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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1421st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 May 2023

**In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to Ambassador Michael Davenport for his detailed report on the situation in the Serbian Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and the activities of the field presence there. The Mission has a broad mandate to work in the field of human rights, democratization, public safety and the rule of law. We are obliged to note that the situation in these areas is still rather difficult in Kosovo.

In view of the statistics presented in the report, which indicate that the Serbian population of Kosovo remains the most vulnerable group, the Mission must continue to focus its attention on ensuring the rights of the non-Albanian population of the province. We have brought up this problem first for good reason. Since Albin Kurti's so-called government came to power in February 2020, more than 300 acts of violence against Serbs have been recorded in the province. Of these, 128 were recorded in 2022 and 37 since the beginning of this year. The perpetrators are usually not brought to justice. For example, on 6 January – Orthodox Christmas Eve – two Serbs, one of them a child, were injured in a shooting near Gotovuša. This is mentioned in the report. However, it is not specified that the charge against the perpetrator was reclassified from “attempted murder” to “careless handling of a weapon”. In January and April there were instances of Serbs being fired upon by Kosovo security forces.

Furthermore, Kosovo special police forces have made frequent incursions into the north of the province, physical attacks on Serbs and their property have increased, Orthodox holy sites and tombs have been desecrated, and Serbs who were formerly employed in Kosovo's law enforcement agencies have been prosecuted under spurious pretexts. As a matter of fact, the Kosovo “authorities” are pursuing a systematic policy of physically displacing the Serbian population from the province. Since 1999, Serbs have completely abandoned 312 settlements in Kosovo and Metohija. In 1981 there were over 50,000 Serbs in Priština, today there are a few dozen. Of the 372,000 non-Albanians living in the province before June 1999, 209,000 have been forced to leave.

All this is taking place with the complicity or direct support of the Kosovo Albanians' Western patrons. Instead of pressing the authorities in Priština to strictly honour their commitments, including those related to the urgent establishment of a Community of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo, the West continues to

demonstrably encourage them. For example, in the midst of the December 2022 tensions, the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union accepted Kosovo's application for European Union candidate status. On 18 April, the European Parliament voted in favour of visa liberalization for the "citizens" of Kosovo, which should enter into force no later than January 2024.

As for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, to which a considerable part of the report is devoted, it turns out that, recently, it has been used as a tool for de-escalating the series of crises caused by the unilateral steps taken by the Kurti team, rather than as a meaningful negotiation mechanism. In fact, it appears that the authorities in Pristina are interested neither in normalizing relations nor in fulfilling their commitments. It is through the prism of Kurti's true policy objectives and his willingness to fulfil these commitments that one should view the verbal agreements made between Serbia and Kosovo in Ohrid on 18 March. Moreover, we should like to recall that Serbia agreed to continue the dialogue on the basis of the following terms and under clearly defined conditions: non-recognition of Kosovo's independence and non-acceptance of Kosovo's membership in the United Nations.

The Russian Federation's position on the Kosovo issue remains unaltered. We advocate that the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina reach a sustainable, mutually acceptable international legal solution on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The outcome must be in the interests of Serbia and the Serbian people and be endorsed by the United Nations Security Council.

Now for the so-called municipal elections of 23 April. This grotesque event was unanimously boycotted by the Serbs living in the province. A total of 1,500 Albanians and only 13 Serbs turned up at 19 polling stations, 13 of which were mobile containers under tight security. The turnout was 3.5 per cent from the total electorate and 0.029 per cent from the Serbian electorate. This imitation of the rule of law, however, suits the United States of America and the European Union just fine. The report cites statements by officials and institutions from some Western participating States providing assessments of these so-called municipal elections. It would seem that, for the sake of objectivity, other participating States' views on the situation could have been presented as well. For example, a statement on this subject was published for the media on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 24 April.

In a similar context, we have another question for the Head of Mission. The "Other notable developments" section provides information that is not directly related to the field presence's work. Why, for example, has data from reports by the US Department of State, the European Commission, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and even the NATO Parliamentary Assembly been published? The information from these structures is hardly a paragon of reliability and political impartiality for all 57 OSCE participating States, especially as it relates to the Balkans.

We are, however, discussing the work of the Mission, which is certainly not limited to promoting the views (which, as we know, are always politically biased) of the aforementioned organizations – one of which also represents an aggressive US-led military bloc with a long and tragic history of illegal military interventions. We would ask that this be taken into account when preparing future reports.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the distinguished Ambassador Davenport and the Mission team every success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.