



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

### **Statement in Response to Violence in Northern Kosovo**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 7, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

The United States condemns the violent attack by Serb hardliners against KFOR troops that took place in northern Kosovo on June 1, as well as the attack on EULEX personnel in Zubin Potok on May 30.

During the June 1 incident, two KFOR peacekeepers were injured while attempting to remove an illegal roadblock that was obstructing the freedom of movement of the international community and all residents of Kosovo. The May 30 attack was intended to prevent EULEX from conducting its normal duties at the local police station.

The United States fully supports the respective efforts of KFOR and EULEX to ensure a safe and secure environment, promote the rule of law, enable the free movement of both goods and people within Kosovo, and facilitate proper border and customs operations in both directions over the Kosovo-Serbia border. These efforts are in the interests of the local population and Kosovo's and Serbia's EU aspirations, as well as broader regional stability.

We again call for the end of barricades in northern Kosovo, and the closure of bypass roads and illegal crossing points. Roadblocks, barricades, and violence impair the daily lives of ordinary people in northern Kosovo, who are placed under duress to participate in actions that can only serve the interests of a few criminals and extremists, and can only make progress impossible.

Obstruction of lawful authority in northern Kosovo not only places at risk peace and stability in the region, but also places at risk the gains made by the OMIK mission. It also makes close to impossible the needed investments that can help improve the lives of local residents.

And so we call for calm and a halt to inflammatory rhetoric and violent actions, noting with particular concern the statements by the Serbian Interior Minister threatening, as he said, "reciprocity" for KFOR's lawful and professional actions. We call on the Government of Serbia to vocally distance itself from, and cease entirely its material support for, the violent and illegal actions of hardliners and parallel institutions in Kosovo.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.