



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Elections in Belarus

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a. i. Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 23, 2010

Thank you, Chair.

The United States strongly condemns the violent actions undertaken by Belarusian authorities following the elections of December 19. This excessive use of force undermines the democratic process and the human rights of political activists, civil society representatives and journalists. We call for the immediate release of all presidential candidates and the over 600 protestors placed in custody December 19 and 20. The government of Belarus is responsible for their safety and well-being while in custody.

The United States notes the assessment of the OSCE/ODIHR mission that limited progress in the political environment prior to the elections did not lead to a free and fair outcome or a transparent vote count. As a result of this assessment, the United States cannot accept as legitimate the results of the presidential election announced by the Belarusian Central Election Commission on December 20.

The United States encourages the Belarusian authorities to open up political space in Belarus and to meet their commitments to OSCE standards for electoral reform, political interaction, media freedom and respect for human rights. We will engage the government, the political opposition, and civil society to promote progress for the sake of the Belarusian people and their democratic aspirations.

The United States has made clear throughout its engagement with the government of Belarus that the government's respect for human rights and the democratic process is at the center of our bilateral relations. The actions taken by Belarusian authorities following the elections represent a clear step backwards on these issues.