⁴² Franklin Graham, a prominent U.S. Evangelical leader, has also recently claimed that Russia is "protecting traditional Christianity."²⁴³ Returning the compliment, Patriarch Kirill of the ROC has argued that U.S. Protestants and Catholics who defend the 'natural family' are "confessors of the faith."²⁴⁴ More broadly, there is increased evidence of warming links between U.S. Evangelicals and the ROC.²⁴⁵

Aside from warm words, relationships between the WCF and its partners and Russian officials are strong enough to withstand domestic U.S. criticism of Russia's military actions in the Ukraine. Rebranded a regional conference on "Large Families: the Future of Humanity," the World Congress VIII went ahead in Moscow with U.S. WCF leaders remaining involved on the organizing committee. Russian oligarchs funded the meeting, and Duma member and author of the federal anti-LGBT 'propaganda' law, Yelena Mizulina, was a featured speaker.

**At the HRC,
Russia is also at
the forefront in
putting forward
hostile amendments
to progressive
resolutions**

**These changes
in national
governments have
begun to complicate
EU bloc positioning
in international
policy**

- ³ Allan Carlson, *The New Agrarian Mind: The Movement toward Decentralist Thought in Twentieth-Century America*, 2000.
- ⁴ Jennifer Butler, *For Faith and Family: Christian Right Advocacy at the United Nations*, *The Public Eye*, Summer 2000, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2000/09/01/for-faith-and-family-christian-right-advocacy-at-the-united-nations/#sthash.hLDnUKqW.dpbs>
- ⁵ Catholics for Choice, *The Catholic Church at the United Nations: Church or State?*, Washington, DC, 2013, http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CFC_See_Change_2013.pdf
- ⁶ *ibid*
- ⁷ Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, Dec. 26, 1933; for more information see, *The Holy See at the United Nations, An Obstacle to Women's Reproductive Health And Rights* (New York: Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, 2000), https://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicactions.net/files/documents/pub_bp_holyseeattheun.pdf
- ⁸ The status of a Permanent Observer is based purely on practice (or 'custom'), and there are no provisions for it in the United Nations Charter.
- ⁹ Catholics for Choice, *Press release* (2014), <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/campaign/global-interfaith-secular-alliance/the-vaticans-obstructionism-on-womens-rights-and-reproductive-rights-at-the-un-forced-a-response-from-international-ngos/>
- ¹⁰ The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000, entry into force 12 February 2002), and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000, entered into force on 18 January 2002).
- ¹¹ Center for Reproductive Rights, *The Holy See at the United Nations: Briefing Paper*, August 2000.
- ¹² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of the Holy See*, 31 January 2014, CRC/C/VAT/CO/2 For more information, see also the comments of the Holy See on the Concluding Observations at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/2014/documents/rc-seg-st-20140205_concluding-observations-rights-child_en.html
- ¹³ Eric Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, 1987.
- ¹⁴ See for example, Pontifical Council of the Family, *The Meeting Point: Project for Affective and Sexual Formation*, 2016, <http://www.educazioneaffettiva.org/?lang=en>, and Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, 1995, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html.
- ¹⁵ John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988) in AAS, article 141.
- ¹⁶ *New Vatican Document Highlights Church Teachings on Life and Family*, *National Catholic Register*, June 2006, http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/new_vatican_document_highlights_church_teachings_on_life_and_family.
- ¹⁷ The XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, "The vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world": *The final report of the Synod of Bishops to the Holy Father, Pope Francis*, October 2015, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20151026_relazione-finale-xiv-assemblea_en.html.
- ¹⁸ Ann Schneible, *Catholic News Agency*, June 4, 2016, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-approves-new-vatican-department-for-the-laity-family-and-life-27040/>
- ¹⁹ For more information on the Institute and its affiliates worldwide, please see <https://www.johnpaulii.edu/about/the-institute-worldwid>
- ²⁰ The Holy See based its objection on an equation of emergency contraception to abortion, which it refutes in all circumstances, including rape. In the past, Pope John Paul II stated that women raped in war should "accept the enemy" and make him "flesh of their own flesh."
- ²¹ Center for Reproductive Rights, *The Holy See at the United Nations: Briefing Paper*, August 2000.
- ²² This misleading discourse is discussed in more detail below.
- ²³ Thomas Reese, *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*, 1996.
- ²⁴ *ibid*.
- ²⁵ *ibid*.
- ²⁶ Amy L Coates, Peter S Hill, Simon Rushton & Julie Balen, *The Holy See on sexual and reproductive health rights: conservative in position, dynamic in response*, *Reproductive Health Matters*, 22:44, 114-124 (2014).
- ²⁷ Old age support rates relate to the number of individuals who can provide economic support to the number of older people that may be materially dependent on the support of others.
- ²⁸ It is also likely that internal clashes between the traditionalist Opus Dei and Pope Francis are contributing to the reinforcement of the Vatican's traditional positioning in policy spaces in recent years, signaling unity and continuity.
