



United States Mission to the OSCE

Concern About Prison Conditions in Turkmenistan

Delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes to the
Permanent Council, Vienna
May 8, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to raise an issue concerning Turkmenistan.

The United States is concerned about the reported deaths in custody last month of a former high-ranking intelligence figure as well as a civil society figure.

There are credible allegations that malnutrition and lack of medical care contributed to these deaths. In addition, other prisoners reportedly are also in critical condition.

These reports have heightened our concern for the conditions of those persons arrested in connection with the November 25 attack such as our former colleague Batyr Berdiev, as well as those arrested on other charges. They highlight the need for access to prisoners by family members as well as international organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross.

We strongly urge the Government of Turkmenistan to allow such access to those in detention and prison.

Thank you.