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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1279th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 September 2020

In connection with International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

Mr. Chairperson,

The problem of enforced disappearances has not lost any of its relevance either in the OSCE area or beyond.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the authorities in the United States of America abduct people in other countries without informing the relevant countries of citizenship, and that they hinder the relatives of illegally detained Russian citizens – and also representatives of Russian diplomatic missions – from gaining access to them.

The existence of Guantánamo prison is a glaring example of the double standards applied by the United States in the area of human rights. Scores of people continue to be held in custody there, most of them without charge and without being committed for trial. Meanwhile, those responsible for the acts of torture and the enforced disappearances that occurred during transfers and secret detentions have still not been brought to justice.

In the context of the topic being discussed, we cannot but mention, too, that secret prisons of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) existed within the territory of some Member States of the European Union. In particular, after examining, in 2017, the most recent regular report submitted by Lithuania, the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances welcomed “the ongoing investigations into allegations of the State party’s involvement in the rendition and secret detention programmes” and also urged “the State party to complete the investigation into allegations of its involvement in the rendition and secret detention programmes within a reasonable time, that those responsible be held accountable, and that victims be duly recognized and provided with appropriate redress and reparation”.

A year later, in May 2018, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the cases of *Abu Zubaydah v. Lithuania* and *Al Nashiri v. Romania* that both individuals had been transferred to the territory of the aforesaid States under the secret extraordinary rendition programme, and that they had been subjected there to ill-treatment and arbitrary detention in CIA prisons.

Furthermore, many instances of arbitrary detention that have taken place in Ukraine involving dissidents, journalists and human rights defenders have not been investigated to this day. This is confirmed by the report of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances issued last year on its official visit to Ukraine. The Working Group's experts noted that "there is almost total impunity for acts of enforced disappearance". Indeed, "[a]s at the time of writing, in none of the investigations had the suspects been found and/or formally charged".

A further cause for concern is the existence of secret prisons in Ukraine, in which people have been subjected to torture. In 2019, the Head of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), Ms. Fiona Frazer, confirmed that in those parts of Donbas controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces the practice of arbitrary and incommunicado detention had been "customary" in the years 2014, 2015 and 2016. Cases had also been recorded in both 2017 and 2018. The HRMMU managed to establish the names of 184 persons who had been unlawfully detained in a "secret prison" of the Ukrainian Security Service in Kharkiv. As reported by the Ukrainian media themselves, such facilities had been hastily set up in a number of cities in the Donbas region as well – in some cases by members of nationalist battalions fighting alongside the Ukrainian armed forces. The founders of these "detention points" evidently drew their inspiration from such earlier "models" as Guantánamo and the CIA's "secret prisons" in the European Union, where people were detained beyond the pale of international humanitarian law. Many manifestations of unwarranted cruelty have still not been given due legal evaluation. No one has been held accountable.

Thank you for your attention.