- ²⁹ The norm of diversity of families, for instance, has been multiply reaffirmed by the United Nations, including in the General Assembly resolution 65/277, and the Human Rights Council resolution 7/29.
- ³⁰ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), article 16(3)
- ³¹ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/documents/rc_seg-st_doc_11021999_forum-aia_en.html
- ³² Statement before the Plenary of the 59th General Assembly on Item 45: 10th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. 14 October 2004. <http://www.holyseemission.org/statements/statement.aspx?id=282>
- ³³ Statement at the 18th Session of the Human Rights Council on item 3: Maternal mortality: practices in adopting a human rights-based approach to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and human rights., 15 September 2011. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/2011/documents/rc_seg-st_20110915_mortalita-materna_en.html

- ³⁴ The Holy See often misleadingly and selectively refers to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its arguments for sweeping 'parental rights'.
- ³⁵ See for example, Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics*, 2003.
- ³⁶ Gracie Hsu, *Population Imperialism: The Growing Backlash against U.S. Policy*, *Family Policy* 10, no. 4.
- ³⁷ See for example, Larry B. Stammer, *Religious Right Dispatches Its Missionaries to Beijing*, *Los Angeles Times*, September 1995. During this period, Evangelical Christianity also began to increase respective to Catholicism in the Latin American region, which may have contributed to the increased presence of Evangelical-associated organizations at the international level alongside the Holy See.
- ³⁸ Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics*, 2003.
- ³⁹ Russia joined as an observer state of the OIC in 2005. The others—Thailand, Northern Cyprus, the Central African Republic, and Bosnia and Herzegovina—joined between 1979 and 1998.
- ⁴⁰ The Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, also known as the Shura Council, is the formal advisory body to the monarch.
- ⁴¹ The Hajj is the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, an annual event which brings over 2–3 million people to Saudi Arabia each year.
- ⁴² *Saudi secretary-general of Organization of Islamic Cooperation resigns*, *Hurriyet Daily News*, November 2016, <http://www.hurriyetedailynews.com/saudi-secretary-general-of-organization-of-islamic-cooperation-resigns.aspx?pageID=238&nID=105608&NewsCatID=352>.
- ⁴³ See *OIC Secretary-General Iyad Madani Resigns Citing Health Reasons*, *Al Arabiya*, October 2016 (<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/10/31/OIC-Secretary-General-Iyad-Madani-resigns-.html>) and *Yusuf Al-Othaimen Elected as OIC Secretary General*, *Qatar News Agency*, November 2016 (<http://www.qna.org.qa/en-us/News/16111801030081/Yusuf-Al-Othaimen-Elected-as-OIC-Secretary-General>).
- ⁴⁴ In addition to the significantly different structure and history of the OIC respective to the Holy See, Islam also has no equivalent to the Pope in terms of an institutionalized and centralized authority figure.
- ⁴⁵ The full text of the CDHRI is available at <http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/FMRpdfs/Human-Rights/cairo.pdf>
- ⁴⁶ That it was the OIC's political intent to posit the Declaration as an 'Islamic' alternative to Western human rights discourse, so as to present the organization as standing in opposition to the liberal West, and to undermine the claim of universality of human rights, is evident from its inclusion in a controversial resolution sent to the World Conference on Human Rights. The resolution in question copied heavily from the Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights, released three weeks earlier to broad international controversy. The sections included along with the Cairo Declaration echoed the Bangkok document's emphasis on the primacy of national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference; the need for human rights to be upheld universally, criticizing double-standards in their implementation; the requirement for the 'universal' nature of human rights to be mediated by national and regional particularities and/or through historical, cultural or religious backgrounds; and the interdependence and indivisibility of all rights, not just civil and political rights.
- ⁴⁷ Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI)*, 5 August 1990, article 1.
- ⁴⁸ CDHRI, preamble.
- ⁴⁹ CDHRI, article 1.
- ⁵⁰ CDHRI, article 2.
- ⁵¹ *ibid*
- ⁵² CDHRI, article 5.
- ⁵³ CDHRI, article 20.
- ⁵⁴ CDHRI, article 19.
- ⁵⁵ CDHRI, article 15.
- ⁵⁶ CDHRI, article 18.
- ⁵⁷ CDHRI, article 7.
- ⁵⁸ CDHRI, article 13.
- ⁵⁹ CDHRI, article 17.
- ⁶⁰ UDHR, 16(2).
- ⁶¹ CDHRI, article 25.
- ⁶² *ibid*. Shariah is nowhere defined in the Declaration, nor is there any indication of any sources of interpretation, applicable schools of Islamic law, State law or otherwise. In contrast to other purportedly 'Islamic' human rights documents such as the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, the CDHRI never directly refers to the Quran or any doctrinal text, and refers only once to a concept derived from traditional Islamic law ('riba' or usury in Article 14).
