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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1348th MEETING OF THE OSCE  
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 December 2021

**Human Rights Day**

Madam Chairperson,

Tomorrow we will celebrate what is arguably the principal international day associated with the human dimension, and what is more not only within the OSCE. On 10 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the landmark document that is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even today the importance of that moment cannot be overestimated. It is not for nothing that the Declaration has been translated into more than five hundred languages.

This year, Human Rights Day is devoted to the theme of equality and to Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The aforementioned theme is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations approach set out in the document “Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development – A Shared United Nations System Framework for Action”. However, perfectly valid goals and objectives – of relevance also to the OSCE area – are sometimes the subject of all kinds of opportunistic manoeuvres.

This is why we must talk first and foremost about the depoliticization of the human rights sphere. Unfortunately, for many, human rights have become a bargaining chip and a pretext for intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States. Such processes are accompanied by attempts to revise the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act and a striving to rewrite OSCE commitments to suit countries’ national practices, which often go against international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Another objective ensues from this, namely ensuring strict compliance with the basic international human rights treaties. I should like to recall some of their provisions. I am referring, in particular, to Chapter VI of the Helsinki Final Act: “The participating States will refrain from any intervention, direct or indirect, individual or collective, in the internal or external affairs falling within the domestic jurisdiction of another participating State.”

Significantly, the 2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration does not say a word about the permissibility of such intervention. It merely states that “commitments undertaken in the field of the human

dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”

There is a desire on the part of certain States to play fast and loose with the key concepts of “legitimate concern” and “intervention”. The first is clearly governed by a provision in the 1991 Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE. There, immediately following the reference to “legitimate concern”, the participating States “express their determination to fulfil all of their human dimension commitments and to resolve by peaceful means any related issue, individually and collectively, on the basis of mutual respect and co-operation”.

The second concept – “intervention” – is defined in the Helsinki Final Act as “direct or indirect assistance ... to subversive or other activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another participating State”.

It is equally important to fully respect the fundamental principles of international law enshrined in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Reference is made there, in particular, to “[t]he duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter”.

It is not for nothing that we have quoted these documents at such length. They confirm how sound and cogent were the principles enunciated by our predecessors as the basis for structuring the post-war world order. Strict observance of these principles and mutual respect are the key to successful development and effective resolution of the most acute problems of our time, not least those in the field of human rights.

In closing, I should like to congratulate all of you, esteemed colleagues, on the occasion of this notable international day. It should unite us, not divide us, and that is precisely what we shall strive for.

Thank you for your attention.