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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1444th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 September 2023

On the situation in Kosovo and Metohija

Mr. Chairperson,

We are concerned by the tensions that have re-emerged in the north of the Serbian Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija in connection with an armed incident on 24 September involving Serbs and Kosovo Albanian security forces that resulted in casualties. At the Permanent Council we have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the course taken by the Kosovan “Prime Minister” Albin Kurti aimed at squeezing out the province’s native Serb population is extremely dangerous and could well destabilize the situation in the region, which is already challenging as it is. The bloodshed that occurred is a direct consequence of that course.

The Kosovo Albanian “police”, who have completely discredited themselves, are methodically carrying out their assigned task of purging the Serb population from the territory of the province. The situation is being exacerbated by the ban on the import of goods from Central Serbia, as a result of which the northern municipalities are on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe. However, the way out of the crisis envisaged by Western countries consists, for some reason, in stepping up the pressure solely on the Serbian Government.

The current escalation of violence was made possible by the pandering to the authorities in Pristina in which a number of Western governments have been engaging. It appears that admonitions are being made exclusively for the sake of ticking the boxes and saving face. Alas, that is not enough.

We once again call upon those countries that have influence over the Kosovo authorities to take active measures to prevent further deterioration of the situation. The high road to de-escalation is for the authorities in Pristina to fulfil as soon as possible the obligations they undertook ten (!) years ago with regard to forming a Community of Serb Municipalities, which should be given broad executive authority so that it can become an effective instrument for protecting the interests of the Serb population. Furthermore, a sustainable settlement of the Kosovo problem is consistent with comprehensive implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

Thank you for your attention.