



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Tajikistan

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 6, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States recalls its statement of July 26 about violence in the Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan. We note that the situation is calmer, but that tensions remain and a large number of security forces are still deployed to the region. We encourage the Tajik authorities to allow access to Gorno-Badakshan for international organizations and diplomatic missions. Given its mandate for early warning and conflict prevention, the OSCE could play an important role in assisting the Tajik authorities.

In addition, the United States calls on the Tajik authorities to ensure transparent and impartial investigations into the recent killings of a leader of the Gorno-Badakshan branch of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Mr. Sabzali Mamadrizoev and the former field commander of the United Tajik Opposition, Mr. Imumnazar Imomnazarov.

We call for due legal process to be followed in any trials of those detained as a result of recent events, and strongly urge Tajikistan to fulfill its OSCE commitments by conducting transparent investigations of the incidents that have occurred at the border, and guaranteeing the rights of detainees, including access to legal counsel, humane treatment, and fair trial.

We reiterate our call for Tajikistan to abide by its OSCE commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of freedom of expression and the free flow of information at all times. A number of websites in Tajikistan remain blocked. We recall the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media's statement of July 27 when she noted that "blocking is a restriction on free media and, most importantly, deprives citizens of their right to know, to receive and impart information about developments in their own country." The United States calls on the Tajik authorities to lift these restrictions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.