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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1257th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

30 January 2020

**On the commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the distinguished Ambassador Georges Santer.

On 27 January 1944, the inhumane siege of Leningrad, which had become one of the bloodiest chapters of the Second World War, was completely lifted. As in the Holocaust, it was a mass extermination of civilians.

Exactly one year later, on 27 January 1945, the Red Army liberated the largest concentration camp – Auschwitz-Birkenau. Up to four million people, including around one million Jews, were exterminated in the grinding machines of this “factory of death”. A total of six million Jews, 40 per cent of them citizens of the Soviet Union, became victims of the bloody crime of the Holocaust. We shall never forget this tragedy.

This year, we mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Another equally important date is the end of the Second World War. For the peoples of Russia and for the other peoples of the multi-ethnic USSR who sacrificed more than 27 million lives in the name of victory in the Second World War, preserving the historical memory of those terrible events remains a task of national importance.

The President of Russia, Mr. Vladimir Putin, attended a commemorative event within the framework of the “Remembering the Holocaust, Fighting Antisemitism” international forum, held at the Yad Vashem memorial complex in Jerusalem on 22 and 23 January. The Russian and Israeli leaders unveiled the “Candle of Memory” monument in honour of the heroic defenders and residents of besieged Leningrad. Mr. Putin also presented the Order of Courage to Nice Shaham, great-niece of Leon Feldhendler – a hero of the inmates’ uprising at Sobibor, a death camp located on the territory of Poland.

Large-scale commemorative events are also taking place in Russia. For example, the exhibition entitled “The Holocaust: Destruction, Liberation, Rescue” was officially opened in Moscow on 20 January. With it began a Week of Remembrance – a series of commemorative and educational events, both at the federal level and in the 50 regions of Russia. We should like to remind you that a similar exhibition was organized by the Permanent Representative of Russia here in the Hofburg in April 2019. As Moshe Kantor,

President of the European Jewish Congress, said at the Jerusalem forum, in Russia “we find maybe the lowest rates of anti-Semitism due to a very uncompromising, long-term policy towards anti-Semitism”.

Mr. Chairperson,

The role of education in preserving historical truth should not be underestimated. We share in this connection the opinion of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, that “teaching about the Holocaust equips students with the knowledge to challenge any attempts to deny or trivialize the crimes of National Socialism”. Educating the younger generation is particularly important at a time when, despite the common understanding that anti-Semitism, racism, fascism and neo-Nazism are unacceptable, intolerance and discrimination are thriving in the OSCE area.

According to Mr. Kantor, “more than 80 per cent of Jews say they feel unsafe in Europe today, with more than 40 per cent [saying] they have considered leaving the continent. In recent years, around 3 per cent of Jews have emigrated from Europe annually because of anti-Semitism, meaning that in only 30 years, if the current trends persist or worsen, there could be no Jews left in Europe by 2050.”

And there are good reasons for this. Marches of Waffen-SS veterans are held annually in certain countries. There are torchlit processions of neo-Nazis and nationalists, resembling the gatherings in Hitler’s Germany. Anti-Semitic slogans are yelled. A war on the monuments to those who fought against National Socialism has been declared State policy. At the same time, memorials are being unveiled to those who fought on the side of the Nazis or collaborated with them. Streets and schools are being renamed in honour of Nazi collaborators. We underscore the absolute inadmissibility of glorifying those involved in the crimes of Nazism, including the whitewashing of members of the SS, which was designated a criminal organization by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

We condemn the attempts to elevate to the rank of national heroes and heroes of national liberation movements those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition or collaborated with the Nazis. It is regrettable that such events often occur in the countries that were occupied during the Second World War and whose heroic peoples made an important contribution to the victory.

On the initiative of Russia and a number of other countries, including OSCE participating States, the United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution every year against the glorification of Nazism. The number of co-sponsors continues to grow. Only two countries vote year after year for spurious reasons against condemning those who annihilated the Jews and other peoples.

We should like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship to continue the tradition of recent years and devote its first event in the human dimension to combating anti-Semitism.

Thank you for your attention.