

Uzra Zeya, an internationally renowned foreign policy and non-profit leader, joined Human Rights First as its President and CEO on April 21, 2025. She served previously as U.S. Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights from July 2021 to January 2025. In this role, she led global U.S. diplomacy to advance human rights, strengthen rule of law, support refugees, elevate the fight against corruption, and combat transnational crime and human trafficking. Concurrently, she was U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, rallying international partners to support human rights of Tibetans and preservation of their unique religious, cultural, and linguistic identity.

As President and CEO of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, Zeya led a non-partisan network of over 150 organizations working in more than 180 countries to resolve conflict by peaceful means. Her distinguished diplomatic career included senior leadership roles at U.S. embassies in France and India and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and advising Secretaries of State Rice and Clinton. She also served in Syria, Egypt, Oman, and Jamaica, and speaks French, Arabic, and Spanish.

Zeya co-authored a 2021 Council on Foreign Relations report on Revitalizing American Diplomacy that shaped State Department modernization. She is on the Board of Advisors at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. She was awarded the French Legion d'Honneur and the Cross of Commander of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas in recognition of her contributions to a more just and peaceful world.