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

**43rd Session, May 8, 2023**

**Delivered by Taylor Westfall**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The United States welcomes the delegation from Montenegro led by His Excellency Mr. Fatmir Gjeka [Guh-yay-kuh], Minister for Human and Minority Rights.

We commend recent initiatives to prosecute those responsible for high-level corruption. However, we remain concerned by the slow and sometimes inadequate implementation of institutional anti-corruption safeguards to ensure good governance.

We recommend that Montenegro:

1. Ensure the independence, integrity, accountability, and impartiality of the judiciary through implementation of anti-corruption policies such as merit-based appointments.
2. Ensure that all reported attacks and harassment against journalists investigating police officers and other government officials allegedly engaged in corrupt practices or abuse of office are thoroughly and impartially investigated, especially given the critical importance of such investigations to ensuring the safety of media workers.
3. Strengthen policies and efforts that counter societal and institutional discrimination against members of marginalized ethnic groups, including the Roma, and LGBTQI+ persons.

I thank you.