



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Concern About the Sentencing of
Khairullo Mirsaidov in Tajikistan**

As prepared for delivery by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gregory Macris
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 19, 2018

The United States joins the European Union in reiterating our common grave concern over the trial in Tajikistan of independent journalist Khairullo Mirsaidov. We understand Mr. Mirsaidov has been sentenced to 12 years in prison. We believe this sentence is extremely harsh and incomparable with the alleged crime. This sentencing will have a negative impact on the freedom of expression for members of the media and others in Tajikistan.

As the United States and European Union stated on April 12, the trial of Mr. Mirsaidov reflects a pattern of increasing pressure on media freedom in Tajikistan, which has forced a number of journalists to leave the country and led to the closure of several independent media outlets. We find these trends concerning and repeat our call for Tajikistan to adhere to its OSCE commitments on freedom of expression, including for members of the media, and to its commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We urge the authorities in the Republic of Tajikistan to reconsider this verdict. We believe that full respect for the rule of law, including fair judicial proceedings, is in the interest of Tajikistan and is necessary to ensure international support for Tajikistan to realize good governance and development goals.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.