



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Freedom of Assembly in Azerbaijan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a. i. Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 7, 2011

We are concerned by actions taken by the Government of Azerbaijan to prevent the peaceful assembly of opposition groups in central Baku on April 2, including the detention of opposition party activists on April 2 and in the days before the planned protests. We recall in this context our statement delivered at the March 17 Permanent Council meeting about restrictions on the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

The recent actions by the Azerbaijani authorities run counter to Azerbaijan's OSCE commitments, including those expressed in the Copenhagen Document of 1990, in which participating States reaffirmed that "everyone will have the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration."

The United States again calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to respect the rights of all its citizens to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, which are guaranteed under the Azerbaijani Constitution and international human rights instruments, and are part of Azerbaijan's OSCE commitments.

Respect for these rights is essential for promoting the sort of dialogue between citizens and their government that forms the basis for positive change and the deeper development of a culture of democracy in any society. True stability can only be achieved by ensuring democracy and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We call for those detained in association with demonstrations to be afforded due process under the law, with open and transparent hearings and adequate access to legal counsel.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.