



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Prosecutions of Independent Media in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 26, 2012

The United States is concerned that the Government of Ukraine is curtailing freedom of media representatives in advance of the October parliamentary elections. We note that some independent media outlets and their owners are facing increased pressure that appears intended to restrict their reporting. Recent actions by authorities include criminal investigations, prosecutions, raids by tax inspectors, and threats to deny broadcasting licenses.

In particular, the July 12 raid on television broadcaster TVi by tax police, a related criminal case against TVi's general director Mykola Knyazhytskiy, and the criminal investigation of Lb.ua journalist Sonia Koshkina, are of concern and appear to contravene the government's own moratorium on checks on the media before the October 28 elections.

Prosecution of these individuals continues, despite President Yanukovich's call for prosecutors and the tax service to reexamine whether there is a legal basis for the investigations. We call on the Government of Ukraine to cease prosecution of these cases and to uphold media pluralism and independence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.