



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

### **Statement on Demolition of IPD Offices in Baku and Conviction of Activists**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
September 1, 2011

The United States joins the EU in expressing its objection to the August 11 demolition of the offices of the Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) in Baku. Of particular concern, the demolition took place despite a May 24, 2011 injunction by a district administrative court forbidding the expropriation or destruction of the property in question. Moreover, the owner of the building was out of the country. Staff present in the office were denied permission to recover private and professional property and records before the demolition of this property, which also contained the owner's residence.

We urge the authorities in Azerbaijan to investigate this case thoroughly and to open a dialogue with citizens affected by this and other recent demolitions to ensure that property rights are respected. We underscore that full respect for the rule of law--including due process--is a core OSCE commitment and one of the foundations of a free and prosperous society.

Recalling the statements we made following the peaceful demonstrations of April 2, 2011, in which we expressed concern about continuing restrictions on the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression in Azerbaijan, we note with concern the August 25 conviction of six activists for their role in the April 2 demonstrations. We join the EU in calling on the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure a fair, transparent, and evidence-based appeal process, and to respect the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression for all its citizens, as enshrined in the Azerbaijani Constitution and in Azerbaijan's OSCE commitments.

The United States will continue to follow developments concerning respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms closely. We reiterate our dedication to assisting Azerbaijan in fulfilling its OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.