

RFE/RL Signal Issue Statement by Ambassador Richard Morningstar

July 15, 2013

Good morning everyone. It is a pleasure to be here at Azadlig Radiosu again. It is also a pleasure to be here with RFE/RL Acting President Kevin Klose.

Prior to our visit here, Kevin and I met at the embassy to discuss Radio Liberty's good work here in Azerbaijan, and also to discuss a recent issue affecting RFE/RL and other Azerbaijani language media outlets: they have recently encountered difficulties broadcasting some of their satellite programming into Azerbaijan. As I have said before, RFE/RL is an important contributor to the Azerbaijani media landscape. Its reporting provides a much-needed model of objective and independent journalism in Azerbaijan.

The U.S. government is concerned and has been in touch with RFE/RL to discuss this issue. According to what RFE/RL has related to me, since this April, its programming broadcast by the Turksat satellite has been subject to signal interference. I have discussed this issue with Azerbaijani government officials and sought their assistance in resolving this issue. During this election year, it is particularly important for the Azerbaijani government to help guarantee the free flow of information to its people.

The United States strongly supports media freedom and freedom of expression in Azerbaijan, and we want to work with our Azerbaijani counterparts to make sure that freedom is secured here.

Thank you.