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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1110th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 July 2016

**In response to the address by the Special Representative of the
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on Preventing Sexual Violence in
Conflict, Baroness Anelay**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to join in welcoming Baroness Anelay and thank her for her report.

Sexual violence is an odious crime without any justification. It is often used in conflicts as a weapon to exert pressure and intimidate the civilian population. The fact of being able to act with impunity remains the basic factor fostering the growth of this type of crime.

Women and children in armed conflicts are typically refugees and displaced persons. Moreover, they are confronted by the threat of sexual violence not only in transit but also in shelters. Information about the establishment of illegal infrastructures to exploit refugees, also as part of illicit trafficking networks, and sexual exploitation for commercial purposes and sexual enslavement, is particularly worrying in that regard.

However, the claim that women and girls suffer most from sexual violence and victimization is not completely true. Men and boys are no less at risk of being among the victims, as, for example, the events at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq demonstrated.

The different aspects of combating violence, including those connected with the problem of trafficking in human beings, are the focus of attention of a whole series of organizations, including the OSCE and its Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Our Organization has made a significant contribution: at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel, a decision was adopted on preventing and combating violence against women. It would appear logical that the elimination of this type of crime should go hand in hand with increased efforts to find effective ways of settling conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

Last year marked the 15th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, which placed the issue of women, peace and security firmly on the agenda. The recent report by the UN Secretary-General on the results of the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 bears witness to the progress achieved in advancing the role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in post-conflict rehabilitation. At the same time, we believe that the work in this area should not overshadow the whole range of commitments to safeguard gender equality and extend women's rights and opportunities.

We still harbour reservations about the utility of promoting UN Security Council resolution 1325 in the OSCE in an unduly expanded interpretation. We believe that the leading role in this process should remain with the United Nations and that it is important for us to avoid unjustified duplication.

As for national plans for implementing resolution 1325, they cannot be used as criteria for assessing States' policies for improving the situation of women. I would recall that such plans are of a strictly voluntary nature and are relevant, in the first instance, to countries in the throes of armed conflict. Moreover, they should also be concerned with measures to protect women and children, who are the most vulnerable members of the civilian population, from violence.

Thank you for your attention.