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**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BELARUS TO THE OSCE (ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES OF ARMENIA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN,
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN AND
UZBEKISTAN) AT THE 1144th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 May 2017

**On the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of the
victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941 to 1945**

On 9 May, we will mark one of the most memorable and sacred dates in world history – the 72nd anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941 to 1945.

Victory Day has rightly gone down in history as a symbol of valour and heroism, unparalleled feats and the harshest ordeals which were the lot of tens of millions of people, including those who paid the ultimate price defending freedom and who delivered humankind from Nazism.

We highly value the contribution to the common victory in the Second World War of the States of the anti-Hitler coalition, in which the peoples of the Soviet Union played a decisive role, crushing the main forces of the Wehrmacht, as did those from the other countries that put up a fight against Nazism. Let us honour the memory of the people of all nationalities and countries who perished in the fight against this scourge on the fronts, in the partisan brigades and in bombardments, those who were tormented in death camps and those who fell victim to the occupation of the Nazi regime and its privations. Let us pay homage to those who selflessly toiled for the good of the common victory on the home front.

In that connection, today we should like to call to mind yet another important date – 11 April, which is celebrated as the International Day of the liberation of the prisoners of the Nazi concentration camps, established in the memory of the prisoners' insurrection at the Buchenwald concentration camp in April 1945.

Attempts to falsify the history of the war and erase the tragic lessons of history from our memories are inadmissible. It is our duty to think of the war veterans and concentration camp prisoners whose numbers dwindle with every year that passes, to nurture a clear memory of all the victims of Nazism, to preserve their places of burial and the monuments erected in their honour, and not to allow these to be defiled.

We should strive together to combat any attempts to whitewash the crimes of the Nazis and their supporters who were convicted by the Nuremberg Tribunal, and ensure that those who have managed to escape just retribution to this day are punished. Such crimes have no statute of limitations.

Remembering that the desire to implement in practice theories of racial supremacy was one of the main driving forces of the Second World War, we are deeply concerned to note the revival of the Nazi ideology and the alarming rise in the manifestations of aggressive nationalism, racism, discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia that goes with it. We must be decisive and uncompromising in our resistance to this.

In that connection, we welcome the resolution of 19 December 2016 adopted at the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. These provisions are of particular relevance in the current international situation.

Against the background of growing challenges to security and cross-border threats, States are required today to join forces in the OSCE area to ensure the peaceful settlement of existing conflicts and the prevention of new ones. We are convinced that this is the only way to protect current and future generations from the adversities of new wars.

The latest anniversary of the defeat of Nazism serves as a reminder to us all of the need to consolidate the work of the international community, including the OSCE participating States, on the basis of the principle of the indivisibility of security, towards such ends as developing robust immunity to the virus of Nazism and its manifestations and preventing a repeat of the disaster of the twentieth century which was the Second World War.