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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1168th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 December 2017

On Human Rights Day

Mr. Chairperson,

Human Rights Day, on 10 December, was established in 1948 in connection with the adoption of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 70th anniversary of which we will celebrate next year. Let me remind you that this document followed on from the victory in the Second World War. The UN Member States, aware of the horrors of the greatest tragedy of the last century, joined forces to establish a solid framework on the principles of human dignity in order to prevent recurrences of the ideology of racial superiority and the proclamation of the exclusivity of certain peoples. Therefore, those who attempt to rewrite the history of the war, who equate victors with executioners and demolish the monuments to and graves of the fighters of the anti-Hitler coalition, impinge on that human rights framework.

Unfortunately, racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism continue to pose a threat to modern society. We have repeatedly called for close attention to be paid to the alarming situation of Christians and Muslims in the OSCE area and in neighbouring regions. Believers and members of the clergy are attacked, persecuted and even killed, and Christian shrines are being destroyed.

Another important event will take place in 2018 – the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. These documents proclaim the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interconnectedness of all human rights. This needs to be remembered more often in our Organization, where a group of countries prefers to give priority to only one category of rights to the detriment of the others.

Russia is committed to fulfilling its obligations in the field of human rights and consistently upholds values such as freedom, justice, life, welfare and human dignity. Serious efforts are being made to ensure the broad involvement of citizens, political parties and voluntary organizations in the development of State policy and in the improvement of the legal system. Incidentally, it is symbolic that on 11 December, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree awarding the State Prize of the Russian Federation for

outstanding achievements in the field of human rights to the oldest human rights activist in the country, Lyudmila Alexeyeva.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that human rights problems exist in all OSCE participating States, without exception. It is inadmissible to use human rights and fundamental freedoms for narrow political purposes. We heard such speeches today. This discredits the whole concept of human rights. The only way to truly improve human rights is to abandon the mentoring tone, double standards, the imposition of destructive behaviour patterns, and to develop constructive and equitable dialogue.

Thank you for your attention.