



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Kazakhstani Criminal Code

As delivered by Acting Political Counselor Jennifer Bosworth
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 3, 2014

The United States wishes to express its concern about the new Criminal Code, Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Code of Administrative Offences recently passed by the parliament of Kazakhstan. While there are some positive measures in the new Codes, several components of the legislation could be used to limit the fundamental freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and religion. They appear to contravene Kazakhstan's stated commitment to liberalize its criminal code and bring it into line with its international obligations. These laws in their current form could further narrow the operating space for NGOs, religious groups, and independent labor unions.

For these reasons, we urge the government of Kazakhstan to work with civil society and ODIHR's legislative support unit to amend problematic portions of this legislation. The United States remains committed to working with the government and people of Kazakhstan to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law based on internationally recognized legal principles, as well as Kazakhstan's international obligations and OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.