

USA – contextual human rights issues



The purpose of this summary is to provide a high-level overview of documented human rights issues in a particular country and how they could intersect with TV production. It aims to prompt further consideration and planning by production teams where appropriate. Not all issues will be relevant for all TV productions and, conversely, there may be aspects not yet covered that are relevant.

Human rights issue	Description of context	How this could intersect with TV production	Suggested mitigations	Resources
Discrimination and hate crimes - LGBTQI	Individual states have introduced anti-LGBTI bills and bills focused on restricting gender-affirming healthcare access for trans youth. (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crew and talent may experience or witness homophobia • Local LGBTI crew may be hiding their identities or living in fear • Local crew may exhibit homophobia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive security practices • Establish culture where everyone can raise concerns • Wellbeing and support resources 	Aide Memoire for Inclusive Personal Safety on Location Inclusive security risk management
Gender-based violence	Indigenous women experience disproportionately high levels of rape and sexual violence, disappearances and killings. (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female crew may be at risk of gender-based violence or sexual harassment • Local female crew may have experienced or be experiencing GBV outside the production 		Toolkit: Getting the culture right FATV Charity: The Whole Picture Toolkit
Reproductive rights	In 2022, the US Supreme Court ended federal protections for abortion rights by overturning <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , reversing nearly 50 years of jurisprudence. Many states immediately moved to implement standing or new laws to ban entirely or severely curtail access to abortion. At least one state subsequently arrested and prosecuted a woman who aided a self-managed abortion. (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female crew may need to access reproductive healthcare during filming • Content that covers reproductive rights may become a target for activists and/or state authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check local state laws in advance and put together a plan should anyone need reproductive healthcare 	Abortion laws by state (Centre for Reproductive Rights)
Behaviour of public security	At least 1,093 people were killed by police using firearms in 2022. The limited public data available suggested that Black people were disproportionately impacted by police use of lethal force. (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public security is sometimes relied on for a production (e.g. a sporting event) • Crew or talent from racial and ethnic minorities may have particular concerns about interactions with police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the risks involved with public security for e.g. sporting events and include in risk assessments • Inclusive security practices 	UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials DCAF/ICRC Toolkit: Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments

Gun violence	Gun violence is widespread throughout the country and authorities released figures showing that nearly 49,000 people were killed in 2021. Increased unregulated gun acquisition and possession combined with rising political extremism, xenophobia and racism has contributed to a high number of mass killings. (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guns may be present on set, in the vicinity of crew or carried by private security providers • Crew may be caught up or affected by a shooting incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate due diligence on private security providers to ensure appropriate training, licences and safety equipment • Clear policy on the use of armed support 	Toolkit: Category management due diligence
Environmental risks	Risks of flash-flooding, wildfires, extreme heat, persistent drought, hurricanes and unsafe drinking water (Amnesty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks to life and health of crew from environmental issues, including working in extreme temperatures, or natural disasters • Lack of sufficient access to water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factor in environmental risks, esp heat exposure • Make provision to ensure water available to the shoot • Set high environmental standards on shoots 	albert production toolkit BFI: Screen new deal route map to sustainable film production
Labour rights	There are no federal laws, and few state laws, requiring paid holidays or paid family leave. The federal minimum wage has been stuck at poverty level since 2009 at \$7.25 per hour and as a result, working families often have to stitch together multiple jobs on unpredictable schedules. The tipped minimum wage—the base pay for someone who receives a substantial portion of their wages from tips—has been stuck at just \$2.13 for over 30 years. (Oxfam America)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancillary workers providing services to productions (e.g. cleaning, catering, driving) may be experiencing exceptionally low pay, inadequate rest breaks or be working multiple jobs due to exploitative practices, putting their physical and mental health at risk • Productions may also encounter such workers in hotels and venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due diligence on suppliers of ancillary services • Direct engagement with and checks on ancillary workers during production 	Toolkit: Supporting ancillary workers directly Toolkit: Getting the culture right Toolkit: Vetting suppliers appropriately Toolkit: Responding to and remedying issues identified Best States to Work Index (Oxfam America)
Child labour	The US has problematic legislation for child labour in agriculture and a 2023 investigation found widespread use of illegal child labour in factories that make a range of products. (Human Rights Watch, New York Times)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productions may encounter child labour • Productions may source products that involve child labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response plan if child labour is encountered • Due diligence on suppliers 	Toolkit: Responding to and remedying issues identified Child safeguarding toolkit for business (UNICEF)

Have further insights? Please share suggested issues, intersections with TV, mitigations and resources with amelia.knott@tvhumanrights.org