



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Conviction of Journalist Mr. Vardanean

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a. i. Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 23, 2010

Thank you, Chair.

We would like thank the delegation of Moldova for its statement on this case. Like the European Union and the Mission to Moldova, the United States calls attention to the recent action of a Transnistrian court in imposing a 15-year prison sentence on journalist Ernest Vardanean for high treason. We have followed this and the case of Mr. Cazak, and we regret this decision on Mr. Vardanean. The United States raised this issue previously in the Permanent Council, and we remain concerned about the manner in which Mr. Vardanean was tried and convicted. We continue to urge that fundamental principles of due process be respected in Mr. Vardanean's case.

Our concern also extends to Mr. Cazak, who is still in detention. The United States calls upon the Transnistrian authorities to respect the rights of any detainees, including the right to be represented by counsel of their choice. Denial of this basic right instills an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among members of civil society.

We look to the OSCE Mission to Moldova to continue to follow these cases and to encourage respect for the human rights of all individuals and for due process under the law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.