



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Statement on Convictions of Opposition
Leaders Mammadov and Yagublu
in Azerbaijan**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 27, 2014

The United States is deeply disappointed by the judicial process leading to the March 17 sentencing of opposition Republican Alternative (REAL) Movement Head Ilgar Mammadov and opposition Musavat Party Deputy Chair Tofiq Yagublu to lengthy prison terms on charges of allegedly inciting the January 23-24, 2013, unrest in Ismayilli.

Before and during the legal process, the United States urged Azerbaijani officials at all levels – including here at the Permanent Council – to ensure an open and fair trial of the defendants. While we welcomed the Azerbaijani Government's decision to allow U.S. and other international observers to monitor the trial, both U.S. and other observers saw significant irregularities in witness testimony and court proceedings.

My government calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to engage with the OSCE to address Azerbaijan's challenges and implement its OSCE commitments related to the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association constructively. We urge the Government of Azerbaijan to ensure a continued robust OSCE field presence that works in all three dimensions, throughout the country, and engages with the full spectrum of Azerbaijani society as envisioned in the mandate of the Project Coordinator.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.