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

# **Statement on Decriminalization of Defamation in Kyrgyzstan**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 22, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in commending Kyrgyzstan for becoming the 13th OSCE participating State, and the first Central Asian state, to decriminalize libel. We believe this measure will strengthen freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan and sets an excellent example for our OSCE community.

We call on all participating States to work towards the complete decriminalization of defamation. States should be especially tolerant of speech and other forms of expression that are directed against government officials, actions, and policies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.