



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# **Right of Reply to the Russian Federation on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 6, 2020

Thank you, Madam Chair.

In respect for my colleagues' time on a beautiful Friday, I will be brief but I did what to exercise my right of reply to my distinguished colleague from the Russian Federation.

The United States marked this November 2 with a statement that reaffirmed our unshakable belief that a free press is essential to an informed citizenry. A vigorous press can, for instance, expose corruption, shine a light on human rights abuses, and provide the public essential information during crises. In many places, journalists fulfilling this necessary role risk attacks by authoritarian regimes and criminal organizations seeking to clamp down on press freedom and freedom of expression. More than 1,500 journalists have been killed worldwide since the turn of the century, and in more than 85 percent of cases, the killers go unpunished.

I want to assure you that the United States is committed to protecting the safety of members of the press and holding accountable those who violate the law, including law enforcement officers. The United States condemns threats, harassment, and violence targeting journalists, both in the United States and around the globe. I assure you there is no law in the United States that suppresses journalists, or prosecutes them for reporting or expressing their views.

Unlike in Russia, where over the last 30 years journalists like Anna Politkovskaya, Natalia Estemirova, Paul Klebnikov and at least 55 others have been murdered for their work, the vast majority with impunity, the United States is committed to vigorously investigating and holding accountable those who commit violence against journalists.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

###