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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1035th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 January 2015

**In response to the statement by Sir Andrew Burns,  
Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and  
Ambassador Roksanda Ninčić, State Secretary of the  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia**

Mr. Chairperson,  
State Secretary Roksanda Ninčić,  
Sir Andrew Burns,

We welcome you to the Permanent Council and thank you for your interesting statements on this very important subject.

Like the rest of the international community, on 27 January we shall mark dates linked with tragic chapters in the history of the Second World War. The criminal Nazi ideology, which led to the extermination of entire peoples and social groups, has left terrible stains on the history of the twentieth century. It is 70 years since the Red Army liberated the surviving inmates of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp close to the Polish town of Oświęcim. Today, the word Auschwitz, which stands for the death of almost 1.5 million people, including around 1 million Jews, is inextricably associated with the tragedy of the Holocaust.

Many OSCE participating States render tribute to veterans of the Second World War and provide support for victims of the Holocaust and other victims of Nazism. Work to preserve the historical truth about the Holocaust deserves the greatest respect and support. International and regional organizations, including the OSCE, have undertaken commitments in this regard. OSCE participating States fulfil them both at the national level and through various international structures, including the organization represented by the distinguished speaker Sir Andrew Burns, the European Shoah Legacy Institute and projects by international Jewish associations.

For Russia, commemorative dates connected with the Great Patriotic War have particular significance. The multi-ethnic population of the Soviet Union suffered dreadful losses during the Second World War. Of the 70 million Soviet citizens under the control of

the Nazis, around 7.5 million were shot and incinerated, 2.1 million died as forced labourers in Germany, and more than 4 million perished in Nazi-occupied territories. On 27 January we also recall another terrible tragedy, the siege of Leningrad, in which around 1 million people lost their lives.

In paying tribute to the memory of victims of the Holocaust, we should also remember that tens of millions of people of the widest variety of nationalities, including almost 10 million Slavs, were martyred in Nazi concentration camps.

A series of events as part of the week of remembrance from 15 to 30 January is being organized in Moscow to coincide with International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet soldiers. I recall that in the multi-ethnic Red Army, which put an end to the terrible crimes of the Nazis, there were over 500,000 Jews, of whom 200,000 died. Around 161,000 Soviet Jewish soldiers were awarded military orders and medals, and over 130 were given the title Hero of the Soviet Union.

The week of remembrance is part of the federal programme to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the victory. The programme features exhibitions, theatrical productions, book presentations, educational seminars, academic conferences and religious ceremonies. It has been organized by the Moscow city government and the largest Russian Jewish non-governmental organization, the Russian Jewish Congress, with the participation of the Holocaust Centre, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Defence and other government bodies.

This is not an isolated action, however. Events with the participation of members of civil society take place regularly. Veterans, concentration camp and ghetto inmates, survivors of the siege of Leningrad and home-front workers enjoy the highest level of social security in our country.

Moscow has the huge Museum of Jewish Heritage and Holocaust. A seminar was recently held there for teachers in preparation for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Lessons about the Holocaust are traditionally given in schools on 27 January. The Russian State University for the Humanities has a Centre for the Study and Teaching of the Holocaust and Genocides.

Synagogues are being restored, monuments erected and veterans and concentration camp inmates honoured.

This painstaking daily work is of the greatest importance for the education of the younger generation and for preserving the historical truth about the tragedy of the Second World War and the achievements of those who saved the peoples of Europe from enslavement or total extermination.

In that connection, we should like to draw attention to the veto by Latvia, which holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, of the exhibition at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Paris headquarters "Stolen childhood: Holocaust victims seen by child inmates of the Salaspils Nazi concentration camp". The exhibition was organized as part of the international project "Enhancing the status of the survivors of the burnt villages of Belarus" by the Belarus Peace Fund and the

National Archives of Belarus with the support of the German foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future and the Russian Historical Memory Foundation.

According to media information, the decision was made on the pretext that it would cause some kind of “damage” to Latvia’s image during its Presidency of the European Union.

The attempts by the Latvian authorities to present Salaspils concentration camp as some kind of educational labour camp are in the same vein. I would recall that the Nazis also called other concentrations camps, such as Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Mauthausen and the rest, labour camps, which did not diminish their criminal inhumanity.

But there are also positive examples. Commemorative events take place regularly in Poland. Russia maintains contact with the management of Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, and there is a Russian section in the exhibition. We also take part in high-level formal events.

Genocide is never against a single nation; it is a crime against all nations. We must learn the lesson from the tragedy of the Second World War not to allow the distortion of ethical standards. Historical grievances cannot serve as a basis for justifying criminal excesses or attempts to equate victims and perpetrators, liberators and occupiers.

During the Second World War we managed to put aside our differences in order to defeat Nazism and fascism. This sentiment is still extremely relevant today.

Thank you for your attention.