



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Detention of Zinaida Mukhortova in Kazakhstan

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 18, 2014

The United States is deeply concerned that Zinaida Mukhortova, a Kazakhstani lawyer and human rights defender, was detained on July 2 and involuntarily committed to a psychiatric facility in Balkhash. This is the third time in as many years that the government of Kazakhstan has forced Ms. Mukhortova to undergo psychiatric treatment for alleged “delusions.” Mr. Chair, the truth is that she has provided the local population with free legal aid, campaigned against corruption, and denounced political interference in judicial processes. The abuse of psychiatry for political purposes has long been roundly condemned by the international community. Yet we have seen Kazakhstan resort to this despicable practice several times during the past year. We call on the government of Kazakhstan to release Ms. Mukhortova immediately, to fully respect her human rights, and to recommit itself to fully implementing the entire body of its OSCE human dimension commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.