



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev Case in Russia

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a. i. Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 26, 2011

The United States is concerned by the May 24 ruling by the Moscow City Court upholding the verdict against former Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovsky and co-defendant Platon Lebedev. We share the concerns of our EU colleagues, as expressed by High Representative Catherine Ashton on May 24, that alleged violations of due process in this case are symptomatic of the erosion of the rule of law in Russia. As Secretary Clinton noted in December, the guilty verdict in the second trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev on charges of embezzlement and money laundering raises serious questions about the apparent selective application of the law to these individuals.

No participating State can meet its OSCE obligation to protect human rights without developing an independent judiciary that serves as an instrument for furthering economic growth and modernization, ensuring equal treatment under the law, and advancing justice in a predictable and fair way.

We welcome President Medvedev's promise to review the Khodorkovsky and Lebedev case through the Presidential Council on Human Rights. We urge him to redress any irregularities in the case. Furthermore, we call on all participating States to enact necessary reforms in their judicial systems to ensure fairness of proceedings and create safeguards to protect human rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.