

PC.DEL/605/13

28 June 2013

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 957th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 June 2013

**Regarding the business dispute between the Moscow Property Committee
and the movement “For Human Rights”**

Mr. Chairperson,

We cannot but react with astonishment at the comments by our United States colleagues regarding the business dispute connected with the non-extension of the lease for the premises in the centre of Moscow.

The question of these leased premises is basically trivial. The owners of upmarket premises in any capital of an OSCE participating State, including, we presume, Washington, have the right in accordance with rental agreements to opt not to extend a lease at their discretion.

The Moscow Property Committee, which owns the premises in question, notified the other party in the business dispute, the “Hotline” regional public organization for promoting the observance of human rights, with which the rental agreement had been concluded, of the termination of the lease back in February. Despite having received the notification, the organization categorically refused to vacate the upmarket and expensive premises in the centre of Moscow, which became the headquarters of the “For Human Rights” movement headed by the human rights activist Lev Ponomarev. Furthermore, this public organization did not exercise its right to appeal against the owner’s decision within a three-month period. Unable to find another way out of this business dispute, the landlord employed the services of a private security company to re-establish its property rights.

The Moscow police are now carrying out two investigations at the same time: one into the actions of the police and the other into the damage caused to the NTV film crew’s video equipment by the human rights activists. The preliminary findings of the investigation conducted by the Ministry of the Interior show no irregularities in the actions of the police. The riot police were merely present to ensure public order.

The human rights activists can appeal against the eviction methods in court. I might add that the human rights activists used force against the NTV journalists first. We believe it should be left to the courts to decide who is right and who is guilty in this business dispute.

It is merely strange that, given the extremely widespread practice in many OSCE countries of evicting tenants from offices by terminating agreements as well as the eviction of organizations and physical persons for non-payment of loans and utility charge arrears, it is this case of property restitution that has attracted so much attention from our United States partners. Is this perhaps because Lev Ponomarev's organization receives funding from the United States with enviable regularity?

Thank you for your attention.