

**U.S. Statement at the UPR of Mauritania, 23rd Session, November
3, 2015**

The United States values our friendship and partnership with [the Government of] Mauritania [and the Mauritanian people].

We commend Mauritania's efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and promote regional security.

We encourage Mauritania to continue incorporating civil society into security discussions[, focusing on viable alternatives to violent extremism for youth. We note Mauritania's support for the establishment of a regional network of youth civil society organizations dedicated to that purpose.]

We welcome the steps Mauritania has taken to eradicate slavery, including the August 2015 anti-slavery law. We look forward to its vigorous and thorough enforcement.

However, we are deeply troubled that individuals in Mauritania continue to be enslaved and that the government has failed to acknowledge and effectively prosecute cases under Mauritania's anti-slavery laws.

We are concerned about the protection of civil society organizations that champion the anti-slavery movement and related issues in Mauritania. We are also concerned about these organizations' right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, which permits them to advocate for their causes peacefully and openly, without fear of government reprisal.

We recommend that the government:

1. Prosecute slaveholders and find means for those who were enslaved to obtain compensation;
2. Fully implement the National Roadmap to Combat the Vestiges of Slavery;
3. Establish clear legal protections for human rights defenders and civil society organizations and abide by them.