

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1061st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 July 2015

Regarding the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Mr. Chairperson,

Combating torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is one of the most pressing tasks in the OSCE area today.

A large set of commitments has been developed in international law and within the OSCE to combat this vicious phenomenon. In Copenhagen in 1990, the participating States recognized that torture could not be justified under any circumstances whatsoever and that “preserving and guaranteeing the life and security of any individual subjected to any form of inhuman or degrading treatment will be the sole criterion in determining the urgency and priorities to be accorded in taking appropriate remedial action”.

Unfortunately, these commitments are being systematically violated in a large number of OSCE countries. To this day, the practice of arbitrary and indefinite detention of prisoners, extradition of detainees in circumvention of established procedures, violent and secret transfer of detainees to secret prisons in third countries, further unlawful detention and interrogation with the use of torture and other kinds of inhuman or degrading treatment has not been eradicated in the United States of America and a number of European Union (EU) countries.

It is particularly alarming that States that claim to be the “benchmark for democracy” continue to avoid meeting international commitments on preventing and combating torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment. The use by the United States of the principle of extraterritoriality to avoid meeting the relevant international commitments and applying national legislation is unacceptable.

Despite the extracts from the Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA torture published in December 2014, the persons who were guilty of using so-called enhanced interrogation techniques, forced feeding and refusal to provide adequate medical assistance to prisoners which lead to torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment have not been duly punished. The hypocrisy of the EU countries, which regularly welcome admissions by the

United States to the use of torture methods, but have never demanded that their strategic partner conduct a thorough investigation and punish the perpetrators, is astonishing.

With enviable regularity we hear promises by United States President Barack Obama to close the infamous Guantánamo Bay prison, but no serious steps have ever been taken in this direction.

No crimes whatsoever that have led to torture in the OSCE area should be forgotten, and the criminals and those guilty of conniving in this inhuman practice should be punished. In that context, we expect the EU States to conduct a thorough and serious investigation of the secret CIA prisons, which, incidentally, Mr. Nils Muižnieks, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, mentioned in his most recent report.

A great deal remains to be done in the OSCE area to increase the effectiveness of combating torture and inhuman treatment. The adoption of a decision to this effect at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade could be an important step in this direction. Last year, we managed to make significant progress in harmonizing our positions with regard to this document. We hope that this year we will after all be able to agree to strengthen the OSCE commitments on preventing and combating torture and that the country that is infamous for its serious violations in this area will not dilute and block this initiative.

Thank you for your attention.