



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Deportation of Helsinki Committee Representative Ivar Dale

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 16, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins Norway and the EU in expressing its concern about recent actions taken by Kyrgyz authorities against Mr. Ivar Dale, the representative of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in Bishkek.

According to the OSCE Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyz law enforcement officials on October 12th denied Mr. Dale entry into Kyrgyzstan at Bishkek's airport without providing any official explanation. Mr. Dale was told that he would be banned entry into Kyrgyzstan for a period of ten years.

This incident follows a series of actions targeted at the Norwegian Helsinki Committee by Kyrgyz authorities, including a June 9th raid of the Committee's office and an administrative case brought against Mr. Dale this summer. Actions of this nature lead to an environment of fear and mistrust for non-governmental organizations and other international organizations operating in Kyrgyzstan. It is important for the democratic development of all participating States that civil society be allowed to function freely.

We urge Kyrgyzstan to reconsider this step, and join us in a commitment to ensure that NGOs are allowed to conduct their peaceful work without intimidation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.