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United States Mission to the OSCE



On the Recent Escalation of Tensions at the Kyrgyz-Tajik Border

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 6, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The United States welcomes the ceasefire agreed to between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan after deadly clashes on their borders starting on April 28 left close to 50 people dead, hundreds injured, and tens of thousands displaced. We offer our deepest sympathies concerning the injuries and casualties. We call on both countries to reduce tensions and avoid further violence.

We encourage Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to work closely with the OSCE Field Operations in their countries to quickly deploy confidence-building measures on the ground, particularly in local communities in and around disputed border areas and the enclaves/exclaves. We also encourage both countries to draw on the resources of the *Conflict Prevention Center*, *ODIHR*, the *Representative on Freedom of the Media*, *Transnational Threats Department*, and the *Office of the OSCE Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities* to develop and implement action plans to address the negative consequences stemming from the decades of border disputes. We would like to see both countries draw on the good offices of the OSCE *Chair-in-Office* to complete the protracted border delimitation and demarcation processes.

Madam Chair, as an Organization tasked with promoting comprehensive security, we must consider ways to empower Field Operations to report on escalating tensions in a timely manner, and with a view to problem-solving and de-escalation. We would welcome ideas from the Kyrgyz and Tajik authorities—and insights from Chairperson Linde's recent visit to the region—on how the OSCE might be helpful in moving ahead to help address the tensions that fueled this border conflict.

Thank you, Madam Chair.