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U.S. Statement at the UPR of Equatorial Guinea, 19th Session, May 5, 2014

The United States welcomes the delegation from Equatorial Guinea to the UPR Working Group.

We welcome the February 2014 release of Agustín Esono Nsogo, but remain concerned about the numerous reports of arbitrary detention and politically-motivated violence perpetrated by the military and law enforcement personnel, including the alleged use of torture, excessive force, and extrajudicial killings. We are also concerned about the state's failure to hold security forces accountable for these ongoing human rights violations.

We are also dismayed by attempts to intimidate and silence political opponents, civil society and journalists through state control of mass media, as well as by opaque and burdensome registration requirements and a military presence at polling stations during May 2013 elections. We urge the government to protect freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, in line with its international obligations.

Though the government has ratified the eight International Labor Organization core conventions, the country still lacks legislation necessary to protect children from hazardous labor.

We recommend that Equatorial Guinea:

1. Hold security forces and other government officials accountable for human rights violations, including the use of torture and arbitrary arrests and detention of members of the opposition;
2. Take necessary steps, such as streamlining organizational registration processes and allowing independent media to operate in the country, to foster an environment where opposition parties, journalists, civil society, and all Equatoguineans can operate freely, independently, and without fear;
3. Establish necessary measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, including raising the minimum age for all hazardous work to 18 and developing a list of hazardous occupations and activities not permitted for children.