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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Media Freedom in Uzbekistan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 3, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

The United States also expresses its concern following the sentencing to 12-and-one-half years' incarceration of the Uzbekistan journalist Dilmurod Sayid on extortion and forgery charges following a closed trial. As a journalist, Sayid has been a marked critic of corruption and abuse of power by local authorities. His arrest and conviction raise serious questions about the use of the criminal justice system in Uzbekistan in suppressing freedom of expression.

As noted by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Haraszti August 5, the trial in which Mr. Sayid was convicted did not meet international standards of fair procedure and failed to comply with Uzbekistan's OSCE commitments.

We urge the authorities of Uzbekistan to conduct a thorough review of the case and to grant a new, open trial for Mr. Sayid.

In addition, Mr. Sayid has tuberculosis and reportedly has not received treatment since he has been incarcerated. We call upon the authorities to provide promptly all necessary medical treatment for his condition.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.