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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1273rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 July 2020

On the death penalty in the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

We are profoundly concerned about the US Supreme Court's decision to maintain the ruling on the resumption of capital punishment at the federal level after a hiatus of almost 17 years. It is already planned to carry out the "federal death penalty" in four cases in the very near future.

According to the NGO Death Penalty Information Center, 54 executions have been scheduled for this year in seven states and at the federal Government level. As at 29 June 2020, six of these death sentences had been carried out in five states.

I should once again like to draw your attention to the fact that the death penalty is fraught with the risk of miscarriages of justice and also of ill-treatment and even torture occurring when the sentence is carried out. In the latter respect, the method used to carry out the execution is essential. Lethal injections and the electric chair, both of which are used in the United States of America, can hardly be described as humane methods.

This was pointed out by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in its background paper from 2019 entitled "The Death Penalty in the OSCE Area". We would also remind you that the Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution stipulates that "cruel and unusual punishments [shall not be] inflicted".

Miscarriages of justice are not uncommon. We reiterate that imposing the death penalty on innocent people is a flagrant violation of a fundamental human right – the right to life. Since 1973, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, 165 people sentenced to death have been found to be innocent, and those are just the cases in which the wrongful conviction was established.

We once again call upon the US Government to honour its international obligations on eliminating the torture and cruel treatment and punishment of prisoners, and to be mindful of the value of human life.

Thank you for your attention.