



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Byalyatski Appeal in Belarus

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 26, 2012

Like the European Union, the United States strongly condemns the Minsk City Court's failure to overturn Ales Byalyatski's November 24 conviction and sentence. We reiterate our earlier condemnation of the Government of Belarus' politically-motivated prosecution of Mr. Byalyatski. The United States likewise welcomes the statement by the Chairperson-in-Office regarding the case of Mr. Byalyatski released on January 24.

We reiterate our grave concern regarding the condition of political prisoners in Belarus, including that of former presidential candidates Andrei Sannikov and Mikola Statkevich. In particular, we are concerned about renewed allegations of torture and inhuman treatment. We call upon the Government of Belarus to fully investigate these allegations and report their findings to the Permanent Council.

We again call on the Government of Belarus to release Mr. Byalyatski and all other political prisoners immediately and unconditionally, remove any barriers to their future participation in public life, and cease its campaign against civil society and independent media. The United States, in concert with our European partners, will continue to monitor developments in Belarus and hold accountable those responsible for repression. We remain committed to supporting the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people through our assistance and engagement.

Thank you Chairman.