

U.S. Statement at the UPR of Brunei Darussalam, 19th Session, May 2, 2014

The United States welcomes the delegation of Brunei Darussalam.

We acknowledge Brunei's stated commitment to protecting the rights of children. We also note Brunei's stated commitment to advance women's empowerment and gender equality.

The United States would like to see progress on bringing Brunei's laws and practices regarding freedom of opinion and expression in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We are strongly concerned that Brunei's planned enactment of the Penal Code Order of 2013 would undermine several of Brunei's international human rights commitments, including the freedoms of religion and of expression and prohibitions on torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

We are also concerned that the Trade Unions Act gives the government broad discretion to refuse trade union registration and, despite laws that penalize labor trafficking and document retention, migrant workers remain vulnerable to forced labor.

The United States recommends that Brunei:

1. Revise the Penal Code Order of 2013 to prohibit torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and to bring Brunei's domestic legislation in line with its international human rights commitments on the freedoms of religion and of expression;
2. Repeal the emergency powers and the Sedition Act to bring Brunei's domestic legislation in line with its international human rights commitments on the freedoms of expression, of peaceful assembly and of association;
3. Strengthen the text and enforcement of legislation that protects internationally-recognized labor rights for all workers, particularly those rights relating to forced labor and freedom of association, and enforce the Trafficking and Smuggling Persons Order to hold accountable labor and sex traffickers.