



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Program Office in Dushanbe, Ambassador Willy Kempel

As delivered by Political Counselor Erin Webster-Main
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 26, 2024

Ambassador Kempel, welcome to the Permanent Council. The United States highly values the leadership and energy you bring to the Program Office.

Your work to renew partnerships with international organizations and embassies, including ours, is vital for your office's success. Your team's dedication to border security, countering violent extremism, and addressing gender-based violence highlights what the OSCE can and should do to contribute to comprehensive security.

Gender-based violence remains severe in Tajikistan. The UN estimates 80 percent of women in Tajikistan have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. The OSCE-backed Women's Resource Centers are vital for supporting survivors while reducing a culture of tolerance of domestic violence. We urge all participating States to support these Centers as they expand next year.

We support your office's human dimension initiatives in other key areas as well. This includes your support for Tajikistan's development of non-discrimination laws and gender training programs. Your Human Dimension work is vital given Tajikistan's ongoing repression of political and civil rights, freedom of expression, and instances of transnational repression. We urge your office to develop programs that address these areas and that support an independent judiciary, civil society, and media freedom.

We are committed to working with Tajikistan to address threats emanating from its border with Afghanistan to secure both national and regional stability. The United States already provides training and equipment to Tajikistan to accomplish this. Coupled with your U.S.-funded Patrol Field Capacity-Building project, which has enhanced the operational readiness of the Tajik Border Troops, we are helping to fortify Tajikistan's southern border.

The OSCE Border Management Staff College also contributes to achieving this goal by building institutional capacity and fostering international cooperation through advanced trainings. These enhance individual skills and strengthen cross-border cooperation, crucial to sustained regional stability.

Unfortunately, and as you noted, your office – like all other field missions – faces significant operational difficulties due to financial constraints. The inability of participating States to pass a Unified Budget has placed undue strain on all field missions' abilities to effectively carry out their mandates. We urge all participating States to engage in good faith negotiations to pass the 2024 Unified Budget as soon as possible.

Ambassador Kempel, the United States deeply values your dedication to strengthening security and promoting respect for human rights in Tajikistan. As the OSCE presence in Tajikistan marks its 30th anniversary this year, we look forward to our continued collaboration to support the evolving needs of the people of Tajikistan.

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