

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Detention of Nematullo Botakuziev in Tajikistan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 29, 2010

By agreement with the Ambassador of Tajikistan we are making the statement today, but we may make another statement next week, if there is further information.

The United States would like to express its concern about the continued detention in Tajikistan of Mr. Nematullo Botakuziev. Mr. Botakuziev, a citizen of Kyrgyzstan and noted human rights defender, was reported missing on February 26. For almost a month, his whereabouts were unknown until March 25, when the office of the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was informed by officials of the Tajik State Committee on National Security that Mr. Botakuziev was being held in a detention facility in Dushanbe. Neither Mr. Botakuziev's lawyer, nor UNHCR officials have been granted access to Mr. Botakuziev, despite repeated requests. On March 31, the Embassy of the United States in Tajikistan officially raised this issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but still has yet to receive a response. We understand other Embassies have similarly sought information from the government of Tajikistan as to the well-being of Mr. Botakuziev.

We call on the government of Tajikistan to look into this matter as quickly as possible and to provide the Permanent Council with an update on Mr. Botakuziev. We also call upon Tajik authorities to permit him to meet with his attorney and with representatives of the UNHCR. In addition, we call on the interim government of Kyrgyzstan to clarify its current position regarding Mr. Botakuziev.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.