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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1351st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 January 2022

On the case of Yury Dmitriev and the closure of Memorial

Mr. Chairperson,

In connection with the statements by our Western colleagues concerning the sentencing of the so-called historian Yury Dmitriev, the closure of the non-governmental organization International Memorial and the Memorial Human Rights Centre and other topics, we should like to exercise the right of reply.

We have commented on the “foreign agents” legislation and Alexei Navalny on several occasions and will not repeat ourselves.

Regarding the case of Yury Dmitriev, on 27 December, the Petrozavodsk City Court found Mr. Dmitriev guilty under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation of producing child pornography, committing indecent acts with a minor (his adopted daughter), and illegal possession of weapons parts, and sentenced him to 15 years’ imprisonment. The court established the facts of the crimes, notably on the basis of the child’s own testimony. The court verdict has nothing to do with Mr. Dmitriev’s work in the Karelia branch of Memorial. These acts, including crimes against the person, are criminally punishable in Russia, as we hope they are in the majority of States that see political motives behind the case against this citizen.

As regards Memorial, the reason for the respective decisions of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and the Moscow City Court issued on 28 and 29 December last year is the repeated gross, if not demonstrative, violations by this organization of the Russian legislation on foreign agents and other regulations, rather than its “historic human rights” activities. There is no political subtext here – *dura lex, sed lex* (the law is harsh, but it is the law).

I emphasize that the organization still has all legal remedies at its disposal, including the right of appeal (which, as far as we know, it intends to exercise). Thus, the legal process is not over yet.

Against this background, we consider public criticism of the verdicts against Memorial, especially in this tone, to be disrespectful of Russia’s national legal and judicial system and an attempt to exert pressure on the system from outside. I must stress that the courts in Russia are independent.

We should like to recall in this connection the provisions of Chapter VI of the Helsinki Final Act: “The participating States will refrain from any intervention, direct or indirect, individual or collective, in the internal or external affairs falling within the domestic jurisdiction of another participating State.”

For those who are particularly concerned about the situation of civil societies in the OSCE participating States, we would advise you to study carefully the report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the human rights situation in certain countries for the year 2020. We have repeatedly drawn attention to this report, but it seems that there are still those among you who have not read it. I advise you to do so without delay. In this document you will find a wealth of very interesting facts, which no one has yet bothered to refute or even comment on.

Thank you for your attention.