

17 May 2012

Original: ENGLISH



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

### **Statement in Response to the Russian Federation on Deaths of Journalists in Iraq**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 17, 2012

Noting the request for information made December 22, 2011, by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation regarding the results of investigations into the deaths of journalists in Iraq, the United States wishes to exercise its Right of Reply.

In a spirit of openness and taking into account the commitment of the United States to media freedom and the protection of journalists around the world, we will endeavor to respond.

It is unfortunately the case that, despite best efforts to the contrary, inadvertent civilian casualties sometimes occur during the lawful conduct of armed conflict, and journalists present in areas of ongoing military actions are at particular risk.

While we are not in a position to discuss specific allegations or investigations into alleged misconduct by members of our armed forces, the United States takes such allegations very seriously. When there is credible information alleging a possible violation of the law of war by members of U.S. forces during the course of a U.S. military operation, the Department of Defense conducts an investigation of the incident in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

When an investigation reveals that the incident was accidental and that no misconduct occurred, no prosecution or disciplinary action is taken. However, investigators may recommend measures to prevent future such incidents.

If it is determined that members of the U.S. forces may not have complied with applicable legal standards, they are subject to disciplinary proceedings, including criminal prosecutions

in appropriate circumstances, which may result in convictions and punishment, where warranted by the facts of the incident.

We do wish to correct one inaccuracy in the Russian Federation's Permanent Council Statement of December 22 on this subject: Beladi TV reporter Hadil Emad was in fact wounded – and not killed – in a 2009 incident at a military checkpoint. She is currently living in Baghdad.

We appreciate the interest of the Russian Federation and other delegations in the safety of journalists and hope it will extend to support for a Ministerial Decision this year to protect journalists in the OSCE region from violence, harassment and intimidation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.