



THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN GENEVA

May 6, 2021

Elizabeth Broderick
Chair Rapporteur of the Working Group
on discrimination against women and girls
Geneva, Switzerland

Mama Fatima Singhateh
Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual
exploitation of children, including child
prostitution, child pornography and other
child sexual abuse material
Geneva, Switzerland

Siobhán Mullally
Special Rapporteur on trafficking in
persons, especially women and children
Geneva, Switzerland

Dubravka Šimonovic
Special Rapporteur on violence against
women, its causes and consequences
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Special Procedures Mandate Holders,

Thank you for your correspondence dated January 25, 2021. Please find enclosed the U.S. response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel A. Kronenfeld".

Daniel A. Kronenfeld
Human Rights Counselor

U.S. Response to UN Joint Communication Regarding the Alleged Use of Instagram to Publish Child Sexual Abuse Material in Romania

Thank you for your letter dated January 25, 2021, expressing concern about the alleged use of the social media platform Instagram to disseminate sexual abuse materials involving Romanian children. We appreciate your efforts to promote respect for human rights across the globe, especially the human rights of children, and for the opportunity to provide the below information concerning U.S. law, policy, and practice.

The U.S. government affirms our support for human rights and fundamental freedoms and firmly condemns the sexual exploitation of children, both online and offline, and the distribution of child sexual abuse materials. In the United States and abroad, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of children to these crimes as they often spend many hours online due to virtual schooling and limited recreational options. The U.S. Department of State regularly engages with U.S. businesses to discuss and encourage human rights due diligence when doing business in various countries and regions. We intend to share the specific concerns you identified with Instagram and its parent company, Facebook, and also urge the Special Procedures Mandate Holders to reach out to those companies directly to make them aware of these allegations.

Additionally, we recommend the Special Procedures Mandate Holders directly contact the Romanian government concerning these allegations. We understand the Romanian government has been investigating the matter and the broader issue of non-consensual pornography. We also understand that the Romanian Parliament is considering amending its cyber laws to allow for the prosecution of perpetrators and better protect victims, especially child victims. In 2021, the Romanian government established an inter-ministerial working group headed by the Justice Ministry to identify and implement measures to improve the state's response to victims of crime, including children. In 2019, the National Police Directorate established a specialized unit in Bucharest dedicated to investigating child sex abuse crimes which has been lauded for its high conviction rate.

The U.S. government, along with the other Five Country Ministerial members (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom), consulted with leading tech companies, including Facebook, on their development of public service announcements for parents, caregivers, and children to prevent and respond to online exploitation, including child sex trafficking. This meeting led to the release in March 2020 of the "*Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*" (attached). The U.S. Department of State will continue to address the sexual exploitation of children, including online, and advance these Voluntary Principles.

Enclosure: As stated.