



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

### **Reply to the Russian Federation on Constitutional Policing in the United States**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 3, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Russian Federation for expressing concern about human rights.

As colleagues are aware, the United States has regularly raised in the Permanent Council incidents in which African Americans were killed in encounters with the police. We have not attempted to hide the fact that the United States still has problem regarding racism, discrimination, and mistrust between law enforcement and the communities which police officers serve. Respect for the service rendered by police officers and respect for the rights of individuals in the communities in which they serve is the basis of our approach to addressing these issues.

We've explained on numerous occasions efforts the U.S. Government is taking to address these problems and ensure constitutional policing in the United States. We've also explained steps taken by the states and local governments. In this regard, I wish to inform the Permanent Council that on October 31, the State of South Carolina began the trial of Michael Slager, a former police officer who is charged with murder for shooting and killing Walter Scott, an African American man, in 2015.

The U.S. delegation will continue to speak on the issue of ensuring constitutional policing in the United States and efforts taken by government, civil society, and ordinary citizens to overcome racism and discrimination in our country.

In response to two additional points made by our distinguished Russian colleague, I would simply point out that because data is collected at the state and local level, it is entirely possible that a federal official does not at any given time have an aggregation of all data from a state and local level at his fingertips. That does not mean that the data itself is not collected robustly, and I think the United States demonstrates best practices in collecting data -- including data that can point to discrimination in law enforcement or in criminal activity.

The second point is in response to the distinguished Russian colleague's sarcastic claim that my government does not think that ODIHR should engage anywhere except east of Vienna. I would note, first of all, that there is a very large ODIHR mission on-the-ground in my country

as we speak, and that last year ODIHR issued a very lengthy report on the issue of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, which the United States worked very diligently to facilitate.

In closing, let me say that I look forward to other delegations informing the Permanent Council of efforts to address problems regarding human rights in their own countries -- and raising concerns about other participating States in good faith.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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