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

**31st Session November 14, 2018**

The United States welcomes the Republic of the Congo to the UPR Working Group.

We recommend that the Republic of the Congo:

1. Release all remaining prisoners of conscience, investigate reports of abuses by security forces and deaths of persons in detention, and take effective measures to ensure fair trial guarantees for all individuals.
2. Revise laws regarding freedom of association and peaceful assembly to ensure they are consistent with your international obligations and commitments.
3. Enact comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation that criminalizes all forms of trafficking and prescribes sufficiently stringent penalties.

We welcome Republic of the Congo’s progress towards peace, but remain deeply concerned by reports of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of individuals who are detained by security forces, arbitrary arrests and holding of prisoners of conscience, and undue restrictions on freedoms of association and peaceful assembly. We are also concerned about inadequate anti-trafficking legislation and enforcement efforts.