United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Blocking of Facebook and Websites in Tajikistan

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 8, 2012

The United States notes with concern reports that Tajikistan's Communication Service, a government entity, instructed Internet service providers in that country on Saturday, March 2, to block social networking site facebook.com, as well as independent news websites tjknews.com, maxala.org, centrasia.ru and zvezda.ru. The United States strongly supports the appeal of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, to Tajikistan's Foreign Minister for the immediate reversal of this order.

The United States recalls Tajikistan's OSCE commitments to the protection of freedom of expression, including for members of the media, and the importance of the free flow of information. We are disappointed that Tajikistan, which last year hosted an OSCE-sponsored media workshop and has cultivated relative Internet freedom, would take such a drastic step to silence independent media and disrupt online communication among its citizens. We call upon Tajikistan to lift its block on these websites and commend to its authorities the recommendations of the office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in the area of Internet freedom.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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