

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1116th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 October 2016

**In response to the comments on Syria by the  
Permanent Representative of the United States of America in connection  
with the address by the President of the International Committee on the  
Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer**

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the distinguished representative of the United States of America raised the question of respect by Russia for the provisions of international humanitarian law in connection with events in Syria, I should like to make some comments in reply. In doing so, we are thus leaving the OSCE's area of responsibility, but not at our instigation.

Since the very beginning of military operations by Russian forces in the Syrian Arab Republic at the request of its legitimate authorities – and I should like particularly to stress this aspect – we have acted transparently and exclusively on the basis of verified information and strictly in the interests of liquidating Islamic State and other terrorist groups.

Russia has repeatedly emphasized on a variety of different platforms that the information on which the targets for aerial attacks are based is verified by at least three separate channels. This rules out strikes against hospitals, schools, weddings and funeral processions. Accusations to the contrary are made with enviable regularity, except that they are not supported by the evidence.

In reply to the assertion that Russian Aerospace Forces allegedly bombed a school in Idlib yesterday, I should like to point out that as a gesture of goodwill Russia responded to appeals by the United Nations and declared a moratorium on flights in the Aleppo region. Our aircraft have not operated for over a week within a range of 10 km of the city.

Meanwhile, no later than yesterday, 26 October, Amnesty International published the results of investigations of 11 air strikes by the coalition of forces led by the United States of America on targets in Syria, which stated that at least 300 civilians have been killed as a result of these strikes. The US authorities have still not issued any explanations in reply to the

corresponding memorandum sent to them by this non-governmental organization on 28 September.

Among recent incidents mentioned in this memorandum are three strikes in June and July this year near the city of Manbij in the Aleppo governorate. In particular, at least 73 civilians including 27 children were killed and dozens injured as a result of the strike on al-Tukhar on 19 July. A week later, on 28 July, an air strike hit the public market in the village of al-Ghandoura, 25 km from Manbij, killing at least 28 civilians including 7 children. I shall refrain from continuing this doleful list. It is long.

The information is not complete but it gives an idea of the scale of the US attacks on the civilian population of Syria. It should not be forgotten that the United States of America and members of the coalition led by it are operating in Syria illegally without the permission of the country's authorities or a mandate from the United Nations.

There is one final but very important aspect. I should like to recall that it was the US Government that effectively put paid to the months of efforts to achieve a political settlement of the Syrian crisis by failing to honour its commitments under the Russian-US agreement of 9 September on the cessation of hostilities in Syria. The United States of America has not only unilaterally ignored the agreement but has also been unable to separate the "moderate" opposition from the "terrorist international" operating in Syria.

Thank you for your attention.