

Spotlight on Human Rights - September 2016

The American Civil Liberties Union <https://www.aclu.org>

The **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** <https://www.aclu.org> was founded after World War I in response to thousands of Americans being labeled as “radicals” and subsequently arrested without warrants or regard for constitutional protections against unlawful search and seizure. Known as the “Palmer Raids”, after then Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, those arrested were brutally treated and held in horrible conditions. A small group of lawyers formed the ACLU in response to these raids to protect basic rights. The ACLU today has more than 500,000 members, nearly 200 staff attorneys and thousands of volunteer lawyers. There are many chapters in the US, including one in Philadelphia <https://www.aclupa.org/chapters/greaterphiladelphia/>.

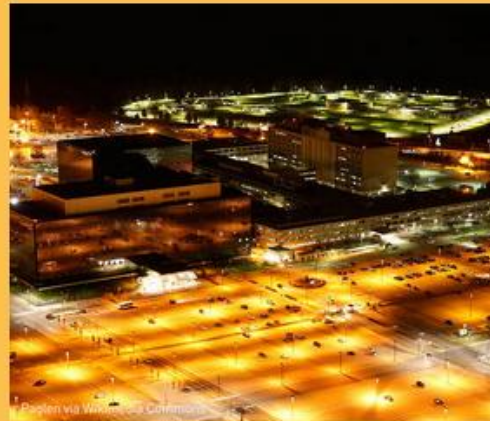
The ACLU’s work incorporates an explicit commitment to holding the US accountable to international human rights laws and standards as well rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/human-rights>; Currently they are involved in issues such as immigrant and LGBT rights, protecting whistle blowers, holding the CIA accountable for torture and many others. They see themselves as part of a reemerging movement of U.S.-based organizations that use the international human rights framework in domestic rights advocacy. The ACLU offers regular online updates and opportunities to take action via their website.

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