



United States Mission to the OSCE

Detention of Uzbek Activist Alikul Sarymsakov

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 26, 2015

The United States is concerned about the case of Uzbekistani human rights activist Alikul Sarymsakov. Mr. Sarymsakov attended a March 3 ODIHR event held to plan the observation of the Uzbekistani Presidential election that will occur on March 29. At the ODIHR event, he criticized the government for allowing President Karimov to run for another term despite the two-term limit set in Uzbekistan's constitution.

Following these comments, Mr. Sarymsakov was detained by government authorities and forcibly committed to a psychiatric institution in Jizzakh. Mr. Sarymsakov had been forcibly committed to that same psychiatric institution in 2014, after he had complained about corruption concerning a building project.

Mr. Sarymsakov's treatment by the authorities is very disturbing since it appears, in both cases, to have been the direct result of his exercise of the right to freely express dissenting political views. We call on the Government of Uzbekistan to release Mr. Sarymsakov and to uphold its international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its OSCE commitments related to freedom of expression and the treatment of individuals in detention.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.