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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1121st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 December 2016

**In response to the statement by the
representative of Ukraine on the Russian media**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have taken note of the statement by the distinguished representative of Ukraine.

The heightened interest by the Ukrainian Government in what is happening in our country is understandable given the need to distract international attention from the excesses in the area of freedom of speech and freedom of the media holding sway in Ukraine.

We have studied the list distributed yesterday by Ukraine of journalists whose rights have supposedly been violated in Russia. We have received requests from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media regarding a number of incidents and have given the necessary explanations about the state of the investigations. At all events, we are open to constructive criticism and will therefore submit this list to the capital for examination.

However, we cannot shake the feeling that this step by our Ukrainian colleagues is simply a response in kind to the detailed list distributed by us on 3 November of crimes against journalists in Ukraine. By the way, we have heard nothing specific in substance about the cases mentioned in it. Perhaps the distinguished representative of Ukraine might like to comment on it today.

To all appearances, Ukraine is attempting to gloss over these crimes by endeavouring to turn attention to the situation in Russia. The authorities in Kyiv will have to respond sooner or later, however, above all to their own people.

As our Ukrainian colleagues have raised the topic of “Russian media”, I should like to say a few words about their situation in Ukraine, which is depressing. For a long time, the authorities there have been systematically cleansing their media space of ideas running counter to their own point of view. They are attempting to justify by all possible means the use of blacklists of foreign journalists, most of whom are Russian. Apart from media workers, these lists also include artists, actors and musicians, representatives of professions

whose job, one would think, is to build cultural bridges between countries, even in the most difficult periods of bilateral relations. In addition, the Ukrainian authorities have restricted the diffusion of over 70 Russian television stations on their territory (73 at the last count). Many Russian films and serials – the list currently contains more than 540 of them – have been banned even though most of them are merely for entertainment.

These steps are a clear violation of international norms and discrimination on ethnic and linguistic grounds. The Ukrainian Government's explanation for this is that it needs to protect its media space. But can anyone in their right mind believe that more than 500 films and serials, a lot of them made many years ago, were specially produced to disrupt the situation in Ukraine?

Thus, we are seeing not only a systematic policy of restricting access by the citizens of Ukraine to alternative points of view and sources of information, but also the deliberate destruction of cultural and historical ties and the removal from the everyday life of Ukrainian citizens of everything that could be associated with the shared experience of the two peoples. Clearly, this is not happening without encouragement from abroad.

Apart from attacks, journalists in Ukraine are subject to other types of violations of their rights. In particular, the odious Presidential Decree No. 550 of 16 September 2015, which introduced sanctions lists for journalists, remains in force. There is harsh censorship, and restrictive measures in connection with the media have become systematic. Contrived accusations of “separatism” are made in order to gag reporters.

Ian Bateson, a journalist at *The New York Times*, whose name was listed on the odious Mirotvorets website, wrote well on this matter in May 2016. His article stated that Ukraine had declared war on journalists. He emphasized that he was included in the disgraceful Mirotvorets list merely because he had travelled to the Donetsk region to investigate the crash of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing jet. Along with over 4,000 other journalists, he was branded as a “terrorist collaborator”. Mr. Bateson points out that Mirotvorets receives major support from the official authorities of Ukraine. He writes: “The website and its supporters in government are suggesting that journalists can be divided into two camps: those who support the state and those who are against it, with the implication that journalists who criticize the government should be silenced.” This assessment speaks for itself.

Thank you for your attention.