



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Statement on Treatment of Human Rights Activist and Opposition Member in Uzbekistan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Sharon White  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 3, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States notes the release of human rights activist Elena Uralyeva from custody at the Tashkent City Psychiatric Hospital on October 27th. Arresting and treating political dissidents as victims of psychosis has long been a despicable tactic used by repressive regimes and has been roundly condemned by the civilized world. Although we, along with Ms. Uralyeva's friends and relatives, are happy to see her released, we would point out that she should never have been arrested in the first place because she was merely trying to exercise her right to freedom of expression. Moreover, Ms. Uralyeva was not present at the hearing and did not have legal representation. Such actions contradict respect for fundamental OSCE commitments.

We also remain very concerned by the arrest, detention, and possible abuse of Sanjar Umarov, leader of the opposition group, the Sunshine Coalition. Allegations appearing in recent press reports that he is possibly being drugged and abused are deeply disturbing. OSCE human dimension commitments require that participating States ensure that all individuals in detention are treated with humanity and prohibit torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

The United States hopes that Mr. Umarov will be treated according to international norms and that he will have full access to his lawyers and family. We urge the government of Uzbekistan to observe its various treaty obligations and OSCE human dimension commitments that obligate governments to allow peaceful freedom of expression and provide for due process and the right to a fair trial in criminal cases.

Thank you.