



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Eviction of Moscow NGO “For Human Rights” and Injuries to Lev Ponomarev**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 27, 2013

The United States is disturbed by an incident directed against a human rights organization in Russia. On June 23, unidentified men entered the Moscow offices of the organization “For Human Rights” to forcibly evict the employees. Seventy-two year-old Lev Ponomarev, a human rights defender who heads “For Human Rights” and six others were beaten and had to be taken to the hospital as a result.

We call on authorities to investigate this attack and hold the persons involved accountable for their actions.

We continue to be concerned by the warnings and prosecutions of NGOs under the law on “foreign agents,” as well as the application of other restrictive laws that impede the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms and undermine the functioning of civil society organizations.

In raising this issue yet again at the Permanent Council, we note that many prior OSCE commitments, from Principle VII of the Helsinki Final Act forward, affirm that civil society members, alone and in community with others, have “the right to know and act upon their rights,” including by monitoring and seeking implementation of the commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms to which we all have unanimously agreed. Participating states reaffirmed in the Astana Commemorative Declaration the principles of Helsinki and all the commitments made to date. All of us reaffirmed unequivocally that human rights are not solely a domestic issue, but also a matter of “direct and legitimate” interest to other States, and further reaffirmed “the important role played by civil society and free media in helping us to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, including free and fair elections, and the rule of law.”

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.