- ⁶³ The term recurs in articles 2a, 2c, 2d, 7b, 7c, 12, 16, 19d, 22a, 23b, 24 and 25.
- ⁶⁴ CDHRI, article 6(a), referring to women's "own rights to enjoy as well as duties to perform." The document does not make a parallel reference to men's duties.
- ⁶⁵ CDHRI, article 6(b).
- ⁶⁶ See also Turan Kayaoglu. "A Rights Agenda for the Muslim World? The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Evolving Human Rights Framework." *Brookings Doha Center*, 2013 <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2013/01/08-oic-human-rights-kayaoglu..>
- ⁶⁷ Influential, but not binding.
- ⁶⁸ The full Covenant is available online at <http://www.oic-oci.org/english/convention/Rights%20of%20the%20Child%20In%20Islam%20E.pdf>

- ⁶⁹ Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), *Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam*, June 2005, article 4.
- ⁷⁰ See also Turan Kayaoglu, "A Rights Agenda for the Muslim World? The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Evolving Human Rights Framework." Brookings Doha Center, 2013.
- ⁷¹ Anthony Tirado Chase, *The Organization of Islamic Cooperation: A Case Study of International Organizations' Impact on Human Rights*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2015.
- ⁷² UN Human Rights Council, Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief : resolution / adopted by the Human Rights Council, 12 April 2011, A/HRC/RES/16/18.
- ⁷³ Turan Kayaoglu, *The OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission: An early assessment*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2014.
- ⁷⁴ OIC Secretary General opens 4th Session of IPHRC, February 2014, http://www.oic-oci.org//topic/ampg.asp?t_id=8848&t_ref=3549&lan=en
- ⁷⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ See also Anthony Tirado Chase, *The Organization of Islamic Cooperation: A Case Study of International Organizations' Impact on Human Rights*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2015.
- ⁷⁷ So-called blasphemy laws, at the national level, prohibit and punish perceived 'insults' to religion, which may include religious figures, customs and/or beliefs. As of 2014, 26% of the world's countries or territories had anti-blasphemy laws or policies in place; see e.g. Pew Research Center, Which Countries Still Outlaw Apostasy and Blasphemy? <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/29/which-countries-still-outlaw-apostasy-and-blasphemy/>
- ⁷⁸ The Plan is available online at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/SeminarRabat/Rabat_draft_outcome.pdf (UN Human Rights Council, Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights : Addendum, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred, 11 January 2013, A/HRC/22/17/Add.4).
- ⁷⁹ Article 19, *UN HRC adopts resolution on combating religious intolerance, but test remains in implementation*, March 2015 , (<https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/37919/en/un-hrc-adopts-resolution-on-combating-religious-intolerance,-but-test-remains-in-implementation>).
- ⁸⁰ Quoting then-Secretary General Madani, http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv3/topic/?t_id=11338&t_ref=4456&lan=en
- ⁸¹ *ibid.*
- ⁸² The amendments tabled were L.71 to L.81.
- ⁸³ See also ARC International, *Understanding the SOGI Resolution 2016*, <http://arc-international.net/global-advocacy/human-rights-council/32nd-session-of-the-human-rights-council/appointing-an-independent-expert-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-an-analysis-of-process-results-and-implications/iii-understanding-the-sogi-resolution-2016/>
- ⁸⁴ Amendments L.75, L.76, L.77 and L.78, see also *ibid.*
- ⁸⁵ Amendment L73.
- ⁸⁶ While there is a documented increase in numbers of ultra-conservative CSOs active at the United Nations, it is also important to note that many of their claims in terms of attendance and dissemination are not externally corroborated and may be inflated.
- ⁸⁷ At present, 4,507 NGOs worldwide enjoy consultative status with ECOSOC, which coordinates the work of the United Nations. NGOs which receive ECOSOC accreditation may engage in formal UN proceedings. For more information, see <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=134>.
- ⁸⁸ Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), *Lobbying for Faith and Family: A Study of Religious NGOs at the United Nations*, 2013, <https://www.norad.no/globalassets/import-2162015-80434-am/www.norad.no-ny/filarkiv/vedlegg-til-publikasjoner/lobbying-for-faith-and-family.pdf>.
- ⁸⁹ The term was introduced in the U.S. domestic context in 'Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America,' by the sociologist James Davidson Hunder. It refers to the ongoing pronounced polarization between ideologies, often played out in the political sphere, and frequently focused on such issues as abortion, immigration, LGBT rights, and the separation of church and state.
- ⁹⁰ See for example, Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*, 2006.
- ⁹¹ See for example, Public Research Associates, *Colonizing African Values: How the U.S. Christian Right is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa*, 2012, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/Colonizing-African-Values.pdf>.
- ⁹² Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics*, 2003.
- ⁹³ George Archibald, *U.S. to help UN redefine 'families'*, Washington Post, April 2002.
