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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1274th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 July 2020

On the 25th anniversary of the tragic events in Srebrenica

Mr. Chairperson,

On 11 July, the tragic events in Srebrenica in 1995 will again be commemorated in a sad anniversary. The Russian Federation expresses its sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims of this crime, which was one of the dark pages of the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995.

During the Balkan crisis, the region witnessed many horrific atrocities, which claimed the lives of people of different nationalities and faiths. Nor should we forget about the hundreds of peaceable victims of the so-called NATO “humanitarian interventions” and those who in peacetime continue to suffer and die of diseases caused by the use of depleted uranium shells by the Alliance’s aircraft. We have consistently called for an investigation of all crimes, without exception, committed during the Balkan wars against Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, Albanians and other ethnic groups. The perpetrators should receive the punishment they deserve, commensurate with the degree of personal responsibility. Attempts to place the collective blame for the bloodshed on one particular people are unacceptable.

The dramatic episodes in the history of the Balkans serve as an important reminder of the urgent need to consistently strengthen peace and stability in the region. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s constituent peoples – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats – face the challenge of overcoming the difficult legacy of the Bosnian war, the continuing lack of trust, and differences in ways of achieving key reforms and, ultimately, lasting reconciliation.

This year will mark the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, a milestone for the country. It not only ended the war but also formed a solid foundation for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s development on the basis of equality and mutual respect between its constituent peoples and the establishment of broad powers for the two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that it is essential for all parties to comply strictly with their obligations under the Dayton Agreement. A special responsibility in this regard lies with authorities at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the external protectorate, including the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has served its purpose, should be wound up.

As a guarantor of the 1995 Peace Agreement and an active partner of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia will continue to promote the full implementation of the Dayton Agreement and to encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen dialogue, inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony and a climate of trust and co-operation. We are convinced that all foreign partners interested in the long-term stabilization of Bosnia and Herzegovina should contribute to building bridges between the Bosnian parties and to expanding a constructive agenda, and should refrain from one-sided assessments that could exacerbate divisions in Bosnian society.

Peace, harmony and prosperity in the Balkans will be the best way of remembering all the victims of the bloody wars in the region.

Thank you for your attention.