

UPR Intervention for Benin, 14th Session October 25, 2012
(as drafted and read)

The United States warmly welcomes [head of delegation] and the delegation from Benin to the UPR Working Group.

We commend Benin and President Yayi Boni for continuing the transition to democracy. We applaud the legislative work of recent years to pass and enforce laws regarding domestic violence against women, official corruption, torture, and other crimes. We applaud the establishment of human rights institutions including the human rights Ombudsman and the National Council for the Promotion of Gender Equity and Equality.

We remain concerned, however, about continuing reports of high levels of violence and abuse by security services, including the police, as well as harsh prison conditions and long pre-trial detention periods.

We are concerned by reports of serious restrictions on the right to strike in the public sector and authorities' frequent anti-union statements, fueling social tensions and protest actions. We also note the government's slow progress in addressing the worst forms of child labor.

We note your rejection of the previous UPR recommendation to decriminalize sexual relations between consenting, same-sex individuals and remain concerned about LGBT citizens in Benin. What services or educational programs do you have in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of LGBT citizens?

Bearing in mind these concerns, the United States makes the following recommendations:

1. Improve the conditions of prisons and other places of detention and reduce overcrowding by building more prisons or reducing the length of pre-trial detention.
2. Establish a legal framework for the national preventive mechanism against torture and lobby for the passage of the bill to establish a national observatory for the prevention of torture.

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3. Decriminalize sexual relations between consenting, same-sex individuals and establish educational programs and appropriate policies for police that promote the personal security of all Benin citizens regardless of sexual orientation.