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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 947th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 April 2013

Regarding the situation at the special prison at Guantánamo Bay

Mr. Chairperson,

Shocking events have been taking place at the American special prison at Guantánamo. On 6 February the inmates there declared a mass hunger strike, the reasons for which lie not only in the terrible and intolerable conditions of confinement but also in the sense of hopelessness in the face of many years of indefinite detention without trial at that special prison facility.

According to the reports of international human rights organizations, many of those protesting are in a serious physical condition because of extreme exhaustion and dehydration. The number of people refusing food is on the increase. All of this causes us serious concern.

Despite the insistent demands of human rights organizations and the international community as a whole, and despite also the promises given in 2009 by US President Barack Obama to shut down the prison at Guantánamo within a year and to transfer the remaining prisoners to US territory, where they would fall entirely under United States law, this has not been done. What is more, the senior officials of the Southern Command of the United States Armed Forces, which is in charge of the special prison at Guantánamo, recently requested more than 200 million dollars for the renovation of the prison facilities, a fact that may point to plans in the opposite direction on the part of the American leadership.

The present events once again confirm that the existence of the special prison at Guantánamo runs counter to the fundamental norms and standards of human rights. Among the prisoners there is a citizen of Russia, with whom our diplomats have for some time been seeking a meeting. The issues involved include, among other things, the right to a fair trial within a reasonable period by an independent and impartial court, something that the United States champions so vigorously.

We call upon the American authorities to pay heed to the recommendations of the international human rights community, to reaffirm their compliance with OSCE commitments on ensuring the rule of law, and to at last take effective measures to ensure the closing down of the prison at Guantánamo as soon as possible.

We have taken note of the intention announced by Director Lenarčič of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) at the meeting of the Permanent Council on 14 March to visit the special facility at Guantánamo for the purpose of studying the situation there with regard to the observance of the prisoners' rights, including the conditions under which they are confined. We shall do whatever we can to see to it that this intention is carried out. It is our hope that the United States authorities will make available all necessary assistance to this ODIHR mission.

We trust that the OSCE and its institutions will continue to devote particular attention to preventing the practice of the detention of prisoners without trial and also to any precedents involving the extraterritorial application of national criminal and anti-terrorist legislation with regard to citizens of third countries in violation of the commitments undertaken under the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thank you for your attention.