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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1086th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 January 2016

**In response to the address by the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Ambassador Szabolcs Takács, and the address by the Special Representative of the German Federal Foreign Office for Relations with Jewish Organizations, Issues Relating to Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Remembrance and International Aspects of Sinti and Roma Issues, Ambassador Felix Klein**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Ambassadors Takács and Klein,

We welcome you to the Permanent Council meeting and thank you for your interesting statements on such an important topic.

Seventy-one years ago, Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp, where millions of people, including around 1 million Jews, had been brutally exterminated. That day, 27 January, was proclaimed International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Russia was one of the main co-sponsors of the United Nations General Assembly resolution establishing that day of remembrance in 2005.

The criminal Nazi ideology, which aimed to destroy entire peoples and social groups, has left a trail of blood in the history of the twentieth century. According to Nuremberg Tribunal materials, 6 million Jews were murdered in Europe, including hundreds of thousands of our compatriots.

However, Jews were not only victims of that war. Soviet citizens of Jewish origin made a major contribution to the victory over Nazism. Over 500,000 Jews fought in the Red Army and more than 40,000 in partisan units. Almost one in three volunteered for the front. Nearly 200,000 fell in battle. Around 161,000 Soviet Jewish soldiers were awarded military orders and medals, and over 130 were given the title Hero of the Soviet Union.

The multi-ethnic people of the USSR sustained the heaviest losses in the Second World War. Of the 70 million Soviet citizens under Nazi rule, around 7.5 million were

murdered, over 2 million died as forced labourers in Germany, and more than 4 million perished in the occupied territories. While paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, we must not forget that tens of millions of people of different nationalities, including almost 10 million Slavs, were martyred in the Nazi concentration camps. In the final analysis, over 26 million Soviet citizens perished in that war.

In this context, we cannot fail to recall another date – 27 January marks the day on which the siege of Leningrad was lifted. It is another example of the crimes committed by the Nazis, who killed Leningrad civilians in cold blood not only through bombing and artillery shelling but also through starvation over a period of almost 900 days.

There is and can be no statute of limitations for such crimes. Any attempts to play down these events, to distort or rewrite history are unacceptable and immoral. Behind such attempts is often the desire to conceal one's own shame at betrayal and to justify direct or indirect complicity with the Nazis. Historical facts, however, are irrefutable. They show that Banderites and other collaborationists who supported Hitler's regime were directly involved in the extermination of Jewish people, in particular, the Jews of Lviv, Odessa, Kyiv and other places in Ukraine, as well as on Polish soil. As for the Baltic Nazis, they carried out ethnic cleansing in Vilnius, Riga, Kaunas and Tallinn.

We must draw lessons from the tragedy of the Second World War without moving the moral goalposts. Historical grievances cannot justify the atrocities committed by members of the SS or attempts to equate victims and executioners, liberators and occupiers.

We pay tribute to the memory of all those who were martyred by the Nazis and their henchmen in the concentration camps and ghettos, and mourn the millions who perished in the war. At the initiative of voluntary and religious organizations, not only Jewish ones, work is under way in Russia to find and mark the sites of mass graves of Holocaust victims and to give the dead back their names. The Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Holocaust opened in Moscow long ago, and the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre was opened in 2012. Lessons about the Holocaust customarily take place in schools on 27 January. There is the Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities. Synagogues are being restored, monuments erected, and tribute paid to veterans and concentration camp prisoners.

This painstaking, day-to-day work is of key importance for educating the younger generation and preserving the historical truth about the Second World War and the heroic deeds of those who saved the European nations from enslavement or total annihilation. Crimes like the Holocaust must not be repeated. This is the common duty of the entire international community.

Nevertheless, misanthropic ideas are still very much alive in Europe. We continue to encounter attempts to divide societies on ethnic, racial or religious grounds. On 19 January President Vladimir Putin met with European Jewish Congress leaders. Congress President Viatcheslav Kantor noted with regret that the memory of the Holocaust has failed to become a vaccine against anti-Semitism. According to that influential organization, the situation of Jews in Europe today is the worst since the end of the Second World War. A new exodus of Jews from Europe is a realistic prospect.

Mr. Chairperson,

Death factories, mass shootings and deportations became a horrible reality of the twentieth century and were carefully organized in what at the time seemed to be a civilized Europe. History has shown that where ideas of ethnic and racial superiority and exclusivity are instilled into people's heads, where the seeds of hatred of other people are sown, and where traditional values are mocked, civilization is inevitably replaced by barbarity and terror, by conflicts and wars.

Together we must combat these threats, defend peace and people's freedom, and uphold the right of States and nations to their own path of development. Today, in the twenty-first century, it is crucial to make the collective security system more effective, to promote the values of humanism and co-operation, and to always remember the lessons of history.

Thank you for your attention.