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Office in Baku

PRESS RELEASE

USAID, OSCE team up to help Azerbaijan combat human trafficking, promote access to justice

BAKU, 29 September 2011 - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office in Baku today signed a grant agreement to co-operate on combating trafficking in persons and strengthen access to justice in Azerbaijan. Michael Greene, USAID/Azerbaijan Mission Director, and Ambassador Koray Targay, Head of OSCE Office in Baku, signed the agreement.

Under the grant, USAID will support the OSCE's efforts in the security and justice sectors on combating trafficking in persons and improving access to justice. The activities will improve coordination and capacity among government and non-governmental actors in assisting victims of trafficking and forced labor, and train media to report on this topic. The grant also will strengthen access to justice, and fund Legal Resource Centers in Sheki and Lankaran to provide free legal assistance and information to the public. The grant agreement in the amount of \$730,000 will finance these activities from October 2011 to September 2013.

U.S. Ambassador Matthew Bryza as well as the Chief of the Department on Combating Human Trafficking of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Javad Shikaliyev attended the ceremony. Ambassador Bryza told attendees that the grant shows that, "The United States, in cooperation with the OSCE, is committed to helping our Azerbaijani partners combat this modern-day form of slavery." He added that the OSCE Office in Baku will implement the activities in co-operation with the Government of Azerbaijan and civil society, which will contribute significantly to combating trafficking in persons in Azerbaijan.

"USAID's support for these two projects will enable the Government of Azerbaijan to improve its compliance with OSCE commitments," said the Head of the OSCE Office in Baku, Ambassador Koray Targay. "Advancement in the security and justice sectors can help Azerbaijan build on the success of its recent development in the energy sector to create a hospitable environment for pluralistic democracy, human rights and economic prosperity for many years to come."

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