Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States condemns the malicious attack that occurred on February 6 in Grozny, Chechnya, directed against human rights lawyer Marina Dubrovina and investigative journalist Elena Milashina, who also happens to be the winner of the Department of State’s 2013 International Woman of Courage Award. This appalling act aims to silence the few remaining voices willing to speak the truth about the human rights crisis in Chechnya. We call on Russian authorities to conduct a credible, federal-level investigation into this incident and to hold the perpetrators to account. To end the climate of impunity in Chechnya, Russia should honor its international human rights obligations and commitments, implement the recommendations of the 2018 OSCE Moscow Mechanism rapporteur on Chechnya, and ensure that journalists and human rights defenders are able to operate without threat of reprisal throughout all of Russia.

Further, we respectfully request that Russia provide an update to the Permanent Council and the Representative on Freedom of the Media on the progress of investigations into this incident, preferably by our next meeting on February 27.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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