



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Statement on Arrests of Activists
in Azerbaijan**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 14, 2013

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.

We have seen reports that two Azerbaijani political activists have been detained and charged in connection with demonstrations on January 23-24 in the town of Ismayilli. We also note that police dispersed a January 26 demonstration in Baku which was called in sympathy with Ismayilli residents and that several dozen protesters were detained. In all cases related to the events of January 23-24 and other recent protests, we urge the Government of Azerbaijan to observe due process of the law and ensure transparency and fairness of the judicial process.

The United States encourages Azerbaijan to undertake its OSCE commitments and promote an open political space for meaningful dialogue with its citizens to address legitimate grievances. We also urge the Azerbaijani authorities to respect citizens' freedom of assembly and expression. We encourage the Government of Azerbaijan to work with the OSCE office in Baku, which has done great work to raise awareness on human rights and promote rule of law and democratic reform.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.