



United States Mission to the OSCE

Release of Kazakh Opposition Figure Mukhtar Ablyazov

Delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Douglas A. Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome the May 13 pardon and release from prison of former Kazakh Energy Minister and opposition politician Mukhtar Ablyazov. Mr. Ablyazov was convicted on charges of abuse of power on July 18, 2002 in what appeared to be a politically motivated trial. His pardon and release are a welcome positive step for Kazakhstan.

A free and open political process is crucial for building public trust and confidence in the rule of law. We urge the Kazakh authorities to work to strengthen the democratic foundations of Kazakh society and, in particular, to bolster those institutions and practices that protect the freedom of association and freedom of expression.

Thank you.