- ⁹⁴ Strong interlinkages amongst anti-rights CSOs continue. The Board of the U.S.-based World Congress of Families, for example includes the founder of the Spanish conservative online petition platform HazteOir, the founder of the Russian CSO FamilyPolicy, the director of La Fundacion in Mexico, and the founder of the Italian Novae Terra Foundation.
- ⁹⁵ For more on these and likely future developments, please see Françoise Girard, *Implications of the Trump Administration for sexual and reproductive rights globally*, *Reproductive Health Matters*, 25:49, 2017.
- ⁹⁶ Bendyna, M., Green, J. C., Rozell, M. J. and Wilcox, C., *Catholics and the Christian Right: A View from Four States*. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39: 321–332, 2000.
- ⁹⁷ We have already seen their effect on the current U.S. administration in early 2017, with respect to the regressive positions on SRHR taken by U.S. representatives at the CSW and CPD, the inclusion of the anti-rights CSO C-Fam (and the Heritage Foundation) on the U.S. delegation to the CSW, and the administration's defunding of the UNFPA.
- ⁹⁸ World Congress of Families newsletter, Oct 28, 2016.

- ⁹⁹ As distinct from the World Meeting of Families, promoted by the Holy See's Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life. See e.g. <http://www.worldmeeting2018.ie/>
- ¹⁰⁰ Ipas, Public Research Associates and Southern Poverty Law Center, *Everything You Need to Know about the Anti-LGBTQ World Congress of Families*, October 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2015/10/21/everything-you-need-know-about-anti-lgbtq-world-congress-families-wcf> .
- ¹⁰¹ World Congress of Families newsletter, August/September 2016.
- ¹⁰² J. Lester Feder, *National Organization For Marriage President Confirms Plans To Go Global*, BuzzFeed News, April 2015, https://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/national-organization-for-marriage-president-confirms-plans?utm_term=.iwqAvVLDk#.sblbQPVN1.
- ¹⁰³ Ipas, Public Research Associates and Southern Poverty Law Center, *Everything You Need to Know about the Anti-LGBTQ World Congress of Families*, October 2015.
- ¹⁰⁴ World Congress of Families, *World Family Declaration* <http://www.worldfamilydeclaration.org/WFD>.
- ¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁶ NORAD, *Lobbying for Faith and Family: A Study of Religious NGOs at the United Nations*, 2013.
- ¹⁰⁷ World Congress of Families October 2016 Newsletter.
- ¹⁰⁸ <http://www.citizenngo.org/>
- ¹⁰⁹ <http://hazteoir.org/>
- ¹¹⁰ <http://www.familypolicy.ru/>
- ¹¹¹ Hannah Levintova, *The World Congress of Families' Russian Network*, Mother Jones, February 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>.
- ¹¹² <http://www.novaeterrae.eu/en/>
- ¹¹³ Luca Volontè, *European Resistance to Cultural Suicide*, Public Discourse, Witherspoon Institute, February 2016, <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2016/02/16362/>.
- ¹¹⁴ Don Feder, *Broad Religious Representation at World Congress of Families IV*, Christian Newswire, April 20, 2007 (quoting Larry Jacobs, vice-president of the WCF), <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/815802870.html>.
- ¹¹⁵ <http://familyinamerica.org/>
- ¹¹⁶ See the index online here: <http://www.worldcongress.org/pdf/Third%20Section%20-%20591%20and%20Index.pdf>
- ¹¹⁷ Marriage and Religion Research Institute, <http://www.marripedia.org/start>
- ¹¹⁸ Right Wing Watch, *World Congress of Families*, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/organizations/world-congress-of-families>.
- ¹¹⁹ The 2014 planned Moscow conference was temporarily put on ice when Russian military intervention undermined planning efforts with U.S.-based partners. However, the conference went ahead as planned with virtually the same partners list and speakers as initially conceived, without the formal title of WCF World Congress.
- ¹²⁰ Ipas, Public Research Associates and Southern Poverty Law Center, *Everything You Need to Know about the Anti-LGBTQ World Congress of Families*, October 2015.
- ¹²¹ See World Congress of Families, *Work* www.worldcongress.org/work.php.
- ¹²² See the full schedule of the 2015 WCF World Congress at <http://wcf9.org/schedule/>
- ¹²³ See the schedule of WCF X at <http://worldcongress.ge/content/13-WCF-schedule>
- ¹²⁴ Meetings were organized for Latin America, co-chaired by Christine Vollmer of the Latin American Alliance for the Family and Katharina Rothweiller of Red Familia, Mexico (including participants from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Chile and El Salvador); the Caribbean, chaired by Rebekah Ali-Gouveia of the Elpis Centre, Trinidad (including Jamaica, Anguilla, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia), Europe, co-chaired by Luca Volonte and Andrea Williams (including Poland, Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Serbia, Britain and Portugal); Africa, chaired by Errol Naidoo of Family Policy Institute, South Africa (including participants from Morocco, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa); and Australia/Asia, chaired by Babette Francis of Endeavour Forum in Australia and Francisco Tatad, former Majority Leader of the Philippine Senate, alongside Tio Faulkner of the Australian Marriage Alliance — (including Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines).
