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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Recent Detentions in Moldova

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 3, 2011

The United States is concerned about the March 2 detention and subsequent sentencing to seven days in jail of Corjova Mayor Valeriu Mitcul and Corjova Council Member Iurie Cotofan by Transnistrian authorities for disturbing public order. We reaffirm our unyielding support for the fundamental freedom of expression and urge the relevant authorities to act in a manner consistent with OSCE and international standards. We also reiterate our call for full respect for human rights, including the right to due process, access to legal counsel, and transparency in the legal process. Additionally, we request that the OSCE Mission to Moldova be given immediate access to Mr. Mitcul, Mr. Cotofan, and other detainees.

We continue to closely follow the cases of Ernest Vardanean and Ilie Cazac, who were recently tried and sentenced by Transnistrian authorities to lengthy prison terms without due process. Both individuals' trials fell far short of meeting international standards on respect for the rule of law. We continue to urge a review of both cases.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.