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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1233rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 June 2019

**In connection with the International Day for the Elimination of
Sexual Violence in Conflict**

Mr. Chairperson,

The responsibility for eliminating sexual violence in conflict – at all stages – and in the peace-building process lies with national governments.

We are convinced that such violence can be prevented, first and foremost, by ending armed conflicts and eliminating their root causes. It is obvious that violence flourishes, primarily, where there is no order and where the State apparatus is powerless. Priority should therefore be given to the restoration of national government institutions.

Issues of eliminating sexual violence should be considered as an integral part of the whole range of conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation measures. The international community must also pay due attention to tasks such as combating terrorism and preventing the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force and the killing of civilians, including women and children.

The specific characteristics of investigating and prosecuting crimes of a sexual nature require an efficient and effective law enforcement system that is free from politicization.

Unfortunately, it must be said that questions are raised about the effectiveness of international justice due to, in fact, discredited international courts. An example of this is the special court in The Hague (the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office), which was created to address Kosovo Albanian crimes against Serbs, including those related to illicit trafficking in human organs. Eight years after the publication of the famous report by Dick Marty, the court has failed to present any official charges.

All States have legislation that criminalizes rape and other acts of sexual abuse, but it is equally important to instil in society a culture of rejection of such acts. Another important aspect is the development of measures to prevent the stigmatization of victims, ensuring their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Russia is committed to international co-operation in eliminating sexual violence in conflict. However, attempts to artificially link this issue exclusively to the maintenance of international peace and security are unacceptable. It is necessary to clearly distinguish between sexual violence as a war crime and similar criminal acts that are not related to the actions of the parties to the conflict. A response on the part of the international community is required only in cases where there is irrefutable evidence of the widespread and systematic nature of this crime.

We believe that, in the international arena, the United Nations Security Council plays a decisive role in eliminating sexual violence in conflict. We urge our colleagues to abandon attempts at a broad interpretation of the scope of OSCE activities in this area, and also arbitrary interpretations of relevant documents and concepts.

Thank you for your attention.