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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1135th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 March 2017

On incidents of anti-Semitism in the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

It is with deep concern that we have observed the sharp increase in anti-Semitism in the United States of America, which, without exaggeration, is widespread. Recently, more than 150 gravestones were desecrated at a Jewish cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Some gravestones were overturned, many were left with insulting graffiti. A week later, on 26 February, more than 100 gravestones were damaged at a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. According to some media, as many as 500 headstones were damaged.

The very next day, 16 Jewish centres and schools in the states of Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia received bomb threats. For some of them this wave of threats was the second and even the third since the beginning of this year. A previous incident of this kind occurred on 20 February when 11 Jewish centres in different parts of the country were forced to evacuate visitors and students after reports of an alleged bomb threat. In total, according to the Anti-Defamation League, about 90 cases of threats against Jewish centres and schools have been registered in the United States of America since the beginning of 2017.

This increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the country, which has positioned itself as a “bastion of freedom” in the world, is a major concern. We note that a number of US officials have condemned the incidents mentioned. But this is not enough, we need not only words, but real action. We urge the United States of America to strictly comply with its obligations with regard to the OSCE commitments to combat anti-Semitism, including the provisions of the Basel Declaration of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in 2014, and to carry out an effective, immediate and impartial investigation into the alleged crimes.

Thank you for your attention.