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

### **International Week of the Disappeared**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Kate Byrnes  
at the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 28, 2015

Each year in May, the world marks the International Week of the Disappeared to honor the disappeared, address the dark history of this element of state terror, expose contemporary cases of disappearances, and shine a light on continuing efforts for truth and justice in countries around the world. This week is a painful reminder that families await information on the fate of their loved ones and that disappeared persons are waiting to be freed from the unknown prisons where they are kept.

All OSCE participating States have committed to “ensure that all individuals in detention or incarceration will be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person” and to “observe the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners as well as the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.”

Mr. Chair, at last week’s Permanent Council meeting we raised our concern over the disappeared in Crimea under Russia’s occupation. Every year at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, we raise the need for follow-up to the Moscow Mechanism and urge one participating State to provide information to families about relatives who have disappeared. The families of the disappeared do not forget, and neither does the international community. We encourage participating States to work with OSCE institutions to expose the truth regarding those who have disappeared, to release disappeared persons, and to move forward before we mark the International Week of the Disappeared in May 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.