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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1387th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 September 2022

**In connection with the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 30 August, we observed the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, which was established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/209 of 21 December 2010. Unfortunately, this problem continues to be relevant in the OSCE area and beyond.

In Ukraine the practice of persecution and enforced disappearances is employed by the Ukrainian intelligence services to combat dissent. We have spoken about this in detail under another current issue and do not intend to repeat ourselves. At the same time, we should like to recall how in the period following the “Revolution of Dignity” – which in fact was an armed coup d’état – secret prisons were set up in Ukraine, where people were subjected to torture and other forms of inhumane treatment.

In 2019, the Head of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMNU), Fiona Frazer, confirmed that the practice of arbitrary and incommunicado detention had become customary from 2014 onwards in the areas of Donbas then controlled by the Kyiv regime. The HRMMU was able to establish the names of 184 persons who were unlawfully detained in a secret prison of the Ukrainian Security Service in Kharkiv. As reported by the Ukrainian media, such facilities were hastily set up in a number of towns and cities in the Donbas region as well – some of them by members of nationalist battalions fighting alongside the Ukrainian armed forces.

It is evident that the Kyiv regime was drawing inspiration from its handlers in the United States of America, where a dramatic situation also continues to be observed. In January 2022, the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University published a report entitled “Legacy of the ‘Dark Side’: The Costs of Unlawful U.S. Detentions and Interrogations Post-9/11”. After 11 September 2001, according to this document, the CIA abducted, with the support of at least 54 countries, more than 100 people in Pakistan, Afghanistan and several other States. They were subsequently branded as “terrorists” without evidence being provided – that is, in the very best traditions of US justice – and transferred to “secret prisons”. A network of such facilities, in which torture and inhumane treatment were commonplace, operated with the direct complicity of foreign States such as Lithuania, Romania, Poland and others. In this

regard, the experts note that the countries actively carrying out enforced disappearances are very close allies of the United States.

But the most abominable facility of this type remains Guantánamo prison, where dozens of people are still being held without charge or trial. At the start of the year, a number of special rapporteurs appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council stated that Guantánamo prison was “a profound symbol of the systematic lack of accountability for and censorship of the practice of State-sponsored torture and ill-treatment and the unacceptable impunity granted to those responsible”.

Similarly, the US Government must know first-hand that migrants and their children are particularly vulnerable to enforced disappearances and their consequences. In 2021, the International Organization for Migration identified the United States-Mexico border crossing as “the deadliest land crossing in the world”. At least 728 deaths were recorded as occurring in 2021 alone in that “Bermuda Triangle”, where adults and children perish and disappear. Moreover, experts assume that the true figures are much higher. In June of this year, an awful tragedy was reported: the bodies of 46 migrants were discovered in a trailer truck that had been abandoned on the outskirts of the city of San Antonio, Texas. Around twenty people were hospitalized. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated case. A similar incident occurred in 2017, when some ten people lost their lives. One can only speculate as to the criminal aims that were being pursued by the organizers of those lethal journeys, just as one can only guess at the fate that had otherwise been awaiting the migrants who were inside those trucks.

Only in the European Union is the situation even more tragic. According to a tally by the International Organization for Migration, more than 2,000 migrants perished and disappeared in 2021 while attempting to reach EU countries, especially via the Mediterranean Sea. Significantly, the Member States of the European Union are fully aware of the vessels carrying migrants that set off from the African coast and also of most of the shipwrecks and accidents. However, the basic policy, judging by the testimonies of survivors, consists in the authorities refusing to maintain relevant statistics and to render assistance to the victims. In mid-2021, the European Parliament noted in a report that staff of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) “generally disregarded” the numerous violations of the rights of migrants in EU Member States. Very revealing in this regard are the instances in which Frontex staff have watched “live”, as it were, the sinking of boats carrying migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and have not taken specific steps to rescue them.

We are of the view that the aforementioned problems call for a principled assessment by the executive structures of our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.