**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of Turkmenistan**

**44th Session, November 6, 2023**

**As delivered by Kaitlin Sandin**

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The United States welcomes the delegation from Turkmenistan, led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Hajiyev.

We welcome the Turkmen government’s efforts to work with Jehovah’s Witness conscientious objectors on a mutually agreeable alternative civilian service policy, as well as the government’s engagement with the International Labour Organization to reform labor laws concerning the cotton sector. We remain concerned about limitations on the public’s access to information.

In the spirit of cooperation, we recommend that Turkmenistan:

1. Remove obstacles to independent media and civil society, including restrictions on websites, social media, and VPNs, to provide citizens with greater access to information and increase government transparency.
2. Provide information on all disappeared persons to their families and lawyers, including those whose sentences have expired.
3. Provide access for independent inspectors to the prison system.
4. Remove barriers to movement by giving women equal opportunities to obtain a driving license and abolish the residence permit system that restricts where people can live and work.

I thank you.