



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

### **On International Human Rights Day**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
December 15, 2016

Thank you to the European Union for the very strong and eloquent statement on International Human Rights Day. The United States would also like to add its voice on this topic.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 68 years ago to recognize and elevate the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all individuals. In recognition of International Human Rights Day, we reaffirm our commitment to upholding universal respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every human being.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights holds the promise of hope for those who courageously press for the human rights of their fellow men and women against repressive laws and practices; for the journalists who are harassed, physically assaulted, and even murdered for their work; for the peaceful members of ethnic and religious groups smeared for political reasons; for the civilians driven from their homes by conflict; for the workers who are exploited; and for those civic activists working tirelessly for tolerance and against hatred to ensure no one is persecuted because of how they look, what they believe, or whom they love. We stand in solidarity with those individuals, governments, and civil society organizations working to secure a future of freedom, justice, and peace.

On International Human Rights Day and every day, the United States will continue to urge all nations to respect the fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association and religion or belief, observe democratic principles of government, and uphold equal protection under the law without discrimination of any kind. As we celebrate the progress we have made towards a more just world, we reaffirm our unwavering devotion to a universal value — preserving and protecting the equal and inalienable human rights of all individuals. We also reaffirm our commitment to the principles that underlie the OSCE, which make this Organization a key pillar of the rules-based international system intended to preserve and protect the human rights of all.

As this is our last regular Permanent Council of the year, I would like to note that December 18 will be International Migrants Day, on which the international community is asked to come together and remember the refugees and migrants who have lost their lives or have disappeared while trying to reach safety.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.