**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of Gabon,**

**28th Session, November 7, 2017**

The United States welcomes the delegation of Gabon to the UPR Working Group.

The United States remains deeply concerned by the lack of progress on democratization in Gabon. Post-election violence on both sides, including the burning of the National Assembly building, significant lapses in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, numerous arrests and detentions without due process, and accusations of political tampering with the electoral process marred the 2016 presidential election. Authorities have held several detainees for over a year without trial. There remains to be a full accounting of missing individuals.

We also remain concerned by the government’s continued restrictions on freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. Following the presidential election, the government blocked access to the internet and social media. It continues to suppress media, including by arresting journalists, and restricting the opposition’s exercise of the right to peaceful assembly, for example by forcibly dispersing protestors. In a non-transparent manner, the government implemented a new law further restricting the right to peaceful assembly.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we recommend that Gabon:

1. Ensure fair trial guarantees for prisoners subject to criminal prosecution, including those detained after last year’s presidential election;
2. Respect freedom of peaceful assembly, including when exercised by the opposition; and
3. Refrain from restricting freedom of expression, whether it is exercised online or offline, and ensure that journalists and media outlets are able to carry out their work without harassment.