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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Freedom of the Media in Tajikistan

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 22, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States also welcomes the release on bail of BBC journalist Urunboy Usmonov and the decision of the Tajik General Prosecutor's Office to drop charges against him related to an alleged Hizb ut-Tahrir affiliation. We call on Tajik authorities to drop the remaining charge against Usmonov of failure to inform the authorities of illegal activities. Mr. Usmonov, like all journalists, must meet with a wide variety of individuals to perform his legitimate work as a journalist.

Mr. Chairman, the United States also takes this opportunity to express our continued concern with the ongoing incarceration of journalist Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov, who has been held in detention in Tajikistan since November 23, 2010. The United States reiterates the importance of implementing our commitments in the area of media freedom and calls for the release of all journalists imprisoned for simply exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.