



United States Mission to the OSCE

Tajikistan's Extended Sentence of Yorov

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 24 2016

The United States wishes to express concern over the new criminal charges brought against defense lawyer Burzurgmehr Yorov.

Mr. Yorov is already serving a 23-year sentence following a trial rife with procedural irregularities, and is likely being held in connection with his work as a defense attorney. On November 14, Tajikistan initiated a new criminal case against Mr. Yorov on alleged fraud charges that, if culminating in a conviction, would increase his current prison sentence by seven years to a total of 30 years.

The United States has repeatedly raised its concerns about the rule of law, the elimination of political pluralism, and the spurious targeting of defense lawyers in Tajikistan. The United States calls on the authorities of Tajikistan to see that all lawyers are able to conduct their work without fear of threat or harassment, and that any pursuit of criminal charges against Mr. Yorov is adjudicated in accordance with Tajikistan's international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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