



**United States Mission to the OSCE**  
**Statement on Barring of NGO from  
House of Representatives of  
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, May 2, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States wishes to express our deep concern over steps taken two weeks ago by the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina barring the NGO Center for Civic Initiatives (CCI), an informative and constructive monitor, from observing House of Representatives' sessions.

This troubling development follows an earlier demand of the CCI by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Bozho Ljubic, that CCI submit a list of annual reports, budgets, staff salaries, and lists of donors to the House of Representatives. Although much of this information is available publicly on-line or otherwise reported to the appropriate authorities, Mr. Ljubic claimed that the House of Representatives had a right to demand such information under Bosnia and Herzegovina's Freedom of Information Act, even though that law does not apply to NGOs.

These attempts to intimidate and hinder a civil society organization run counter to many prior OSCE commitments including those that emphasize the importance of civil society's ability to monitor and seek implementation of commitments involving human rights and fundamental freedoms which have been accepted by all OSCE participating states.

Most recently, we reaffirmed in Astana in 2010 "the important role played by civil society and free media in helping us to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, including free and fair elections, and the rule of law."

We call on the House of Representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina to reverse this order, and to respect the important role of civil society organizations as crucial monitors of the democratic process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.