- ¹²⁵ Family Capital and the SDGs, *Implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals*, Sustainable Families Group, United Families International, World Congress of Families, 2016, <http://www.familycapital17sdgs.org/sdg-book-complete/>.
- ¹²⁶ <https://c-fam.org/about-us/>
- ¹²⁷ Among other controversies, Ruse stated in 2014 that liberal academics “should all be taken out and shot.” See further, Luke Brinker, *This Breitbart Journalist Is Too Extreme For A Notorious Anti-Gay Hate Group*, Media Matters, March 2014, <https://mediamatters.org/blog/2014/03/14/this-breitbart-journalist-is-too-extreme-for-a/198494>
- ¹²⁸ <https://c-fam.org/about-us/>
- ¹²⁹ On this theme, and the following (human dignity), please see further discussion below in the discourses section.
- ¹³⁰ Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*, 2006.
- ¹³¹ Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics*, 2003 (quoting from an interview with Austin Ruse).
- ¹³² C-Fam, *CEDAW Watch*, September 2012, <https://c-fam.org/cedaw-watch-2>.
- ¹³³ NORAD, *Lobbying for Faith and Family: A Study of Religious NGOs at the United Nations*, 2013.

- 134 See more on the Civil Society for the Family below.
- 135 Which is distinct from the Youth Coalition for SRHR.
- 136 For the full text of the statement, see *Statement of Youth to the World*, International Youth Coalition, <https://iycoalition.org/youth-statement/>
- 137 Susan Yoshihara, C-Fam Friday Fax, *Born of Controversy, Youth Coalition is Emerging Voice at UN*, August 2014, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/born-of-controversy-youth-coalition-is-emerging-voice-at-un/.
- 138 International Youth Coalition mission, <https://iycoalition.org/mission-statement/>.
- 139 C-Fam claims that the statement received 120,000 signatures, although this has not been confirmed by external sources.
- 140 *Statement of Youth to the World*, International Youth Coalition, paras 2, 3 and 6.
- 141 *ibid*, paras 4 and 7.
- 142 Southern Poverty Law Center, *Could Austin Ruse's Violent Rhetoric Endanger C-FAM's Status with the UN?* March 2014, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2014/03/19/could-austin-ruses-violent-rhetoric-endanger-c-fams-status-un>.
- 143 For more information on the World Youth Alliance, see the sub-section below.
- 144 Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*, 2006.
- 145 Defend the Vatican at the UN; see the campaign page here: <http://defendtheholyse.org/>
- 146 Catholics for Choice, *The Catholic Church at the United Nations: Church or State?*, Washington, DC, 2013,.
- 147 Stefano Gennarini, *New Civil Society Coalition Formed to Protect the Family*, C-Fam, April 2016, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/new-civil-society-coalition-formed-protect-family/
- 148 For more on the Coalition organizers, see The Slowly Boiled Frog, *Yet another consortium of Catholic anti-gay hate groups*, April 2016, <http://www.slowlyboiledfrog.com/2016/04/yes-another-consortium-of-catholic-anti.html>.
- 149 C-Fam, Friday Fax, April 28, 2016.
- 150 Available at <https://civilsocietyforthefamily.org/>
- 151 Civil Society for the Family, *The Family Articles: Official Platform*, para 1.
- 152 *Ibid*, para 5.
- 153 *Ibid*, para 3.
- 154 *Ibid*, para 6.
- 155 *Ibid*, para 8.
- 156 Statement by Mr. Alexander Lukashevich,, <http://www.osce.org/pc/245656?download=true>
- 157 In the context of the OSCE, human dimension refers to human rights and democracy norms, i.e. as the “human dimension” of security. For more on the Committee’s mandate, please see <http://www.humanrights.ch/en/standards/europe/osce/human-rights-committee/>
- 158 *ibid*
- 159 <http://www.foreignservicefellowship.org/>
- 160 Official Website of the Republic of Belarus, *Belarus, Egypt, Qatar initiating group of friends of family in UN HQ*, February 2015, http://www.belarus.by/en/government/events/belarus-egypt-qatar-initiating-group-of-friends-of-family-in-un-hq_i_19000.html; for more on the event, see also Peter Montgomery, *Anti-Gay Activism Trumps Religious Freedom at UN Event*, May 2016, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/anti-gay-activism-trumps-religious-freedom-at-un-family-event/> and *Uniting Nations for a Family-Friendly World*, Special High-Level Event: Concept Note, <http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/160516am-family-belarus.pdf>
- 161 Special High-Level Event, *Uniting Nations for a Family Friendly World*. May 2016, ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, Statement in support of the family, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/GoFF_May_2016.pdf
- 162 Family Watch International, *A Declaration on the Rights of Children and Their Families: A Call from the Children of the World*, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/declaration_on_the_rights_of_children.cfm
- 163 *The Rights Of The Child: Parents, Science and Experience*, October 2016, <http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/161007am-child-belarus.pdf>
- 164 Rebecca Oas, *UN Event Shows How Sexual Agenda Tramples Children's Rights*, Catholic Citizens, October 2016, <http://catholiccitizens.org/views/68319/un-event-shows-sexual-agenda-tramples-childrens-rights/>
- 165 Live Action released a series of videos that featured actors posing as patients with Planned Parenthood staff in an attempt to discredit the organization by portraying it as accepting of sex-selective abortion, etc. See e.g. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/01/live-action-planned-parenthood-videos_n_1563241.html
- 166 World Organization of Ovulation Method Billings, <http://www.woomb.org/>
- 167 Family Watch International, *About Us*, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/about_us.cfm
- 168 Allegedly by Planned Parenthood and other “powerful and wealthy non-governmental organizations.” See e.g. Sharon Slater, *Human Rights Gone Awry: Myths and Facts Regarding International Human Rights Affecting Women and Children*, 2011 Nigerian Bar Association Conference in Lagos, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/human_rights_gone_away_nigeria_speech.pdf

- 169 Stand for the Family, *About the Author: Sharon Slater*, http://www.standforthefamily.org/sff/about_sharon.cfm.
