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

**33rd Session, May 6, 2019**

The United States welcomes the Albanian delegation to the UPR Working Group.

We recommend that Albania:

1. Vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers—including complicit officials—under articles 110(a) and 128(b) of the law and increase the number of judges and district prosecutors trained on victim-centered approaches to trafficking in persons.
2. Appropriate sufficient funds to support the Ministry of Interior’s vetting system under the law on “Vetting of State Police, Republican Guard and Police Internal Affairs Service.”
3. Train law enforcement officers to recognize the signs of domestic violence and to enforce the laws on rape and amendments to the law on domestic violence effectively, including in cases of spousal rape.

The United States welcomes Albania’s implementation of reforms to protect victims of trafficking in persons. However, we remain concerned by corruption among police, prosecutors, and judges, including complicity in human trafficking. Improvements in training, vetting, and selection criteria for security officials are a positive step towards restoring the public trust in democratic institutions and obtaining justice for victims. Furthermore, the United States applauds Albania’s positive progress in the vetting of judges and prosecutors, as well as the establishment of the High Judicial Council and High Prosecutorial Council.  Albania has come a long way on its judicial reform path, but must stay the course to root out corruption and revamp key rule-of-law institutions.