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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1095th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2016

**Regarding the crimes of the Latvian SS divisions**

Mr. Chairperson,

The only people to remain in the dark about the atrocities of the Latvian SS members are those who do not wish to know about them. Historical documents record the multifarious criminal activities of police battalions and Latvian divisions of the Nazi SD security service, which became the Latvian legion of the SS in 1943.

There is reliable information that as far back as summer 1941, the extermination of Jews had already started happening in small villages, without much need for encouragement from the Nazis, as exemplified by the tragedy of the Jewish community in the town of Bauska.

And then there is the shooting of the wives and children of command staff and medical workers of the Red Army while Liepāja was under Nazi occupation. The tens of thousands of Jews beaten or burned to death or shot in and around Riga. Salaspils concentration camp, which Latvian historians close to the authorities call “a corrective labour camp”, in the tradition of the Third Reich.

There is the involvement in the extermination of Soviet prisoners of war. Reprisals against civilians during punitive actions on the territory of modern-day Russia and Belarus. And there is much more besides, including the fact that during the occupation of Latvia by the Nazis and their Latvian henchmen in the Waffen SS, 72,000 Jews living in the Republic of Latvia were exterminated – some 80 per cent of the pre-war Jewish community. Historians say that entire families of Jews were massacred.

Have the legionnaires and their modern-day acolytes distanced themselves from these crimes, condemned them? No, they have not condemned them. What is more, as recently as 1998, the Saeima (Latvian parliament) adopted a statement “on Latvian legionnaires in the Second World War”, which deliberately distorts the historical truth about this SS formation.

Therefore, claims that Latvia is in no way trying to whitewash Nazism and rewrite the history of the Second World War for its own political ends do not hold water.