



United States Mission to the OSCE

On Reports of Police Abuse of Gay and Transgender People in Azerbaijan

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Michele Siders
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 12, 2017

During last week's Permanent Council, we raised concern about reports from Azerbaijani civil society of allegations in recent weeks of abuse and mistreatment by law enforcement officials of dozens of gay and transgender individuals being held in custody following raids. While we note the release of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals, the United States remains concerned about their reported mistreatment while in custody.

We reject the idea that OSCE participating States do not have commitments relevant to concerns in these areas. Azerbaijan has obligations under international law to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals, and Azerbaijan has recognized under the Helsinki Final Act that these rights and freedoms "derive from the inherent dignity of the human person." All persons are born equal in dignity and rights and should be treated as such.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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