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**United States Mission to the OSCE**

**Concern About the Detention of  
Odil Kobilov in Uzbekistan**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Kate Byrnes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 26, 2016

The United States is concerned about the detention of Mr. Odil Kobilov, a lawyer in Uzbekistan who defended Mr. Aramais Avakian, convicted on baseless charges of supporting ISIL.

After defending Mr. Avakian, Mr. Kobilov, reportedly, has been imprisoned and his license to practice law was revoked. Such politically-motivated retaliation, intended to suppress freedom of expression and discourage legal representation of criminal defendants, undermines the rule of law and the integrity of the judicial system.

We urge the government of Uzbekistan to ensure that the rights of Mr. Avakian, his co-defendants, and Mr. Kobilov are fully respected. We also call upon Uzbekistan to fully uphold its OSCE commitments regarding the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

Thank you, Madam Chair.