

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 address by the President of the International Committee
of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Maurer,

We are pleased to welcome you to the Permanent Council after such a long break and thank you for your interesting statement.

As one of the founder members of the Red Cross in the nineteenth century, Russia has been co-operating closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for more than 150 years and shares the ideals of humanism, impartiality and compassion on which its work is based. As a member of the international Red Cross movement, the Russian Red Cross also devotes all of its efforts to helping the needy – refugees, victims of epidemics, wars and conflicts, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable sections of the population.

We are in favour of universal implementation of international humanitarian law and are willing to play a constructive role in a future intergovernmental process to ensure respect for this law. The priority for us is to improve the potential of existing mechanisms in this sphere, including the Red Cross conference.

In the difficult times we are experiencing today, the work of the Red Cross continues to be much in demand. We are witnessing an increase in conflicts in various parts of the world, including the OSCE participating States and OSCE area. We are gratified to note that in these circumstances the ICRC has continued to stand by its principles and endeavours to give the most extensive assistance to all those in need, regardless of race, nationality, confession or political convictions. This approach has made the ICRC highly respected in the world and has enabled it in a number of cases to operate in places where other organizations cannot gain access. This is particularly precious against the background of the visible tendency towards the politicization of humanitarian acts.

We note the targeted efforts by the Red Cross to locate missing persons on the territory of Ukraine and to restore family ties that have been severed in the internal armed

conflict in that country. The ICRC does considerable work in Donbas, offering assistance of various kinds to the civilian population of this region, providing food, essential goods and building materials to rebuild the infrastructure. This supplements the efforts of Russia, which provides humanitarian aid to the inhabitants of south-east Ukraine, who are suffering not only from the shelling and attacks by the Ukrainian armed forces and volunteer battalions but also from the inhumane socio-economic blockade of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The Red Cross also carries out important work in Nagorno-Karabakh. We welcome the prompt response by the ICRC to the escalation of the conflict in April this year, when the Committee, in co-operation with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, became a “humanitarian mediator” in the search for and return of the bodies of those killed on both sides of the line of contact. As a Co-Chair of the OSCE Mink Group, Russia continues to support the efforts by the Red Cross to facilitate an exchange of information between the parties to the conflict on missing persons.

Mr. Mauer,

In conclusion, I should like to confirm that you can always count on the active assistance of Russia in the fulfilment of the Red Cross’s noble mission.

Thank you for your attention.