



United States Mission to the OSCE

Concern about Developments in Turkey

As delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 10, 2016

First, let me say that the United States condemns the ongoing PKK violence, including the recent, indefensible bombing in Diyarbakir. We offer our deepest condolences to all the loved ones of those who lost their lives and wish the wounded a speedy recovery. We again call on the PKK to cease its senseless, brutal attacks, and to lay down its arms. We continue to stand by our friend and ally Turkey in this fight.

The United States raised concern about media freedom in Turkey at last week's Permanent Council. I would like to echo the sentiments of the previous speakers regarding developments since then.

The United States is deeply concerned by the Turkish Government's formal arrest of opposition members of parliament, including the co-chairs of the HDP. When democracies pursue legal action against an elected representative, they must do so in a manner that reinforces the public's confidence in the rule of law.

We are also alarmed by government restrictions placed on internet access last week, including restrictions placed on access to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Skype, and Instagram. Restricting the internet undermines confidence in Turkey's democracy and economic prosperity by undermining the institutions upon which these stand.

Turkey is our ally and our friend, and in that context, we look forward to continued constructive dialogue on these issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.