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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1062<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 July 2015

**On the 20th anniversary of the massacre at Srebrenica**

Mr. Chairperson,

The sorrowful date, 11 July, is associated with the tragic events at Srebrenica during the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. We wish to join in the words of sincere sympathy to the families and friends of all the innocent victims of the massacre, which was one of the most serious crimes committed during the war in Bosnia. We understand the great depth and pain of their loss.

The 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica tragedy is an opportunity to reflect once again on further steps leading to the reconciliation of the Balkan peoples who were divided by the bloodshed, on what has been done and on how much remains to be done to strengthen the relations between the Balkan States.

In this context, we consider the participation in the commemoration ceremony of a high-level Serbian Government delegation headed by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić to be extremely significant. It testifies to Belgrade's genuine interest in overcoming the legacy of the past as soon as possible. We strongly condemn the attack on the Serbian delegation during the commemoration ceremony at Srebrenica on 11 July this year.

We commend the efforts of the Serbian authorities to assist in the investigation of the Srebrenica tragedy, including the arrest by the Serbian authorities of persons suspected of involvement in this crime in March this year. Equally constructive co-operation by all the parties involved would undoubtedly facilitate an objective and thorough investigation of all the facts associated with this mass murder.

We firmly believe that the perpetrators of the murders in Srebrenica and other atrocities in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be brought before the courts and receive the punishment they deserve. Justice should prevail, and all criminals, regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation, should receive their due punishment.

With regard to the voting on the United Kingdom's draft United Nations Security Council resolution on 8 July, which was timed to coincide with the tragic events in Srebrenica 20 years ago, we regret that the draft was put to the vote despite the concerns of the Balkan region that were addressed to the United Nations Security Council regarding the consequences of adopting a document that could potentially provoke conflict.

In voting against the draft, we also took into account the absence of consensus in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. Neither the parliament nor the members of its Presidium were able to reach agreement on the draft resolution. This further reinforced our certainty that its adoption would merely open old wounds, condemning the Balkan communities to preserving inter-ethnic tensions and delaying the prospects for establishing sustainable peace.

During the Balkan crisis, the region witnessed a multitude of different terrible crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, that took the lives of people of different nationalities and denominations. We consistently advocate the investigation of all illegal acts perpetrated against all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs so that all perpetrators are duly punished.

To single out just one of the numerous war crimes of that period while consigning the others to oblivion is clearly inappropriate and would merely deepen the divide in Bosnian society.

The extremely important task today is to achieve full agreement and a sustainable stabilization of the situation in the region. It is important to be guided by a logical approach that is focused on the future and directs all the interested parties towards advancing national reconciliation and rapidly overcoming the bitter legacy of the Bosnian tragedy.

As a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement and an active partner of Bosnia and Herzegovina in advancing the Bosnian settlement, Russia will continue to actively do everything possible to facilitate the full implementation of this agreement, whose 20th anniversary will be marked at the end of this year. It is extremely important for all sides to comply strictly with their commitments under the Dayton Peace Agreement. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have particular responsibility here. We are willing to continue to make every effort towards enhancing inter-ethnic and interdenominational accord and an atmosphere of trust and co-operation in this country and in the Balkans as whole.

We are certain that peace, harmony and prosperity in the Balkans will be the best memorial to all the innocent victims of the bloody wars in the region.

Thank you for your attention.