

40 → 7

UPR Intervention for Montenegro, 15<sup>th</sup> Session January 28, 2013  
(as drafted)

The United States warmly welcomes ~~Minister Dusko Markovic~~ and the Montenegrin delegation.

H.E. Svad Humarović

We commend Montenegro's commitment to the promotion of human rights. We specifically recognize the recent successes in furthering LGBT rights, preventing torture and other mistreatment of individuals, and finding a durable solution through the Regional Housing Program for the refugees at Camp Konik, which includes 800 individuals whose residences were destroyed by fire in July 2012.

We welcome your government's efforts to resolve the legal status of refugees and simplify the registration process and commend the recent decision to extend the registration deadline. However, we remain concerned that thousands of people from the 1990s conflicts still have not registered for legal status due to several reasons, including administrative barriers, which create a risk of statelessness.

We recognize the challenge of curbing official corruption and the progress Montenegro has made. However, we are concerned with the apparent lack of political will and judicial independence needed to tackle high-level corruption. Anti-corruption efforts by police, prosecutors, and judges need substantial improvement.

We note that full integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian individuals remains elusive. Societal prejudice against them is widespread, and local authorities often ignore or tacitly condone it. According to local NGOs, the greatest barriers facing members of these minority groups in the labor market are inability to speak the national language, lack of education, and employer discrimination. Although the Government has a formal action plan to achieve inclusion, no formal steps have been taken to implement it.

The United States makes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct public awareness campaigns within the refugee community on the importance of registration and ensure strong implementation of the Action Plan for Solving the Status of Internally Displaced Persons;

(continued)

Ambassador Eileen C. Donahoe

2. Strengthen accountability and integrity standards within the judiciary by ensuring merit-based appointments and promoting career development;

3. Implement the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2012 – 2016.