



United States Mission to the OSCE

Restrictions on the Freedoms of Expression, Association and Peaceful Assembly in Belarus

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Kate Byrnes to the Permanent
Council, Vienna
March 30, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have been following with deep concern reports regarding the response by government authorities to peaceful public demonstrations that took place in several locations in Belarus over the last weekend. Hundreds of peaceful demonstrators were forcibly dispersed or detained by security forces, journalists and human rights observers were detained, and the offices of non-governmental organizations were raided by authorities. There were credible reports that some detainees were injured or beaten. The United States calls on the government of Belarus to release individuals who were detained for peacefully exercising their rights. We join the European Union and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Director Michael Link in calling upon Belarus to uphold its OSCE commitments and international legal obligations regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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