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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 February 2012

Regarding freedom of assembly in the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

Our attention has been drawn to the recent arrest of 11 Occupy Wall Street activists who set up a tent camp in Washington. The American authorities again used force to disperse the participants and according to our information some were injured.

While not calling into question the responsibility of any State to maintain public safety and order, it should be mentioned that in this case the demonstration was peaceful and non-violent, without any illegal actions on the part of the demonstrators. In this campaign, American citizens are exercising their democratic right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association guaranteed in fundamental international treaties and agreements, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The reaction by the American authorities manifested elements of unwarranted brutality and the disproportionate use of force. According to human rights groups, over 6,000 people have been detained in 110 cities in the United States since the start of the Occupy Wall Street campaign in autumn 2011.

These actions are particularly puzzling in view of the continuous emphasis by the Americans on the need for other States to observe human rights, including the freedom of expression and the right to stage marches and demonstrations.

Thank you for your attention.