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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1155th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 July 2017

On the Russian position regarding the use of torture

Mr. Chairperson,

In the light of the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland, we should like to make the following comments.

The use of torture constitutes a gross violation of human rights and cannot be justified under any circumstances. Freedom from torture is an absolute right, which cannot be restricted under any conditions. Such a prohibition is an inalienable element of international law and binding for all members of the international community, regardless of whether or not a particular State has ratified the international treaties expressly prohibiting the use of torture.

A large set of commitments has been developed within our Organization to combat this vicious phenomenon. However, they are being systematically violated in a large number of OSCE countries. To this day, the practice of arbitrary and indefinite detention of prisoners, extradition of detainees in circumvention of established procedures, their forcible and secret transfer to clandestine prisons in third countries, unlawful detention and interrogation involving the use of torture and other kinds of inhuman or degrading treatment has not been eradicated.

The use of the principle of extraterritoriality to avoid implementing international commitments or one's own national legislation prohibiting torture is unacceptable.

Cases involving the use of so-called enhanced interrogation techniques and the refusal to provide prisoners with appropriate medical care are cause for serious concern.

All this confirms that much remains to be done in the OSCE area to increase the effectiveness of combating torture and inhuman treatment, including the aforementioned forms.

In that connection, we should like to express our gratitude to our colleagues from Switzerland, Norway and Denmark for their efforts to seek consensus in the work on the draft

OSCE Ministerial Council decision on this subject over the past three years. Russia was among those countries that explored every avenue to find generally acceptable wording and to give weight to the document. However, owing to the unwillingness of a number of countries to recognize the problems we mentioned, the draft decision was never approved. This situation also had an impact on the idea of adopting a Permanent Council declaration on combating torture.

Thank you for your attention.