

UPR Intervention for Serbia, 15<sup>th</sup> Session January 30, 2013

*H.E. Gordana Stamenic*

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

We commend Serbia's notable progress in protecting and promoting human rights.

We also commend the actions of the Anti-Corruption Agency and look forward to further steps to enhance judicial independence, eliminate bribery, and address issues of conflict of interest for government officials.

We recognize that improved respect for the human rights of Romani individuals is a priority for the government of Serbia. However, many Romani individuals still suffer routine discrimination in education, housing, employment and birth registration.

While the Government has made commendable strides in many areas, we remain profoundly disappointed that the Government of Serbia prohibited the Belgrade Pride Parade in October. By doing so, the Government missed an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to upholding the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens of Serbia.

We are further disappointed by the lack of progress in the Bytyqi (Buh-TEE-Chee) case. It has been thirteen years since three U.S. citizen brothers, Agron, Ylli and Mehmet Bytyqi, were detained and executed by Serbian authorities after accidentally crossing the Serbia-Kosovo administrative line. The Serbian war crimes prosecutor has been investigating the case, but according to our information, substantial progress in the investigation has not been made.

The United States makes the following recommendations:

1. Enforce legal safeguards to ensure fair and equal access to housing, education, employment and government services for Romani individuals, and protection against arbitrary, forcible evictions and displacement from their homes or temporary residences;
2. Ensure adequate protection for all citizens, including members of the LGBT community, by, inter alia, allowing them to assemble to publicly promote

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their human rights and identifying and prosecuting those who commit violence against those who participate in peaceful assemblies;

3. Ensure that a serious inquiry is undertaken into persons responsible for detaining and executing the Bytyqi brothers in 1999.