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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1214th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 January 2019

**In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo,  
Ambassador Jan Braathu**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished Ambassador Jan Braathu for his detailed report on the situation in the Serbian autonomous province of Kosovo and the activities of the field presence. For the most part we share his assessments.

The Mission's observations make it very clear that Kosovo is increasingly becoming a hotbed of instability and source of potential conflict in the region. The authorities in Priština have embarked on a policy of exacerbating the Kosovo crisis, threatening renewed violence and war in the Western Balkans. What is even worse is that there are more and more signs that in the 20 years since the barbaric NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the 10 years of unilateral "independence" the Kosovo Albanian leadership of the territory has moved completely beyond the control of the Western countries that engineered this "independence".

Between October and December 2018 alone, the authorities in Priština engaged in a whole series of provocations against Serbia and the Serbs living in the autonomous province. On 22 November, in violation of its obligations under the Central European Free Trade Agreement, the so-called Kosovo Government announced the introduction of a 100 per cent tariff on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These measures remain in force. The authorities in Priština simply ignore the calls from the United States of America and the European Union to remove them.

On 14 December, the so-called Parliament adopted a decision on the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into a fully fledged Kosovo army, which grossly violated the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. Nevertheless, the United States, NATO and the EU are attempting to vindicate the authorities in Priština, deviously assuring people that the decision does not change the essence of the Kosovo Security Force. In fact, what we are talking about is doubling their numerical strength, creating reserves and, most importantly, changing the nature of the forces that until recently performed a civil

defence function. With the assistance of the United States and a number of NATO countries, accelerated training of Kosovo Albanian military personnel is already under way, and there are increased deliveries of weapons and equipment to the Kosovo Albanians. No one is providing any guarantees that the so-called armed forces of Kosovo, made up of terrorists from the Kosovo Liberation Army, will not be used against the Serbian population in the north of the territory in the future.

It is quite clear that all the decisions adopted in Kosovo are links in the same chain. The purpose of these decisions is to intimidate the territory's Serbian population and deprive them of any prospects, taking the failure of Kosovo's statehood out on them, and all this is against the background of the repeatedly confirmed goal (including in the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo) of creating a multi-ethnic society in the territory.

Against the background of the toothless policy of the United States and the European Union often directly pandering to the Kosovo Albanians, the EU's mediation efforts in the dialogue between the authorities in Belgrade and Priština have inevitably failed. A case in point is the fact that for the sixth year it has not been possible to implement the key agreement on the formation of the Community of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo. There has been no reaction to the flagrant sabotage by the Kosovo authorities of their commitments. It is the same in this room. Instead, both sides are urged to normalize relations, which only increases the feeling of impunity among the authorities in Priština and leads them to increasingly all-or-nothing approaches without any leeway for compromise solutions. We agree that such an approach is beyond the bounds of diplomatic honesty. The Kosovo Albanians were and still are hoping that under external pressure Serbia will recognize the so-called independence of Kosovo.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has to work in extremely difficult conditions. It is clear that the burden on the field presence's personnel will only become greater, especially in view of the ill-founded curtailing of the activities of other international presences deployed in the territory.

We are grateful to the Mission for its involvement in the fate of internally displaced persons returning to the territory. Unfortunately, there are fewer and fewer each year. We note the systematic work of the field presence with the Kosovo institutions to ensure the rights of the Serbian population as the most vulnerable of the non-Albanian communities. The Mission's work has brought about an improved response by the local police to crimes against Serbs. We expect the local investigative bodies to work systematically to ensure that the perpetrators are inexorably punished.

We believe that the results of the work of the special court to investigate crimes by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army will offer some kind of orientation in this regard. We note that for now it is limited to summoning former fighters for questioning without bringing charges. All the perpetrators of serious crimes should be brought to justice and receive appropriate punishment, regardless of their positions.

We note the OSCE Mission's work in negotiating exemptions from the illegal decision to impose prohibitive tariffs on Serbian goods with regard to supplies for Serbian schools and churches in Kosovo. The task of ensuring reliable protection of Orthodox sites in

the territory requires particularly close attention. Kosovo Albanians continue to seize Serbian Orthodox Church property. In particular, the Church of John the Baptist and the Chapel of St. Paraskeva Pyatnitsa in Peć are no longer listed in local cadastral documents as property of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Construction continues in a zone near churches and monasteries protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. We know that the OSCE Mission actively promotes dialogue between archpriests of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the local authorities.

We trust that the OSCE field presence will continue its successful work within the framework of its mandate and will focus on protecting the rights of the non-Albanian population of the territory.

As a matter of principle, we are interested in a speedy solution to the Kosovo problem, which should be found by the parties themselves on the basis of UN Security Council resolution 1244 with full regard for Serbia's interests.

We are aware of the persistent attempts by a number of participating States to involve Kosovo representatives in OSCE events. We hear such calls again today. We urge the initiators of this approach not to waste energy and time on this useless exercise and to turn their efforts instead to ensuring the rights of the national communities living in the territory. We reaffirm our position that the participation of Kosovo Albanians in OSCE events is possible only as part of the Serbian delegation. Anything else would blatantly contravene the provisions of UN Security Council resolution 1244.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ambassador Jan Braathu and his team at the Mission continued success in their difficult but very important work.

Thank you for your attention.