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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1091st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 March 2016

Regarding the case of Nadiya Savchenko

Mr. Chairperson,

The court is continuing to hear the case of Nadiya Savchenko. The prosecution spoke yesterday, 2 March 2016.

The charges are extremely serious. Let me remind those who have forgotten what this case is all about. According to the investigators, while serving with the Aidar paramilitary battalion on 17 June 2014 in the vicinity of the village of Metalist in the Slovianoserbsk district of the Luhansk region, Nadiya Savchenko conducted covert surveillance and directed artillery shelling, as a result of which the journalists Igor Kornelyuk and Anton Voloshin were killed.

The investigation considers it established that Nadiya Savchenko entered into a criminal arrangement with Aidar battalion fighters for the purpose of shelling civilians and believes that her guilt has been proven. Using co-ordinates obtained from the Aidar nationalist battalion, the Ukrainian security forces fired no less than six rounds at an area where there were no military positions and through which civilians were being evacuated. The shelling of civilians not involved in the hostilities and Russian journalists was deliberate.

The prosecution is demanding a partly cumulative sentence of deprivation of liberty for 23 years and a fine of 100,000 roubles.

In connection with the inaccurate statements heard here repeatedly, we recall that Nadiya Savchenko's incriminating actions were committed prior to her becoming a member of parliament, and this means that there are no grounds for granting her any immunity.

Our distinguished colleagues who believe that Nadiya Savchenko should be released at their request and not in accordance with a court ruling are becoming like representatives of Right Sector or Azov. They believe it is normal to go to a court or police department making threats and to secure the release of their partners in crime simply because they are "patriots".

We have not seen any eagerness on the part of our colleagues to defend the rights of persons currently imprisoned in Ukraine, many of them without charges being brought against them. Many of them have been deprived of their liberty solely for political reasons and were not directly involved in resisting the punitive operation of the Ukrainian security forces in Donbas. According to various sources, there are at least 1,000 such political prisoners in Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv.

Meanwhile, under the notorious Nadiya Savchenko law, persons convicted of particularly serious offences against the person – rapists and murderers – have been released early.

The law on amnesty and the non-prosecution of persons in connection with events in Donbas, which is stipulated in the Minsk Package of Measures, has still not entered into force.

Mr. Chairperson,

The protection of journalists in crisis situations receives a lot of attention in the OSCE. We believe that a thorough investigation of the premeditated murder of journalists and the hearing of the case in court are important aspects of this protection.

Unfortunately, Igor Kornelyuk and Anton Voloshin were not the only journalists to lose their lives in Ukraine. We remember other colleagues – Andrea Rocchelli, Anatoly Klyan, Andrey Stenin and Oles Buzina.

Regrettably, Ukraine shows no enthusiasm for investigating their deaths. On the contrary, the right-wing radicals suspected of murdering Oles Buzina and detained immediately after the event were quickly released.

The question arises: is there any chance of the persons guilty of murdering journalists in Ukraine ever being punished? Or does the same fate await these cases as the investigation into the snipers on the Maidan or the fire at Trade Union House in Odessa?

Thank you for your attention.