



United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply on “Gross Violations of Human Rights in the USA” Raised by the Russian Federation

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 29, 2020

Since the distinguished representative from Russia has mentioned my country, I'd like to exercise my Right of Reply. As in July when the Russian delegation last raised this broader topic, his intervention was riddled with factual errors and deliberate exaggeration.

We mourn the deaths of Marcellis Stinnette in Waukegan, and Karon Hylton in Washington last week, as well as that of Walter Wallace, Jr. in Philadelphia earlier this week. All lethal force incidents are fully investigated. The Wallace case appears to present difficult issues of mental health. The facts must be followed wherever they lead to ensure fair and just results. In America, we resolve conflicts through the courts and the justice system.

Without speaking to the specifics concerning the deaths of Mr. Stinnette, Mr. Hylton, and Mr. Wallace, which, I repeat, will be investigated, I wish to reiterate that anyone who breaks the law in the U.S. is accountable, whether he or she is in authority or not. We will not predispose or prejudge the result of any legal procedure that may be conducted in the United States.

Our procedures are conducted legitimately, with independent judges who bear no obligation to the state or to anyone else, and who go into court every day and uphold the rule of law. Our defendants are represented by independent lawyers who go into court every day and make the prosecutors prove their case.

As I said in July, we fully acknowledge that the work of combatting racism and ending racial discrimination in the United States, as in other participating States, remains incomplete. This is a fact the United States faces directly and forthrightly.

In addition, we are appalled at any occurrence of violence, whatever its source. The United States will maintain order, but it is always unacceptable and unlawful for anyone to be abused on the basis of race or for any other reason.

My country was founded upon the rule of law. Law must be objective. It must be honest, and it must be enforced with respect for the equal dignity and rights of all. As President Trump recently stated, law “is the foundation of our prosperity, our freedom, and our very way of life. But where there is no law, there is no opportunity. Where there is no justice, there is no liberty.”

The headline events in the United States underscore the urgent need to make progress on the challenge that lies squarely in front of us, namely for all Americans to work together to achieve the Constitution of the United States’ promise of a more perfect society. In doing so, we also uphold our international obligations and OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to make this Right of Reply.