



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Russian Federation's Decision to Deny OSCE Election Observers the Opportunity to Observe their Upcoming Presidential Elections

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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The United States shares the deep regret of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly, and other participating States that the Russian Federation has decided for the first time not to invite OSCE observers to its presidential election.

We agree with their statement that this “will deny the country’s voters and institutions an impartial and independent assessment of the election.”

For decades, the United States has invited OSCE observers to assess our own elections and encouraged fellow participating States to do the same. We value the thorough, professional, impartial assessments of the OSCE observers and we take their recommendations seriously. By inviting OSCE observers, we and other participating States model democratic behavior and demonstrate the great importance we attach to free and fair elections as well as to meeting our obligations under international law on civil and political rights. By choosing not to invite OSCE observers, the Russian Federation demonstrates just the opposite.

This unfortunate decision by the Kremlin cannot be viewed in isolation. It comes in the context of intensifying repression within Russia against those who peacefully dissent, including members of the political opposition, and a relentless crackdown on civil society and independent media. The decision also comes at a time when the Kremlin is prosecuting a brutal war against its neighbor, Ukraine, and harshly punishes those in Russia who criticize the war.

Whatever the false accusations made by the Russian representative to excuse his government’s failure to invite OSCE observers, all of us in this room -- including all the members of the Russian delegation -- know the true reason. Clearly, the Kremlin has concluded that under the deplorable conditions it itself has created, inviting respected, impartial international observers to assess the freeness and fairness of its election process would not be in its interest.

We continue to hope for the day when Russia will live up to its OSCE human dimension commitments and its international law obligations to protect the civil and political rights of all in Russia. The citizens of Russia deserve no less.

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