



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Rule of Law for Political Activists in the Russian Federation**

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States is concerned about both the conviction on aggravated hooliganism charges and the disproportionately harsh sentences handed down August 17 by a Moscow court in the case of Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Ekaterina Samutsevitch, members of the group “Pussy Riot.” Procedural irregularities during the trial and the severity of the sentence of two years in prison for these non-violent acts raise serious questions about the arbitrary use of law for political purposes.

We urge Russian authorities to review this case and sentence and to ensure that the right of freedom of expression is upheld.

The United States is also concerned about the verdict and sentence in the re-hearing of the case of Taisia Osipova, an activist of the opposition movement “The Other Russia,” who was sentenced to eight years in prison on drug charges, though the prosecutor had recommended only four years. According to independent observers of the trial, Ms. Osipova was not permitted the opportunity to defend herself adequately against the charges, which appear to be politically motivated.

These disproportionate sentences against political activists underscore our growing concern about the rule of law and the arbitrary use of law enforcement authorities to stifle the legitimate expressions of fundamental freedoms in Russia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.