



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

July 16, 2024

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Geneva, Switzerland

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

Dear Mandate Holders,

Please find enclosed the U.S. response to communication AL USA 12/2024 (086-24) dated May 10, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a cursive name, likely Michèle Taylor.

Ambassador Michèle Taylor  
Permanent Representative to the  
UN Human Rights Council

## **U.S. response to communication AL USA 12/2024**

Thank you for your letter dated May 10, 2024, concerning law enforcement actions in response to student protests. The United States is firmly committed to upholding and promoting the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association both at home and internationally.

In May and the months before, as Americans of all backgrounds and ideologies gathered to make their voices heard at universities across the United States, President Biden reaffirmed support for peaceful protest, stating it “is in the best tradition of how Americans respond to consequential issues.”

The rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution include rights to the freedom of speech, to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Many political, economic, and social concerns throughout our nation's history have been confronted and ameliorated by marches, sit-ins, rallies, demonstrations, and protests. Law enforcement agencies play a critical role in preserving and protecting these rights, but they must also identify when intervention is necessary in order to maintain safety and public order. Law enforcement must protect the ability of individuals to exercise these rights, including by intervening when necessary and as appropriate to maintain public safety. The U.S. Supreme Court holds that there are exceptions to First Amendment protections including for speech that incites imminent lawless action and true threats.

It is important to safeguard the free speech and peaceful assembly rights of everyone on our campuses, while protecting the safety of our universities and students. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, “it’s a hallmark of our democracy that our citizens make known their views, their concerns, their anger at any given time. And I think that reflects the strength of the country, the strength of democracy.” As President Biden said, “dissent is essential to democracy. But dissent must never lead to disorder or to denying the rights of others.” Students deserve the ability to earn an education, and faculty and staff deserve the ability to support those students. They all deserve the ability to walk across campus safely.