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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 September 2009

Regarding the series of killings in the Northern Caucasus

Madam Chairperson,

We are grateful for the messages of condolence that have been received following the violent deaths of the Russian journalists and human rights defenders Abdulmalik Akhmedilov, Natalia Estemirova, Zarema Sadulaeva and Alik Dzhabrailov. It is strange, however, that our partners have preferred to say nothing about the series of killings of law enforcement officers in a number of Russian republics in the Northern Caucasus. The violent death of a human being is always a tragedy for that person's family, friends and colleagues. The pain felt at that loss is even greater in the case of an untimely death for reasons connected with the deceased's professional activities.

The bold acts of violence committed in the region, other planned killings, including that of the President of Ingushetia, along with crimes against the police and ordinary citizens are evidence that certain forces unhappy with the stepping up of efforts to normalize the situation in the region are receiving assistance and support from various sources, including some abroad, as they seek to carry out their terrorist designs. Hunting down these criminals and bringing them to justice, with the full rigour of Russian criminal law, is a task that the memory of the victims demands of the federal and regional authorities. The President of the Russian Federation has issued appropriate instructions, and the investigations are proceeding with all due care.

Considering that the question of involving special rapporteurs of the United Nations Human Rights Council has been raised, we should like to make the point that these rapporteurs may indeed be able to assist the Russian law enforcement agencies in their investigations by providing them, in accordance with our national laws, with concrete information on the crimes in question where such information is available.

Madam Chairperson,

On the other hand, we are disappointed at the choice made by a number of countries that at this first Permanent Council meeting of the new political season have already opted in favour of heating up the rhetoric of confrontation. Regrettably, we must once again note that

the podium of the Permanent Council – a forum for dialogue among the participating States on a basis of equal rights – is being used as a platform for politically motivated and frequently unfounded criticism of one country or group of participating States. On the eve of a series of important discussions within the framework of the Corfu meetings, during which we shall be called upon to seek common approaches and points of convergence in our positions, a clearly unconstructive atmosphere is again being created.

How are we to understand this? Is this course of action a deliberate tactic aimed at complicating the discussions on pan-European security? Or are the reproaches directed against Russia a merely automatic response? Am I to assume that there are some people who would enjoy hearing in reply our assessments of the numerous instances of human rights violations in the United States of America and in countries of the European Union that have been revealed to no less an extent by international humanitarian agencies?

It is not we who have sought this argument, all the more since what are involved are human tragedies and the fate of human beings, who are becoming mere bargaining chips in the political games being played by certain countries.

What is to be said other than that this can only be regretted.

Thank you for your attention.