



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Closing Reinforced Plenary:**

**Any Other Business**

As delivered by U.S. Head of Delegation J. Brian Atwood  
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
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The United States for several years has used this agenda item to follow up on the recommendations made by the fact-finding missions resulting from the invocation of the Moscow Mechanism concerning Turkmenistan and Belarus. Because the conditions that gave rise to invocations of the Mechanism remain ongoing, my delegation will again address these serious issues. We will continue to follow up and we encourage the OSCE to remain actively engaged on these concerns until they are resolved.

The mechanism was invoked concerning **Turkmenistan** in 2003 following hundreds of arrests and show trials connected to the alleged coup attempt of November 2002. More than a decade later, many of the individuals arrested at that time – as well as others imprisoned on other grounds – have disappeared into the prison system. There are over 60 well-documented cases of such disappeared persons and numerous reports of torture and abuse. In other cases, the families have no information on the prisoners' whereabouts, their health, or even if they are dead or alive. Turkmenistan, as an OSCE participating State, committed itself to "ensure that all individuals in detention or incarceration will be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person," and to "observe the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of prisoners as well as the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials." We heard last week about the appalling conditions in Turkmenistan's prisons, in particular in Ovadan-Depe prison. We urge the government of Turkmenistan to engage with the OSCE and address serious shortcomings in its law enforcement and penitentiary institutions.

Nearly three and one-half years have passed since the invocation of the Moscow Mechanism concerning **Belarus** following the December 2010, post-election crackdown. Subsequently, the OSCE rapporteurs issued a thorough report designed to assist Belarus in meeting its OSCE human dimension commitments. Most of the report's recommendations remain unaddressed. We urge the Government of Belarus to review the recommendations and adopt measures that would guarantee human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law, and democratic norms and practices. We were pleased to see human rights defender Ales Bialiatski at this year's HDIM. That said, we again call upon the Government of Belarus to release all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally, and to ensure that their civil and political rights are fully guaranteed. We urge Belarus to repeal article 193.1 of the Criminal Code that criminalizes public activities without official permission.

Finally, my delegation underlines again the importance of evaluating constantly how the array of OSCE tools, including the Moscow Mechanism, can be strengthened and applied effectively to address persisting as well as unfolding situations of concern.