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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1070th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 October 2015

**On problems in the work of the OSCE Warsaw review meeting on the
human dimension**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are outraged at the attempts by a number of States and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to introduce political censorship at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw.

For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland refused entry into Polish territory of Georgy Muradov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea, who had travelled to the Warsaw meeting to shed light on the real situation in that constituent entity of the Russian Federation. Visas were also refused to Refat Dzhemilev and Rafial Seitumerov, representatives of the Crimean Tatar people in the Republic of Crimea. The issue of a visa to Dimitry Gornostaev, deputy editor-in-chief of the international news agency "Rossiya Segodnya", was artificially dragged out, with the result that he was late in arriving in Warsaw and was unable to speak on a number of important questions.

We believe that such actions are a gross violation of Poland's commitments to safeguard the activities of international organizations on its territory and a deliberate restriction on the possibility for opinions to be heard on the OSCE platform that differ from the policies of Warsaw's official political establishment. This raises questions as to the expediency of the ODIHR's continued presence in the capital of a country that is unwilling to guarantee plurality of opinions. Moreover, these actions are a violation of the OSCE's commitments on freedom of movement. In that connection, we intend to raise the question of transferring the venue of the HDIM to another State.

The unprecedented intimidation and pressure encountered in Warsaw by Dmitriy Polonskiy, representative of the regional public organization Russian Community in Crimea, is a cause for indignation. For one thing, the ODIHR staff persistently refused to register him in the list of speakers. They regarded it as "criminal" that he was at the same time Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea, although he had come as a representative of civil society. I might mention that representatives of other

non-governmental organizations whose views did not concur with the West also encountered difficulties in registering to speak. One Russian journalist was prevented from speaking at all, and they threatened to have her removed from the room for her views. The fact is that the ODIHR takes upon itself the role of an arbiter of sorts that can decide who should be allowed to speak or not.

On the day before Dimitry Polonskiy's speech, on the direct orders of the Ukrainian ambassador to Poland, Mr. Andrii Deshchytsia, a Ukrainian journalist spilled coffee on Mr. Polonskiy in the lobby of Hotel Sofitel. It is clear that this behaviour was designed to provoke a retaliatory reaction. What is more, this shameful act was photographed by the perpetrators.

To Mr. Polonskiy's credit, he did not rise to the provocation. Then, the Ukrainian delegation, with the support of the United States of America and a number of European Union countries, attempted to disrupt Mr. Polonskiy's speech. When this failed to work, a number of delegations simply left the room. In this way, they demonstrated their lack of interest in hearing the truth about the situation in Crimea at first hand.

This confirms the inappropriateness and impossibility of businesslike discussion of this issue within the OSCE's human dimension. The familiar advocates of strengthening the voice of civil society in the OSCE are preventing this from taking place through their own clumsy antics. Next time it will end up in physical violence, by the look of things.

We should like to emphasize that the question of Crimea's status has nothing to do with the procedure for conducting the meeting and should not be a reason for preventing people from speaking. This is an evident and gross violation of freedom of expression.

We consider that provocation of this type, with the participation of officials into the bargain, is inadmissible. This is far removed from the ethics of diplomacy and only discredits the perpetrators and the ODIHR at the same time. By their very own actions, Washington, Brussels and Kyiv are putting in jeopardy the Warsaw meeting that they value so much, turning it into a farce and theatre of the absurd and undermining the authority of this platform as an international human rights forum.

Thank you for your attention.