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

8 July 2010

Regarding the terrorist act in northern Mitrovica

Mr. Chairperson,

Once again we resolutely condemn the terrorist act that occurred on 2 July during a peaceful demonstration in northern Mitrovica.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the situation in Kosovo is by no means stable and is a cause for serious concern. Our fears relate primarily to the desire of the authorities in Pristina to implement at any cost the so-called “strategy for northern Kosovo”. We might recall that this so-called “draft”, which was drawn up in a decidedly unilateral manner and has not been approved by the international community and all the communities in Kosovo (as some try to suggest), flagrantly contravenes United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, which remains the central platform for a Kosovo settlement under international law.

Like our Serbian colleagues we have warned that any unilateral steps in this regard may cause the already difficult inter-ethnic situation in the territory to explode, especially given the growing dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation and with the high level of crime and corruption. Unfortunately, these warnings have not been heeded.

What happened on 2 July was a blatant provocation aimed at undermining stability in the Serb-populated districts of Kosovo. Information has reached us indicating that other destabilizing steps are being planned. We believe that all the necessary measures should be taken to prevent provocations of this kind.

We firmly believe that not only those who carried out this inhuman crime must be brought to justice but also those who through their persistent efforts to push through the “strategy for northern Kosovo” in effect provoked it. We are awaiting the results of the investigation currently being conducted.

Mr. Chairperson,

We could agree with the thesis heard here regarding the non-involvement of the Kosovo Albanians in destabilizing activities in the territory if we erased from our memory the destruction and desecration by Albanian extremists of more than 140 monasteries and churches, including monuments dating back to the Middle Ages, under UNESCO protection. Part of humanity's world heritage has been barbarically destroyed for the same reasons as those for which, on an almost daily basis, the non-Albanian population of the territory, irrespective of gender or age, is shot at, pelted with stones and intimidated. With the international community looking on in silence and doing nothing, people are, in reality, being forced to leave the land that their fathers and grandfathers have inhabited for centuries.

The incident in northern Mitrovica has clearly demonstrated that, contrary to the mandate approved by the Security Council within the framework of the reconfiguration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) is with increasing frequency deviating from the principle of status-neutrality. This is detrimental to the authority of that international presence. The European mission has an obligation to carefully observe the principles of resolution 1244, to act in a balanced manner and to take into account the interests of both sides subject to the general co-ordinating functions of the United Nations in Kosovo. We urge our European partners to adhere more strictly to this principle and also to correct the policy of their special representative, Mr. Pieter Feith. There has long been a need for explanatory work in Pristina through EULEX, UNMIK and the OSCE mission and in the capitals of the countries that have an influence on the Kosovo Albanians. We need at last to reject the defective logic that makes "evidence" of the so-called sovereignty of Kosovo more important than the restoration of stability in the territory.

The difficult and at times explosive situation in the territory confirms the need to preserve the United Nations Security Council's leading role in a Kosovo settlement. It is inadmissible to deviate from this principle, since otherwise the fragile situation in the territory will simply slide into large-scale destabilization.

The incident in northern Mitrovica also confirms the need to continue political efforts with a view to promoting the elaboration of a legally correct and just solution of the Kosovo problem in accordance with resolution 1244. Russia is ready to facilitate this in full measure.

Thank you for your attention.