



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On the Detention of Taner Kiliç in Turkey**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate M. Byrnes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 22, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States is deeply concerned by the recent detention of Taner Kiliç, Chair of Amnesty International Turkey, along with 22 other lawyers – the latest in a series of respected human rights defenders, journalists, academics, and activists detained in Turkey apparently for their criticism of the crackdown on suspected coup plotters.

These detentions and the sweeping charges that have ensued, reportedly without credible evidence or transparent legal grounds, are part of an alarming trend. We are closely following these and similar cases, and underscore the importance of respect for the procedural safeguards against arbitrary detention, and the requisite fair trial guarantees among other individual rights, as enshrined in the Turkish Constitution and consistent with Turkey's international obligations and commitments, including its OSCE commitments.

As we have expressed to the Turkish government on numerous occasions, persistent curbs on freedom of expression and other fundamental freedoms erode the foundations of democratic society.

Non-governmental organizations and a robust civil society are an essential element of any strong democracy. Turkey benefits from having more engaged voices, not fewer. The detentions of individuals such as Mr. Kiliç chill public debate and undermine the quality of democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.