



United States Mission to the OSCE

Human Rights Concerns in Tajikistan

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 16, 2015

We would like to follow up on a statement made by the European Union at the PC on July 2. The United States expresses its deep concern over the Government of Tajikistan's ongoing attempts to silence voices of political opposition members, both within Tajikistan and abroad. As we have previously noted, international observers characterized Tajikistan's March 1 parliamentary elections as lacking in meaningful political alternatives due to government interference in the campaign activities of such opposition parties as the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT). The OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission's preliminary report detailed these and other irregularities.

In the months following the election, the Tajik authorities have continued to obstruct the exercise of the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly by members of political opposition groups whom they smeared and persecuted as "extremist" for engaging in peaceful dissent.

By discouraging political pluralism, Tajikistan risks damaging its international reputation and its development as a peaceful, prosperous country. We urge the Tajik government to fully observe its obligations on freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—including respect for the peaceful expression of opposing political views. We also reiterate our call on the Tajik authorities to grant detained political opposition figures access to fair and open trials with the required procedural guarantees, in accordance with Tajikistan's international obligations and OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.