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H.E. Mr. Francois Zimeray
Ambassador for Human Rights
UPR Intervention for France, 15th Session January 21, 2013
(as drafted)

The United States warmly welcomes [head of delegation] and the French delegation.

We applaud France's commitment to addressing the broad spectrum of human rights.

We welcome France's announcement of an action plan to combat racism and anti-Semitism. However, we remain concerned about the law that prohibits the wearing of religious symbols in state schools and bans the wearing of face-covering garments, including the burqa, in public.

Although France has plans to improve its prisons, we must express our deep concern about current overcrowding and unacceptable hygienic conditions in penal institutions. The recent review of the Baumette Prison in Marseille by the Inspector General for Places of Detention illustrates the disturbing conditions that inmates must endure daily.

We applaud the government's announcement that more employment opportunities, better living conditions, and increased access to education and health care will be offered to Romani individuals. Nevertheless, we remain concerned with the ways in which evictions of Romani individuals are being carried out as well as with societal intolerance aimed at Roma.

The United States makes the following recommendations:

1. Allocate more resources to improve the condition of prisons around the country and in French overseas territories and provide additional training to prison staff; and
2. Ensure that evictions from unauthorized Roma camps be carried out in full adherence with the law and work to better integrate Romani individuals into French society through provision of educational and employment opportunities.