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## United States Mission to the OSCE

### Statement on Belarusian Newspaper *Narodnaya Volya*

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 6, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States thanks the OSCE Office in Minsk for its September 30 spot report on *Narodnaya Volya*, Belarus' only daily independent newspaper. According to the report, state distribution networks and a state printer have canceled their contracts with the newspaper.

These unilateral, short-notice actions will paralyze *Narodnaya Volya*, effectively removing it from circulation to all except subscribers.

We share the concern expressed by the OSCE Freedom of the Media Representative in his September 30 press release on this issue. We strongly agree with Mr. Haraszti that "the closure of *Narodnaya Volya* would be a major setback in the development of the free press in Belarus and a great loss for Belarusian society."

We note Belarus agreed in the 1991 Moscow Document that "...independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms." All participating States further committed in the Moscow Document that they "will not discriminate against independent media with respect to affording access to information, material and facilities."

The United States calls on Belarus to desist from its campaign against *Narodnaya Volya* and all free press and to allow them to continue publication unhindered and with complete freedom.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.