



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

# **Statement on Post-Election Violence in Azerbaijan**

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
December 1, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After the recent parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, my Government was encouraged by the response of President Aliyev and his government as they began to address flaws in the election process and respond to the findings in the report of the International Election Observation Mission.

Since the election, results in four constituencies have been annulled and will be rerun at a future date. Two results were overturned in favor of opposition candidates. President Aliyev fired three local government officials for election interference. The Prosecutor General has opened at least 15 criminal cases. We considered these actions to be important first steps in correcting problems in the elections, although more remains to be done.

However, Mr. Chairman, the United States was very disappointed and very perplexed when the police used excessive force against peaceful supporters of the opposition Azadliq bloc in Baku, who were exercising their right to freedom of assembly on November 26. Police rushed into the square where the demonstrators were rallying, wielded truncheons and turned water cannons against them. Many were injured, including women and children.

The head of the OSCE Office in Baku expressed his deep concern over this latest incident of police violence. We share his concerns.

Mr. Chairman, the United States strongly condemns this unjustified and unprovoked use of force. It contravened citizens' rights to freedom of expression and assembly and violated core OSCE principles. We urge the Government to investigate the incidents and punish those responsible.

Finally, during this tense post-election period, we urge all Azerbaijani citizens and authorities to remain calm and exercise restraint.

Thank you.