- 170 See e.g. Public Research Associates, *Colonizing African Values: How the U.S. Christian Right is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa*, 2012. It is important, again, to note that the impact of anti-rights Evangelical organizations outside of the U.S. arrives in the context of longer histories of clashes between ultra-conservative and progressive actors in relation to gender and sexuality. These are only one part of the overall picture of religious fundamentalisms and response in these contexts.
- 171 See, for example, the Family Policy Resource Center at <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/resources.cfm>
- 172 Family Watch International, *Threats to National Sovereignty: UN Entities Overstepping Their Mandates*, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwipolicybrief_National_Sovereignty.pdf
- 173 Family Watch International, *Binding Obligation of States to Protect the Family*, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwipolicybrief_Binding_Obligations_updated.pdf
- 174 Sharon Slater, *An Analysis of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, The Hidden Threats to Life, Family, and Children*, Family Watch International, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/SDG_Analysis1_22_16_000.pdf
- 175 Family Watch International, *What You Need to Know about Homosexuality*, <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/FWIpolicybriefwhatyouneedtoknowabout homosexualityREVISED.pdf>
- 176 Family Watch International, *Family Policy Brief: Traditional Marriage is Essential for a Healthy Society*, <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/FWIpolicybrieftraditionalmarriagefinal.pdf>
- 177 Family Watch International, *The Relentless Push to Create an "International Right" to Abortion*, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwiPolicyBriefonAbortionandHumanRights_FinalforPublication.pdf
- 178 Family Watch International, *The Relentless Push to Create an "International Right" to Abortion*, <http://www.stopsexualizingchildren.org/ssc/>
- 179 Family Watch International's YouTube page has 19 videos as of November 2016, including 'Cultural Imperialism,' and 'The Protection of the Family: An African Perspective.' <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLzr2OALFhqSjmolMza5qwg/videos>
- 180 Stop CSE, *The War on Children: The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda*, <http://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/videos/the-war-on-children-the-comprehensive-sexuality-education-agenda/>
- 181 The 2013 version of the Resource Guide is available online at http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/Resource_Guide_2013.pdf
- 182 Ibid, pg 75.
- 183 Ibid, pg 2.
- 184 Ibid, pg 66 (emphasis added).
- 185 ibid
- 186 Ibid, pg. 8. The full list of chapters includes: abstinence; adoption of children; birth attendant training; child care; development of children; dignity; disabilities; economic support and parents; education and parents; elderly and family; ethical and cultural considerations; extended family; family – basic unit of society; family – central role; family disintegration; family planning; family policies; family reunification; father; female-headed households; fidelity; forced abortion; freedom, dignity and personally-held values; fundamental group unit – family; gender- male and female; generational solidarity; grandparents; happiness; healthy infant; HIV/AIDS and family; husband; impact on families; love; marriage; maternal health; men; migrants; morality; mother; mother to child transmission of HIV; multigenerational families; national laws; national legislative process; natural group unit – family; natural environment for children; nurturing role of family; orphans; parents; parental guidance; parental rights, duties and responsibilities; pornography; pre-natal care; pre-natal sex selection; prostitution; rape; religion; religious and ethical values; religious beliefs of parents; religious intolerance; reproductive health care; reunification of family; right to life; role of parents; sex education; sexual exploitation; single-parent families; spirituality; street children; strengthen and support family; substance abuse (and family); trafficking in children; understanding; values; vital role of family; wellbeing of families; widows; wife; women in family; work; and youth.
- 187 The campaign calls for greater support "to preserve and protect the family," which entails "strengthen[ing] the family as the fundamental unit of society," preserving and protecting "marriage as only between a man and a woman," "protect[ing] life before...birth," and preserving the "rights of parents."
