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PRESS RELEASE

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US Embassy Statement on May 13 Repeat Parliamentary Elections

The United States believes there was some progress in the conduct of Azerbaijan's May 13 parliamentary rerun elections, and shares the views in the May 15 statement by the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission. Specifically, we welcome improvements in finger-inking, candidate registration, largely unimpeded campaigning, and quick posting of the results on the website of the Central Election Commission. We were pleased to see the large numbers of domestic election observers who participated, including representatives of the Election Monitoring Center. We note the consistency between the official results and the results of the U.S. Government-supported exit poll. However, we are concerned about reports of irregularities in the pre-election period, including the misuse of administrative authority in support of specific candidates, as well as allegations of fraud in specific precincts on election day. We also note with concern reports that some domestic observers were restricted in their access to the electoral process.

We urge the Government of Azerbaijan to investigate these reports and take appropriate corrective measures. These rerun elections should be viewed in the overall context of the November 6, 2005 parliamentary elections and we share the comprehensive February 1 OSCE/ODIHR assessment on the election process. We urge the Government of Azerbaijan to continue to work with OSCE/ODIHR to implement its recommendations.