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Delegation of Belarus to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE
OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 June 2006

**Regarding the efforts of the United States of America to combat terrorism
and the observance of human rights**

Mr. Chairman,

The fight against the terrorist threat is one of the priorities of our Organization. This being so, the Republic of Belarus supports the efforts of all OSCE participating States to prevent and counter terrorism and to eradicate its causes.

We value highly the contribution being made by the United States of America, which suffered more than any other country in the course of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, to the international community's common efforts to counter terrorism.

At the same time, we cannot fail to notice that in this fight against terrorism the United States authorities are paying less and less attention to the observance of generally recognized standards in the area of human rights and international humanitarian law, including guaranteeing the fundamental right to life. The United States is openly violating OSCE commitments in this area.

Unfortunately, events over the past few months have only reinforced our concerns in this regard. We should like to mention the suicide of three prisoners, suspected of involvement in terrorist activities, at the military prison at Guantanamo; information about the shooting of unarmed civilians in Iraq by United States military personnel in Haditha in November 2005 and in Isahaqi in March 2006; and also the publication of a report by the Special Rapporteur of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Dick Marty, on the illegal transportation of prisoners by the United States and the existence of secret prisons belonging to the Central Intelligence Agency in a number of European countries.

Facts published by international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media demonstrate that at the highest level the United States Government is sanctioning a policy of inhumane or humiliating treatment of hundreds of people along with the unlawful practice of secret detention and kidnapping of individuals.

There is particular concern regarding the prison at Guantanamo. The recent suicide of three prisoners represents an act of despair on the part of people who have been placed by the United States authorities to all intents and purposes outside of the law and deprived of elementary mechanisms of protection, including the right to communicate with the outside world and to have one's case heard in a court of law.

Despite repeated calls by a number of countries and international organizations, including the Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on Guantanamo, Ms. Anne-Marie Lizin, for the closure of the camp at Guantanamo, it continues to operate and its prisoners have still not been charged.

We hope that the suicide of the three prisoners at Guantanamo and also the events in Iraq will be investigated most thoroughly by the United States authorities, and that the United States delegation will inform the Permanent Council of the results of these investigations.

We should also like to urge the United States authorities to fulfil their OSCE commitments in the area of observance of human rights in the fight against terrorism, and also to comply strictly with the requirements of international humanitarian law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.