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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1295th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

11 December 2020

On Human Rights Day

Mr. Chairperson,

The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory over Nazism, which created the conditions for the establishment of the United Nations. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 was the starting point for our observance of Human Rights Day. Many other multilateral treaties dealing with specific aspects of human rights have since been adopted.

Human rights are the most important universal institution of both contemporary international law and national constitutional law. However, legal obligations alone are not a guarantee of respect for this right. This requires, in particular, mechanisms for its enforcement and political will.

Despite repeated discussions on the principle of the universality of human rights, this issue is still being used to serve the political interests of certain countries as a tool for interfering in internal affairs, violating the sovereignty of independent States. The manipulation of this fundamental principle and of human rights in general has led to a practice of applying double standards when assessing certain situations.

The historical past is often sacrificed for the sake of short-term opportunistic reasons. Unfortunately, attempts to revise history, especially the Second World War, have been going on for years. As a matter of fact, a systematic policy of falsification and distortion of the past is being pursued, resulting in the reinterpretation of the outcome of the war and the belittling and even misrepresentation of the role of the USSR in the victory over Nazism and fascism. Attempts to effectively revise the verdicts of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, to equate liberators and executioners and to whitewash Nazi criminals and their accomplices are increasingly evident.

One cannot help but be alarmed by the increase in xenophobic and racist incidents and manifestations of aggressive nationalism, chauvinism and other forms of racial and religious intolerance, the failure to act on which is justified by reference to the supposedly absolute nature of the right to freedom of expression.

The spread of racist and xenophobic ideologies, whose proponents adopt populist ideas and thus broaden their base of followers, is a matter of serious concern. Even more worryingly, young people are being actively drawn into radical groups, and the number of those involved is steadily increasing. Last but not least, the authorities are playing a decisive role in this regard by pandering to the extremists and even by deliberately playing along with radicals in order to divert public attention from existing problems.

Against this background, the protection of the rights, especially linguistic and educational rights, of national minorities and ethnic groups has become a serious issue. Severe shortcomings in the protection of the rights of migrants have been noted.

Racist attitudes and prejudices are becoming more widespread and manifestations of Christianophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are being reported. The views of the clergy and parishioners, who at times make up the overwhelming majority of the population, are ignored. Insulting the religious sensitivities of believers and inciting interreligious enmity and conflict on religious grounds have become a sad reality in a number of States. Measures are needed to prevent such actions, including the adoption of agreements or other collective documents by the relevant international organizations. In such circumstances, the implementation of the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council mandate to elaborate declarations on the protection of Christians, Muslims and members of other religions remains imperative.

Traditional values are increasingly coming under attack by those who push a neoliberal agenda, who seek to impose their own ideas on others in defiance of the principles of justice, responsibility and co-operation, and who attempt to replace them with ideas of permissiveness and moral relativism. We regard such approaches as a direct threat to the fundamental values of democracy and human rights and as a serious challenge to international and regional stability as a whole.

We are convinced that, in the field of human rights, it is most effective to ensure international co-operation on an equal basis between States in strict compliance with international law, while respecting sovereignty, observing the principle of non-intervention and refraining from using human rights as an instrument of political pressure.

Thank you for your attention.