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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 940th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 February 2013

Regarding the 70th anniversary of the victory in the Battle of Stalingrad

Mr. Chairperson,

Seventy years ago, on 2 February 1943, one of the fiercest and bloodiest battles of the Second World War – the Battle of Stalingrad – ended with the capitulation of the group of Nazi and fascist troops. For 200 days and nights there were ferocious battles for every street and every house. Representatives of the different peoples of the former Soviet Union fought side by side, united in their common desire to defend their country.

On 31 January 1943, the southern group of forces under the command of Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus surrendered, and the northern group followed on 2 February 1943. More than 91,000 people were taken prisoner. The total losses on both sides in this battle exceeded 2 million human lives.

Many public and political figures commended the victory of the Soviet forces. President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States wrote in May 1943 that this “victory stemmed the tide of invasion and marked the turning point in the war of the Allied nations against the forces of aggression”. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Winston Churchill called the victory of the Soviet Army at Stalingrad amazing, and King George VI sent a ceremonial sword as a gift to Stalingrad as a sign of the deep admiration of the British people.

The memory of the great battle at Stalingrad, which heralded the fundamental turning point in the Great Patriotic War, is still revered in our country. The Battle of Stalingrad has forever united the fates of many who now live in different independent States. We remember the assistance that the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition provided in this battle.

Our common duty to those who gave their blood to save humanity from Nazism and fascism is to prevent the tragedy of world war from reoccurring and to create a reliable barrier against the spread of the ideas of intolerance and racial, national or religious superiority.

Thank you for your attention.