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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1203rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 November 2018

On the Holodomor in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, our Ukrainian colleague is once again attempting to interpret the tragedy of the mass famine in the USSR in a narrow nationalistic manner.

The assertion that the “artificially organized famine” was supposedly directed exclusively against the Ukrainians is not true or supported by facts and statistics. This approach is at odds with the historical realities of the time. Archive documents show that the mass famine in the early 1930s was a consequence of a severe drought, forced collectivization and dekulakization, which took place in the entire Soviet Union and not just in Ukraine. Millions of Russians, Kazakhs, Tatars, Bashkirs and other nationalities living in the regions of the middle and lower Volga, northern Caucasus, central Black Earth, southern Urals, western Siberia and Kazakhstan were victims of the famine. The events of those years did not have an ethnic connotation, were not directed against a particular people and did not have the aim, as was the case with the Holocaust, for example, of exterminating a particular ethnic group. The population of Russia suffered no less from the famine in those years than the inhabitants of Ukraine.

Let us look at the statistics. The census data for 1926 and 1937 show that in those 11 years the population of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) decreased by 1.9 per cent, compared with 2.1 per cent in the Voronezh region of Russia, 4.1 per cent in the northern Caucasus, 7.8 per cent in the Kuybyshev region, 14.3 per cent in the Kursk region and 23 per cent in the Saratov region. So who suffered more?

To describe the “Holodomor” as a genocide of the Ukrainian people in the meaning of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is to show ignorance of the law. First, the events of those years cannot be considered as “deliberately inflicting on the group”, in this case the people of Ukraine, “conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”.

Second, there are no provisions in the Convention that would give this international agreement retroactive force, which makes it inapplicable to the events in the 1930s on the territory of the former USSR or the Ukrainian SSR.

I recall that in the international organizations at the time the problem of famine was considered in relation to the entire USSR. In 1933, the question of famine in the Soviet State was submitted to the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations, but even then it was not dealt with there but referred to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Thus, the deliberate confining of the events in the 1930s to the territory of Ukraine is incorrect from historical and factual points of view and shows disrespect for the memory of the victims from among the other peoples in the former USSR. The famine in the 1930s does not have a national “face”, and attempts at “posthumous discrimination” of victims on ethnic grounds are unacceptable and contrary to the ideals of our Organization. It is immoral to use this tragedy for opportunistic purposes today.

Thank you for your attention.