

U.S. Statement at the UPR of The Gambia,

20th Session, October 28, 2014

The United States welcomes [head of delegation] and the Gambian delegation to the UPR Working Group.

The United States is deeply dismayed by the human rights situation in The Gambia. Among other issues, we are concerned by government interference with the electoral process; and government harassment and abuse of its critics, including restrictions of freedoms of press and speech of Gambian citizens and journalists, and reports of torture, arrest, detention, and sometimes enforced disappearance of citizens for exercising their human rights. We are also concerned about discrimination against Gambian citizens based on sexual orientation or gender identity, trafficking in persons, forced child marriage, child prostitution, and exploitative child labor.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we recommend that The Gambia:

1. Investigate the disappearance of U.S. Citizens Alhaji Ceesay [all-HA-gee SEE-say] and Ebrima Jobe [eh-BREE-mah JO-beh];
2. Demonstrate its commitment to freedom of expression, including by members of the press, by allowing the UN unfettered access to complete the investigation of the death of journalist Deyda Hydara [DAY-da hee-DAH-ra] in 2004 and the disappearance of journalist Ebrima Manneh [eh-BREE-mah MAH-neh] in 2006.
3. Ensure that the human rights of all Gambian citizens are respected, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, by repealing discriminatory laws that are inconsistent with international human rights principles.