



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Government of Uzbekistan's Second Round of Andijon Trial Verdicts

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 19, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States has taken note of the prison sentences handed down by the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan on December 21 and 22 against 78 persons found guilty of involvement in the unrest that took place in Andijon on May 12 and 13. We also note that on December 23 a military court and another court convicted 19 soldiers and five police officers of "negligence and dereliction of duty," as well as other crimes. And on December 28, the Supreme Court convicted ten police officers and two prison medical personnel on similar charges.

Regrettably, diplomatic personnel and human rights monitors were not allowed to attend the trials, and journalists were only allowed access to one day of the proceedings in the Supreme Court trial. As in the first series of Andijon trials, these proceedings, which were mostly closed to the public, shed little light on the tragic events that took place in Andijon, and we remain very disturbed by the way these and earlier show trials were conducted.

According to the 1990 Copenhagen agreement, all those charged with crimes are entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal. The handling of the trials by the Uzbek Government raises concerns about the investigative process, apparent denial of due process, mistreatment including alleged torture of defendants, and the failure to protect defendants' rights. They do not appear to reflect the legal processes of an OSCE participating State committed to upholding OSCE principles.

We understand that the Government of Uzbekistan claimed the trials were closed because, "material in the criminal charges includes information considered state secrets." Nevertheless, we reiterate that legitimate concerns about national security cannot be used as a justification to prevent a credible, transparent, and independent investigation to establish what actually happened in Andijon. Once again, we call on the Government of Uzbekistan to lift its chokehold on due process in its courts and to allow an independent, international investigation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.