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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR TITORENKO,
HEAD OF THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION, AT THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON VICTIMS OF TERRORISM**

Vienna, 13 September 2007

Mr. Chairman,

The Russian delegation is perplexed at the fact that representatives of a number of OSCE participating States have asked that you register the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society and allow representatives of this non-governmental organization (NGO) to participate in today's meeting.

As we informed you earlier, this organization was closed down by a decision of the Nizhny Novgorod Provincial Court on 13 October 2006 because of its involvement in the publication of statements by the well-known international terrorists Aslan Maskhadov and Akhmed Zakayev, statements intended to stir up violent racial, ethnic and social discord, and also because of its role in the dissemination of extremist slogans.

What we are referring to here today is an attempt to use the OSCE platform by a representative of an organization that is associated with terrorism and that promotes the ideas of international terrorists. We are surprised that following the clarifications made by the head of the Russian delegation in this connection, a number of countries continue to insist on the participation of the aforementioned NGO in the work of this conference.

The Russian delegation reaffirms its view that it is absolutely unacceptable, blasphemous even, to include persons who defend the interests of terrorists in a discussion on the protection of victims of terrorism. Their presence would discredit both the event itself and the OSCE as an organization capable of making a truly important contribution to international counter-terrorism co-operation.

The Russian Government reserves the right to investigate thoroughly how exactly a society with such an odious track record could be invited to a prestigious event involving an official delegation of the Russian Federation.

We cannot regard these actions as anything other than anti-Russian provocation.

Today's incident graphically demonstrates the shortcomings, what is more, the inadequacy of the procedures for allowing non-governmental organizations to participate in OSCE events, in particular those on counter-terrorism issues.