



**UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Offices to the United Nations and has the honor to refer to reports of unsolicited and fraudulent telephone calls and emails received by those in the diplomatic community and to provide general information and resources.

The Host Country has received multiple inquiries from Permanent and Observer Missions requesting assistance for members of staff who have been targeted in telephone scams. Scam callers have claimed to be from the Social Security Administration, and various government agencies or financial institutions and have solicited personally identifiable information or account numbers with the intention to defraud victims. The caller may threaten loss of income, arrest, deportation or other dire consequences if the victim fails to comply with requests and to reveal or confirm information. The scammer is often aggressive and may

**DIPLOMATIC NOTE**

insist that the victim does not disconnect from the call. The caller may already have limited personal information about the victim, may send fraudulent e-mails, may spoof the toll-free number of an organization so caller ID reads as if it is from a legitimate source and may call the victim multiple times. Callers have reportedly asked victims to withdraw funds from accounts to purchase gift cards, bitcoins, or other electronic currency. In addition, scammers have recently used “robocalls” – the use of automated messages attempting to solicit personal information from the recipient, often from seemingly local telephone numbers.

The Host Country wishes to raise awareness of this problem, particularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic and in advance of the holiday season where solicitations by telephone and email may increase.

The United States Federal Communications Commission offers the following advice on handling scam calls:

- Do not answer calls from unknown numbers. If you answer such a call, hang up immediately;
- If you answer the phone and the caller – or a recording – asks you to hit a button to stop getting the calls, you should just hang up. Scammers often use this trick to identify potential targets; and
- Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother’s maiden names, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls or if you are at all suspicious.

For more advice, please see the below tips on how to avoid becoming a victim and go to <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-robocalls-and-texts>.

Individuals wishing to report scam calls should contact their local police precinct or file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission at [https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket\\_form\\_id=39744](https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=39744).

The United States Mission to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Offices to the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

*JBD*

## **Avoid Becoming a Victim:**

If you or someone employed by your Mission receive a phone call of this nature:

- Advise the caller that you will contact the organization directly to verify the claim being made and hang up.
- **Do not** confirm or provide the caller with any personal information (full name, diplomatic title, address, visa information, diplomatic identification or any other identity number, etc.). **Do not** provide funds or payment in any form.
- Write down the phone number the individual called from, the name/title they used and any additional information the caller provided.
- **For calls regarding the IRS, if there is a possibility you owe taxes, you can call the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040 to discuss the matter. For Social Security, you may call 1-800-772-1213)**

## **Sources and Additional Reference/Reporting Information:**

- **Federal Trade Commission; Consumer Information – *Scam Alerts:***  
<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts>
- **Federal Trade Commission Consumer Information – *Identity Theft:***  
<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft>
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Common Fraud Schemes:*  
<http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud>