



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

### **Statement on International Committee of the Red Cross in Uzbekistan**

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 18, 2013

We note with concern the April 12 statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that the ICRC in Uzbekistan will end all visits to detainees because it is not able to follow standard working procedures for such visits due to the absence of essential preconditions for the effective protection of detainees. The ICRC suspended detainee visits in October 2012 and has now determined that its inability to address humanitarian issues and have a meaningful impact on detention conditions requires termination of its visits to detainees.

Despite this unfortunate development, we understand that the ICRC office in Uzbekistan intends to continue its efforts related to emergency preparedness, building respect for international humanitarian law, and building capacity of the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan, as well as providing assistance to family members to visit relatives in detention. We would like to express in the strongest terms our support for these activities.

ICRC detainee visits provide OSCE participating States with a valuable tool to ensure full implementation of our commitment that all individuals in detention or incarceration are treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of each human being. Given our longstanding concerns over alleged mistreatment of individuals in detention facilities in Uzbekistan, we strongly encourage government authorities in Uzbekistan to work cooperatively with the ICRC to address its concerns and allow the organization to perform its important humanitarian mission for the benefit of the people of Uzbekistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.