- 188 FWI also prepared a report focusing entirely on anti-Planned Parenthood advocacy, entitled "Abort Planned Parenthood: End their Empire of Abortion, Deception, Fraud and the Sexualization of Children."
- 189 See also Family Watch International, *Sexual Rights Defined*, http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwipolicybriefsexualrights_ud11-14docx.pdf
- 190 For more on the campaign, petition, and book, see <http://www.standforthefamily.org/sff/>
- 191 Ipas, Public Research Associates and Southern Poverty Law Center, *Everything You Need to Know about the Anti-LGBTQ World Congress of Families*, October 2015.
- 192 As, for example, with respect to the 2016 'Protection of the Family' resolution in June 2016, and the September 2016 HRC Maternal Mortality and Morbidity resolution.
- 193 Cole Parke, *Whose Family? Religious Right's "Family Values" Agenda Advances Internationally*, Political Research Associates, July 2014, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2014/07/16/whose-family-religious-rights-family-values-agenda-advances-internationally/#sthash.Waca8y9Y.dpbs>
- 194 UN Family Rights Caucus Declaration to the Human Rights Council, July 2017, available online at http://www.unfamilyrightscaucus.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/UNFRC_Declaration.pdf
- 195 ibid
- 196 NORAD, *Lobbying for Faith and Family: A Study of Religious NGOs at the United Nations*, 2013.
- 197 Kerry Eleveld, *Right-Wing Group Fuels Homophobia at the UN*, Equality Matters Blog, May 2011.

- 198 For example, this statement undermining non-discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity was presented to the UNGA on behalf of FWI and more than 66 members states: http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/un_counterstatement.cfm
- 199 There have been a series of yearly resolutions brought forward at the Human Rights Council since 2014 on the theme of 'protection of the family.' The resolutions and their language is discussed in more detail in the section on discourses below.
- 200 The online letter-writing campaign was coordinated on the conservative online petition platform CitizenGo: http://citizengo.org/en/signit/26571/view?utm_source=email+marketing&utm_campaign=HRC+Update+Q%26A&utm_medium=email . The action received nearly 33,000 signatures.
- 201 Stop CSE, <http://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/>
- 202 Stop CSE, Online Petition, <http://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/act-now-2/stop-cse-petition/>
- 203 The letter/online petition is available at <http://fwipetitions.org/lgbtczar/>
- 204 Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*, 2006.
- 205 Catholics for Choice, *Conservative Catholic Influence in Europe: World Youth Alliance*, March 2015, <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2005worldyouthalliancefactsheet.pdf>.
- 206 World Youth Alliance, *How We Work*, <https://www.wya.net/about-wya/how-we-work/>.
- 207 *ibid*
- 208 For more information, see <https://www.wya.net/programs/elc/>.
- 209 <https://www.wya.net/publications/declarations/>
- 210 In-depth reports on specific topics that share information and offer proposals.
- 211 World Youth Alliance white papers and fact sheets are available here: <https://www.wya.net/publications/white-papers/>
- 212 Their focal point is based in Mexico City.
- 213 See e.g. <https://www.wya.net/op-ed/entrepreneurship-is-the-best-option-for-latin-america/>
- 214 Catholics for Choice, *Conservative Catholic Influence in Europe: World Youth Alliance*, March 2015,
- 215 Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*, 2006.
- 216 *ibid*.
- 217 For more information, see their website at <https://femmhealth.org/>.
- 218 An information handbook on the curriculum is available at <https://www.wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/HDCBook.pdf>.
- 219 World Youth Alliance, *2015 Annual Report*, <https://www.wya.net/about-wya/annual-report/>
- This continues a trend highlighted in a report by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) on faith-based actors at the United Nations, see <https://www.norad.no/globalassets/import-2162015-80434-am/www.norad.no-ny/filarkiv/vedlegg-til-publikasjoner/lobbying-for-faith-and-family.pdf>. Since the publication of NORAD's report, more global North Christian-affiliated organizations have become institutionalized—for example, C-Fam garnering ECOSOC status in 2014.
- See e.g. Marie Juul Petersen, *International Religious NGOs at The United Nations: A Study of a Group of Religious Organizations*, The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, November 2010, https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/847#_edn44.
- 222 Alicja Curanovic, *The Guardians of Traditional Values: Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church in the Quest for Status*, Transatlantic Academy, 2014-15 Paper Series, No 1 (<http://www.gmfus.org/publications/guardians-traditional-values-russia-and-russian-orthodox-church-quest-status>)
- 223 See, for example, President Putin's 2013 Valdai Discussion Club Speech (<http://russialist.org/transcript-putin-at-meeting-of-the-valdai-international-discussion-club-partial-transcript/>).
- 224 The first such law was passed in Ryazan. See also Melissa Hooper, *Russia's 'Traditional Values' Leadership*, The Foreign Policy Center, 2016, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Melissa%20Report.pdf> .
