



Press Statement

Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Washington, DC

September 29, 2008

Belarus: Parliamentary Elections

The United States is disappointed that the September 28 parliamentary elections in Belarus fell significantly short of international standards, and that the Government of Belarus failed to uphold pledges for a transparent vote count. According to the preliminary report of the OSCE's election monitoring mission, the conduct of the parliamentary elections in Belarus did not meet OSCE standards despite minor improvements. The vote count in particular was judged negatively at nearly one-half of the precincts where OSCE observers were present. Problems included election monitors being denied access to the vote count process, discrepancies between the number of voters observed and the number of votes recorded and outright falsification of votes.

The United States commends those individuals and members of political parties who participated fully in the elections. We note that a demonstration was held after the elections in a peaceful and orderly manner.

It is the intention of the United States to maintain our dialogue with the government and people of Belarus. We encourage the authorities to take steps to uphold Belarus' international commitments to promote democratic freedoms, including holding genuinely competitive elections, and to improving respect for internationally recognized human rights. Such steps are necessary in order for relations between the United States and Belarus to improve significantly.

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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