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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Tajikistan on civil society participation in OSCE events, arrests of Islamic Revival Party members

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 19, 2015

The United States strongly supports the participation of civil society in OSCE events. Under OSCE rules as enshrined in the Helsinki Document 1992, only “persons and organizations which resort to the use of violence or publicly condone terrorism or the use of violence” may be barred from participating in OSCE meetings.

We remain concerned about the recent wave of arrests in Tajikistan of Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) members, including one who had planned to participate in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, and allegations of mistreatment in detention. We note that the Tajik government continues to assert a link between IRPT members and the violent attacks of September 4, 2015. At this time, the government of Tajikistan has provided no credible evidence that the IRPT as an organization was involved with the attacks in Dushanbe and surrounding towns. The IRPT has denied involvement in the attacks.

Tajikistan, like other countries, faces threats from violent extremists. Countering violent extremism and combatting terrorism are no small tasks. We believe, however, that it is vitally important to distinguish between peaceful political opposition voices and violent extremist acts, and to recognize that protection and promotion of space for peaceful opposition can be a bulwark against the domestic and transnational security threats both our countries seek to address.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.