- 225 Draft Law 6.13.1.
- 226 Melissa Hooper, *Russia's 'Traditional Values' Leadership*, The Foreign Policy Center, 2016. See also Mizulina's connections to the World Congress of Families.
- 227 Discourse in danger: attacks on free expression in Putin's Russia, PEN American Center, January 2016, http://www.pen.org/sites/default/files/PEN_Discourse_In_Danger_Russia_web.pdf. Similar laws have since been passed in the Baltics and introduced in Poland.
- 228 Adam Federman, An alliance is born between anti-gay, anti-abortion American groups and the Russian Orthodox Church, The Nation, Jan/7/2014 (<http://www.thenation.com/article/how-us-evangelicals-fueled-rise-russias-pro-family-right>).
- 229 Melissa Hooper, *Russia's 'Traditional Values' Leadership*, The Foreign Policy Center, 2016.
- 230 James Macintyre, Russian Orthodox Church Hardens Stance Against Abortion, Calls For Total Ban, Christian Today, September 2016, <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/russian.orthodox.church.hardens.stance.against.abortion.calls.for.total.ban/96552.htm>.
- 231 Penalties for first-time offenders who do not cause "serious injury" have been reduced to 15 days of police custody rather than up to 2 years in jail. See further <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-38767873>

- ²³² She described the law as necessary to prevent separation of children from their parents, and argued that, “[C]hild protection services have developed in such a way that they see the family as one of the most dangerous places for children. But this is entirely wrong – the family, especially the biological family, is one of the safest places and it must be protected... If the family were so dangerous, how could humanity have survived to this moment?” Mizulina also stated that NGOs exaggerated the extent of domestic violence in Russia in order to increase their funding. For more from the interview, see <https://www.rt.com/politics/375943-senator-blames-feminist-lobby-for/>
- ²³³ Kristina Stoeckl, *The Russian Orthodox Church as moral norm entrepreneur*, Religion, State & Society 44 (2), 132-151, 2016.
- ²³⁴ Emphasis added. Article 29 UDHR reads, in full: 1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible; 2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society; 3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
- ²³⁵ Metropolitan Kirill, *The Experience of Viewing the Problems of Human Rights and their Moral Foundations in European Religious Communities*. Presentation at the Conference ‘Evolution of Moral Values and Human Rights in Multicultural Society’, Strasbourg, October 2006; Europaica Bulletin. 2006 108, <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/108.aspx#1>.
- ²³⁶ Kristina Stoeckl, *The Russian Orthodox Church as moral norm entrepreneur*, Religion, State & Society 44 (2), 132-151, 2016.
- ²³⁷ Patriarch Kirill, 2007 speech to UNESCO; Kirill appealed to “those people in the world who share traditional moral values founded on religion” (*Vystuplenie mitropolita Smolenskogo i Kaliningradskogo Kirilla na mezhdunarodnom seminare YUNESCO na temu 'Dialog civilizacij: prava cheloveka, npravstvennye cennosti i kul'turnoe mnogoobrazie'*. Interfax Religion, March 2007, 108), suggesting that traditional values have their roots in all world religions.
- ²³⁸ Andrew Higgins, In Expanding Russian Influence, Faith Combines With Firepower, New York Times, Sep/13/2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/world/europe/russia-orthodox-church.html?_r=0. For example, through its influence and connections, the ROC has helped to export anti-rights legislation to Moldova and Montenegro in the past two years.
- ²³⁹ The ultra-conservative Law and Justice party won a majority of government seats in October 2015, see e.g. Associated Press, *Rightwing Law and Justice party wins overall majority in Polish election*, The Guardian, October 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/27/poland-law-justice-party-wins-235-seats-can-govern-alone>
- ²⁴⁰ See e.g. Nick Duffy, *Hungary Blocks European Agreement on LGBT Rights*, Pink News, March 2016, <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/03/08/hungary-blocks-european-agreement-on-lgbt-rights/>.
- ²⁴¹ Support and admiration for the Russian government and ROC goes beyond Trump in the Republican party: <http://www.alternet.org/election-2016/why-religious-right-shares-trumps-putin-crush>.
- ²⁴² Christopher Stoop, Russian Social Conservatism, the U.S.-based WCF, & the Global Culture Wars in Historical Context, The Public Eye: Winter 2016, February 2016, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/02/16/russian-social-conservatism-the-u-s-based-wcf-the-global-culture-wars-in-historical-context/#sthash.SfFg9IMA.dpbs>.
- ²⁴³ *ibid.*
- ²⁴⁴ *ibid.*
- ²⁴⁵ Rod Dreher, *An Orthodox-Evangelical Alliance?*, The American Conservative, November 10, 2014, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/christianity-orthodox-evangelical-alliance/>.

This is one chapter of **Rights at Risk**
Observatory on the Universality of Rights Trends Report 2017

To access the full publication, please visit www.oursplatform.org