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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1187th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 May 2018

**Regarding the statement by Georgia on Syria's recognition of  
Abkhazia and South Ossetia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are surprised that this issue is being raised. Syria is not within the OSCE's area of responsibility and it is not even a Partner for Co-operation. Representatives of that State are not present here and cannot speak for themselves. As we would say in Russia, they are being berated behind their back. In our opinion, this is not correct, to say the least.

And now to the heart of the matter. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are independent States. The question of their recognition is strictly a matter for the countries concerned themselves. We will regard anything else as an attempt to put pressure on the sovereign authorities of independent countries. We advise our Georgian friends not to attempt to stop the course of events that was irrevocably put in motion following the military escapade by Mikheil Saakashvili on 8 August 2008 – with the attendant loss of life – but to co-operate with the new independent Caucasian countries in the framework of the Geneva International Discussions. This is the only way of ensuring stability and security in this region.

Thank you for your attention.