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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1302nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

11 February 2021

**On the joint Russo-Turkish centre tasked with monitoring the ceasefire in the
Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished representative of Azerbaijan for the very detailed and clear presentation.

The inauguration, in the Ağdam district of Azerbaijan, of a joint Russo-Turkish centre tasked with monitoring the ceasefire and the cessation of all hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone is an important development in our view. It serves as an example of how constructive practical co-operation in the region can and should be established even in the most complicated and problematic situations.

The centre performs round-the-clock monitoring of the implementation of the ceasefire regime using the most advanced technologies. Where necessary, it takes measures to prevent violations, and it is also the body responsible for examining any complaints, questions or problems relating to potential instances of the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict failing to abide by the peace agreements that have been achieved. In terms of personnel, the centre comprises two contingents of equal size from the Russian and Turkish armed forces, each contingent being led by a commanding officer from its own country. The Russian and Turkish soldiers will jointly perform tasks pertaining to co-ordination of the conflict parties' activities and will inform the military authorities of Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia, along with the headquarters of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, of any recorded violations, should any occur.

We regard the centre's activities as part of the major endeavour aimed at stabilizing the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and turning the entire Trans-Caucasus region into a zone of peace and economic development.

Russia and specifically President Putin himself played a key role in overcoming the acute phase of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from September to November of last year. On 9 November 2020, the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia adopted a statement on a ceasefire and the cessation of all hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

A Russian peacekeeping contingent has been deployed along the line of contact between the parties and along the Laçın corridor. Through its mediation, the bodies of more than 1,450 persons killed have been handed over to the parties, while over 52,000 people have been able to return to their homes.

We are facilitating the repatriation of prisoners of war and other detainees. We welcome the latest reciprocal exchange of prisoners of war, which took place on 9 February of this year through the Russian peacekeepers' mediation. The optimal solution to this issue is to conduct exchanges under the principle of "all for all".

An international humanitarian response centre has also been established. Its tasks include the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure and the restoration of the electricity and heating supply. Both Azerbaijani and Armenian specialist entities are actively involved in this work. Over 1.5 million tonnes of humanitarian aid and 800 tonnes of construction materials have been delivered to the affected areas. Medical assistance is being provided to the population. More than 23,000 explosive hazards have been neutralized.

On the whole, the situation regarding Nagorno-Karabakh has stabilized considerably. Conditions have been created that pave the way for a peaceful life.

At a summit held in Moscow on 11 January of this year, the Azerbaijani Head of State, Ilham Aliyev, and the Armenian Head of Government, Nikol Pashinyan, confirmed their mutual resolve to normalize relations between the two countries. In that respect, the main practical task at present is the unblocking of all economic and transport links in the region. This is something being dealt with by, among others, a high-level working group jointly chaired by the Deputy Prime Ministers of Russia (Alexei Overchuk), Azerbaijan (Shahin Mustafayev) and Armenia (Mher Grigoryan). The group's first meeting took place in Moscow on 30 January.

It is our understanding that the efforts to promote the political settlement process should be continued within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Thank you for your attention.