



## United States Mission to the OSCE

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# Uzbekistan: Death in Detention of Orif Ershanov

Delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Douglas A. Davidson  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 29, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins the European Union in expressing its utmost concern about the death on May 15 in detention in Uzbekistan of Mr. Orif Ershanov. In addition to being a tragedy for the Ershanov family, this death raises concerns about Uzbekistan's commitment to progress on human rights.

We are, in addition, deeply disturbed by reports that Mr. Ershanov was beaten and tortured. We have raised our concerns with the Government of Uzbekistan, which has promised to conduct a full investigation of the death.

Regrettably, Mr. Ershanov's death at the hands of law enforcement authorities was not an isolated incident. Already, there have been three deaths in detention since July of last year. These have gone unpunished and we find this unacceptable.

In addition to bringing the culprits in the Ershanov case to justice, and to publicizing the disciplinary action taken against those responsible, we believe the Government of Uzbekistan must make swift and tangible progress on the UN Special Rapporteur's recommendations. Uzbekistan must demonstrate its resolve with clear and decisive steps to halt the use of torture to extract confessions. We urge President Karimov to exercise his leadership and to renounce publicly torture for once and for all.

The United States has made its views known directly to the Government of Uzbekistan and appreciates the Government's willingness to cooperate with the international community on these cases as well as to prosecute those responsible.

Thank you.