



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **A Call on Russia to Release Oyub Titiev and Respect Human Rights in Chechnya**

As delivered by Political Counselor Gregory Macris  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 18, 2018

The United States is troubled by the news that Oyub Titiev, the head of the local Chechen branch office of the Russian human rights NGO Memorial, was arrested on January 9, reportedly on questionable drug charges. This is the latest in a string of alarming recent human rights violations in Chechnya. Titiev's arrest came less than two weeks after the speaker of the Chechen parliament called human rights activists "enemies of the people" and suggested they should be executed. The United States is also concerned by reports that Memorial's offices in Ingushetia were destroyed in an apparent arson attack. We urge Russian authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into this attack and to hold accountable all those responsible.

The United States joins the European Union, ODIHR, and the Council of Europe in calling on Chechen authorities to release Titiev immediately and allow independent civil society to operate free from harassment and intimidation. Given well-founded concerns about potential mistreatment of Titiev while in custody, we urge Russian federal authorities to ensure that his rights are protected in accordance with the Russian constitution and Russia's human rights obligations and commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

###