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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1234th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 July 2019

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Mr. Chairperson,

Torture and other forms of inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment constitute, without doubt, one of the most serious types of violation of human rights and dignity.

Provisions laying down that no one shall be subjected to torture or other degrading treatment and punishment are to be found in the key human rights instruments, not to mention the various specialized Conventions on the subject. States are expected to fulfil the existing international commitments scrupulously, rather than merely pretending to do so.

Although it is now the 23rd time that we are celebrating the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the problem in question continues to affect the OSCE area – and this despite the fact that, as long ago as 1990, the participating States stressed in Copenhagen that “no exceptional circumstances whatsoever ... or any other public emergency ... may be invoked as a justification of torture”.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the situation in the United States of America. To this day, the practice of indefinite detention without trial continues there, as do such other practices as the extradition of detainees in circumvention of the established procedures, the forcible and surreptitious transferring of prisoners to secret prisons on the territory of other countries, extended unlawful confinement, and interrogations that make use of torture and other kinds of inhuman or degrading treatment – all this with the direct involvement of other States, including some OSCE participating States.

Application of the principle of extraterritoriality, which the US Government is so fond of invoking, is simply unacceptable. The purpose of such a line of conduct is quite clear, namely to avoid having to comply with international commitments or with national legislation that prohibits the use of torture.

A cause of great concern are instances of the use of “enhanced interrogation” techniques by the US intelligence services, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which have also force-fed prisoners and refused to provide them with adequate medical assistance. These practices amount to torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment.

The situation in Ukraine continues to be especially alarming. International experts, along with representatives of non-governmental organizations, are concerned about the ongoing instances of arbitrary arrest, solitary confinement, torture and ill-treatment of civilians.

The authorities of that State are not taking effective steps to investigate the systematic violations of human rights perpetrated by the Ukrainian security services and also by nationalist battalions, which are notorious for their neo-Nazi discourse. The crimes they have committed include arbitrary arrests, the use of torture, ill-treatment and intimidation of people (also carried out at unofficial places of detention) with a view to obtaining information, or forcing them to make confessions or to agree to collaborate. What is more, the culprits – including, for example, those responsible for the violent events of 2 May 2014 in Odessa's Trade Union House, where people were burned alive in plain sight of representatives of the law enforcement agencies – to this day continue to enjoy complete impunity.

As we have already pointed out, the Ukrainian security services have evidently drawn inspiration from the “best practices” of the United States and several European Union countries, taking their cue, in particular, from Guantánamo and the CIA's secret prisons in Europe. The operation of such establishments and the use of these inhuman practices have been severely criticized in relevant documents of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and in numerous decisions issued by the European Court of Human Rights. We count on the new authorities in Ukraine to undertake a most thorough and objective inquiry into cases of torture and inhuman treatment and, at long last, to return to the universal norms of human conduct.

The various aforementioned facts merely confirm the imperativeness of taking effective action, in the OSCE area, to combat torture and inhuman treatment.

Thank you for your attention.