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

**42nd Session, February 1, 2023**

 **Delivered by Ms. Kelly Billingsley,**

**As Deputy Permanent Representative to the Human Rights Council**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The United States welcomes the delegation of Sri Lanka.

We support efforts by Sri Lankans to uphold freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, which are central to Sri Lanka’s tradition of democracy.  We recognize steps taken in recent months to improve economic transparency and governance.

However, we are concerned by reports of abuses by members of the security forces, the use of anti-terror legislation to detain human rights defenders, and the rise in corruption.

We recommend that Sri Lanka:

1.  Replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act, cease arbitrary detentions for freedom of expression, and ensure legislation is aligned with international human rights standards.

2. Ensure the rights of LGBTQI+ persons are respected and take steps to end discrimination and harassment of the LGBTQI+ community, including by amending the penal code to decriminalize same sex relations.

3. End impunity for human rights violations, abuses, and harassment, especially against members of ethnic and religious minority communities, by holding those responsible to account, including security forces and government officials, and implementing HRC resolution commitments.

I thank you.