

PC.DEL/252/11
18 March 2011

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. DENIS SIDORENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BELARUS TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 March 2011

Regarding the treatment of detainees in the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

As a follow-up to our statement at the last meeting of the Permanent Council regarding the situation in Guantánamo, we should like to draw attention to the scandal unfolding in the United States of America in connection with the use of torture and the inhumane treatment of the detained American military intelligence officer Bradley Manning, who is suspected of passing on classified information to the well-known Internet site WikiLeaks, allegedly attesting to war crimes by the United States.

According to Amnesty International, Bradley Manning has been held in solitary confinement at the Quantico military base in the state of Virginia since July 2010. There is no window in his cell. Manning is prohibited from communicating with other detainees and from having personal possessions in his cell. He is allowed to walk around or take physical exercise for no more than one hour per day.

Manning is reportedly subject to maximum conditions of confinement. For example, his hands and feet must be shackled during visits from social workers and members of his family.

According to the information available, Bradley Manning is subject to what is known as a “prevention of injury order”, in accordance with which his condition is monitored by prison staff every five minutes. He is not allowed to sleep during the day and must constantly be in a position where the prison staff can see him, and is also subject to checks at night. Manning is forced to sleep naked. He is woken up if, while sleeping, he places his hands under the blanket or turns his face to the wall. These conditions are still being applied to Manning, in spite of the fact that the prison psychiatrist has concluded that there are no grounds for their continued application.

Amnesty International regards the conditions of confinement imposed on Bradley Manning as “unnecessarily harsh and punitive” and as violating article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which stipulates that persons deprived

of their liberty should be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

American and foreign journalists, along with human rights activists, argue that prolonged detention in isolation, sleep deprivation and enforced nakedness constitute “indirect torture” intended to demoralize and break the detainee and are similar to the Central Intelligence Agency’s methods of “enhanced interrogation” used in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib.

On 9 March 2011, Bradley Manning’s request for more lenient treatment was denied.

It is worth mentioning that the press secretary of the United States Department of State, Philip Crowley, who called Manning’s treatment “ridiculous, counterproductive and stupid”, was forced to resign a few days ago.

At the same time, Pentagon officials have assured the President of the United States Barack Obama that the conditions and procedure for Manning’s detention are “appropriate and meeting basic standards”.

This information provides fresh grounds for serious concern. In this connection, we call on the United States authorities to conduct an independent investigation into these substantial allegations and also to make use of existing OSCE instruments, in particular the expertise offered by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to ensure transparency in the future judicial proceedings in the case of Bradley Manning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.