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U.S. Statement at the UPR of Georgia, 23rd Session, November 10, 2015

The United States warmly welcomes the Georgian delegation.

We commend Georgia's reforms, including those on antidiscrimination, labor, and judicial independence. We appreciate the Georgian delegation's updates on implementation of these and other reforms.

We remain concerned by persistent shortcomings in Georgia's legal system that have resulted in incomplete investigations, premature charging of suspects, and inappropriate use of pretrial detention. We are also concerned by the increased societal intolerance of members of minority groups, and an apparent narrowing in the space for media.

We also must note that due to the Russia's occupation of Georgia's regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Government of Georgia is unable to take measures to promote and protect human rights in these regions, which sit within Georgia's internationally recognized borders. Moreover, the lack of transparency and absence of international monitors prevents Georgia and the international community from assessing the human rights situation there.

Noting these concerns, we recommend that Georgia:

1. Strengthen respect for rule of law by promoting judicial independence and transparency through the depoliticization of the judiciary and law enforcement authorities, and by strengthening mechanisms to investigate human rights abuses or violations.
2. Increase respect for the rights of *all* citizens by strengthening antidiscrimination legislation and enforcement mechanisms and ensuring law enforcement provides universal equal treatment and due process;
3. Bolster respect for pluralism and open debate by fostering a non-violent environment tolerant of dissenting voices – including those of the opposition – and avoiding politically motivated actions against critical media outlets.