



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Status of Uzbek Refugees in Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 30, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

As we have on several previous occasions before this Council, the United States once again wishes to express its ongoing grave concern for the welfare of the Uzbek refugees currently residing in Kyrgyzstan, 29 of whom remain in detention in Osh.

We welcome the assurances of the Kyrgyz Government, including those made before this Council, that it will abide by its obligations under international law to protect the human rights of these individuals.

Such protection must include a full review of each individual asylum case in close cooperation with UNHCR in order to determine eligibility for refugee status.

We would strongly object to any decision to return the asylum seekers to Uzbekistan in the absence of a careful review of their status by the Kyrgyz government, in consultation with UNHCR.

Through our Embassy in Tashkent, the United States continues to inquire after the status of the four individuals who were forcibly repatriated to Uzbekistan on June 9, and to urge that they be treated in a manner fully consistent with international law.

Mr. Chairman, the United States continues to monitor this situation very closely and reserves the right to return to this issue as warranted by future developments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.