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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1285th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 October 2020

On the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

Mr. Chairperson,

We fully support the statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, delivered by the distinguished representative of France on 13 October.

Russia, in close co-ordination with France and the United States of America, is doing its utmost to put an immediate stop to the bloodshed. We cannot stand idly by as the tragedy unfolds in the region. Azerbaijan and Armenia are not just our neighbours. We are linked by an alliance and strategic partnership. Moreover, there are millions of politically and economically active Azerbaijanis and Armenians living in our country who have close ties with their homeland.

Following a series of telephone conversations with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin proposed an initiative to put an end to the hostilities on humanitarian grounds and to hold consultations on all issues relating to a settlement. The trilateral meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, held on 9 and 10 October as a follow-up to this initiative, made it possible for an agreement to be reached on a ceasefire and on the subsequent resumption of the negotiation process through the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group. We have heard expressions of support from the Governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia for the understanding reached.

We urge the parties to strictly adhere to the decisions taken. We repeat that they must cease fire immediately and completely, verify compliance with the “silence regime” and exchange prisoners and the remains of the dead.

Further developments in the spiral of violence must be prevented. There is no and cannot be any justification for the shelling of civilians on either side of the line of contact, or for the targeted destruction of vital infrastructure. This path would lead to a humanitarian catastrophe in the region and a complete impasse in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

We are convinced that a “humanitarian pause” in the hostilities will enable the political process on a settlement of the conflict to be resumed without further delay. It is important that the sides reaffirmed their

commitment to the existing negotiating format mediated by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the relevance of the core settlement principles developed with their involvement, and also their willingness to embark on substantive negotiations with a view to achieving peace as soon as possible.

There is no military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Illusory successes on the battlefield will not bring lasting peace to the region. The geographical expansion of the hostilities and information concerning the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters pose a direct threat to the security of the entire South Caucasus and beyond.

We urge the Governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia to take advantage of the chance for peace created after the talks in Moscow on 10 October.

Thank you for your attention.