



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Statement on the Release of Former
Minister of Culture in Turkmenistan**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 18, 2013

The United States Government welcomes the recent release of Turkmenistan's former Minister of Culture Geldimurat Nurmammedov. Mr. Nurmammedov, who had been detained at a treatment center for drug addiction since a closed court proceeding on October 5, 2012, was released from custody on July 3. We understand that he is at home with his family and in good health.

We view the positive resolution of Mr. Nurmammedov's case as an important and encouraging indication of Turkmenistan's intent to abide by international human rights standards and its OSCE commitments. We encourage and support continued efforts by the Government of Turkmenistan to increase respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, which remain essential to a secure and prosperous future for all of its citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.