



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Statement on Freedom of Expression and
Association in the Russian Federation**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 14, 2012

The United States is deeply concerned by the apparent harassment of Russian political opposition figures on the eve of the planned demonstrations on June 12th. This follows searches of opposition leader's homes and several arrests in connection with the May 6th demonstrations in Moscow and also follows the passage of the new law in Russia that imposes disproportionate penalties for violations of rules concerning public demonstrations.

Several opposition leaders organizing the June 12th demonstrations, which we are gratified were free of violence, were called in for police questioning one hour prior to their start. Taken together, these measures raise serious questions about the arbitrary use of law enforcement to stifle freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.