



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

As delivered by Political Counselor Gregory Maris  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 5, 2017

Since the adoption of the United States' Bill of Rights over 200 years ago prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment, the prevention of torture and respect for due process of law have been fundamental American protections and values. As we mark the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, I would like to affirm the United States' abiding commitment to achieve a world without torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The United States stands in solidarity with the victims of torture throughout the OSCE region, and around the world.

Torture is abhorrent, unlawful, and an assault on human dignity. We stand against torture and other cruel, inhuman treatment, in words and action. The United States was an active participant in negotiating and drafting the UN Convention Against Torture, which came into force 31 years ago. We are the largest contributor to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and support a broad range of programs that seek to rehabilitate and reintegrate torture victims.

Unfortunately, torture still occurs around the world, including in the OSCE region. In other cases in the region, defenders of human rights, political prisoners, and civil society members face cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment. We call on all OSCE participating States to abide by their international obligations and respect the human rights of all people.

We commend the excellent work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), as well as that of governments, civil society organizations, survivors, and others working worldwide to end torture. In particular, ODIHR's valuable work on preventing, investigating, and documenting torture, as well as providing rehabilitation services to its victims, makes us stronger and more secure.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.