



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Right of Reply to the Russian Federation on International Human Rights Day

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
December 12, 2019

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I am grateful for the words of my Russian colleague, Ambassador Alexander Lukashevich—for whom I have the greatest personal respect and regard—but he represents a country which is in violation of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Helsinki Accords.

The notion here that this Organization, the OSCE, is based upon nothing but mutual respect is wrong. In fact, the Organization is built upon the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and Helsinki Accords, which are based upon openness, human rights, liberty, freedom, democracy — and above all, non-aggression and not invading other countries to change borders through force, which Russia is now doing.

This is a rules-based organization. It is transatlantic and indeed ranges across Europe and into Central Asia. And it seeks to foster a rules-based society. That is why the United States participates so actively in the OSCE, and what we continue to stand for. This is not a matter of avoiding mentioning States when they stray from our principles. To the contrary, to avoid mentioning States sets this organization back and says, in fact, that we are not going to be living up to the principles of the Helsinki Accords and the Final Act. So, we are not mixing up any of the issues. Rather, we are continuing to stand up for the principles of liberty, decency and non-aggression in the OSCE region.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

###