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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1484th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 July 2024

**On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons**

Madam Chairperson,

The World Day against Trafficking in Persons was established in 2013 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/192 on improving the co-ordination of efforts against trafficking in persons. Uniting the efforts of the international community in the fight against this repugnant phenomenon was declared to be its fundamental goal. The underlying causes of trafficking remain unaltered, these being poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, marginalization, an enduring demand for “human commodities”, inadequate support for families, mothers and children, and much more besides. Women, minors, refugees and migrants are in a particularly vulnerable position.

Madam Chairperson,

The number of problems related to trafficking in human beings in the OSCE area is growing. Under the Kyiv regime in Ukraine, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of removing human organs, cells and tissues continues to flourish. We have brought up this topic on several occasions and spoken of the evidence gathered in the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics pointing to how the Ukrainian neo-Nazis have been removing anatomical materials from Donetsk and Lugansk captives and even from soldiers of the Ukrainian armed forces.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated cases. Last month, open-source information emerged on how the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities had unmasked a criminal group that was engaged in removing and exporting human organs from areas controlled by the Kyiv regime. The criminals caught include a former Deputy Health Minister of Ukraine, doctors from Kyiv’s central hospital and staff from private clinics.

As reported in the media, biological materials were removed from people who were still alive but were in a helpless state. The exact number of victims is not known. However, this is but the tip of the iceberg. The number of actual victims runs into the thousands and, as suggested by various data, they include not only adult men. It is evident that systematic efforts to combat this are not in the interests of the corrupt Zelenskyy regime. For their part, the relatives of those killed are unable to remain silent any longer.

In the public domain there recently appeared heartbreaking footage where the loved ones of fallen soldiers from the Ukrainian armed forces make some shocking admissions. We shall not comment on that footage. You can draw your own conclusions.

The Kyiv regime's Western handlers, who are so zealous in their concern for children's rights, would be well advised to familiarize themselves with the final report of the Russian parliamentary commission established to investigate crimes committed against minors. In particular, it is pointed out there that in Ukraine the selling of children abroad has shifted to an industrial scale. Once outside the country, they often fall into the hands of paedophiles and become victims of exploitation. That document is publicly available – we urge you to study it carefully.

Madam Chairperson,

The situation in “civilized democracies” with regard to trafficking continues to be deeply troubling. Of particular concern is the information about trafficking in, and exploitation of, minors.

The conclusions of a study published in July of this year by ECPAT UK (“Every Child Protected Against Trafficking”), a specialized British non-governmental organization, make for depressing reading. The experts responsible for the study argue that unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the United Kingdom are at increased risk of trafficking. Between 2021 and 2024, several hundred children went missing from temporary accommodation centres (the Home Office's “child hotels”); many of them have yet to be found. Most of the victims are Albanian boys, who, as the authors write, are extremely frightened and vulnerable because of a “targeted campaign against Albanian asylum seekers”. In that regard, the human rights activists call upon the UK authorities to take immediate and determined action to protect the rights of victims who are minors.

Civil society organizations in the Netherlands are sounding the alarm regarding the lack of an effective strategy in that country for combating trafficking in human beings. They point out that the country's authorities are ignoring the problem of labour exploitation, which accounts for up to 40 per cent of all recorded cases of trafficking. They also flag the low prosecution and conviction rates.

Things are no better in France. This was noted by the experts from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) following their consideration of the country's latest periodic report in October 2023. They pointed to the growing number of adolescent girls engaged in prostitution and to the inadequacy of the Government's efforts to root out the causes of this phenomenon, including structural inequalities and demand for “human commodities”. Moreover, they were concerned about the low rates of prosecution and conviction in cases of trafficking in women and girls, the lack of adequate mechanisms to identify and refer victims of trafficking in need of protection, in particular minors, and also about the lack of attention paid to exploitation in the form of forced labour.

The observations of the CEDAW experts regarding Estonia are not very optimistic either. That Baltic State continues to be a country of origin, transit and destination for trafficking in women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour. The experts highlight the ineffectiveness of the victim support system, particularly for migrants and other groups of women and girls who are in a vulnerable position. They argue that the legal procedures to establish the identity of victims are inadequate, the same being true of the measures to reintegrate and rehabilitate victims. In that regard, they recommended that Estonia ensure that cases of trafficking in human beings be investigated properly, that perpetrators be held accountable, that measures be taken to reduce the demand for prostitution, that access to the support system be expanded, and a lot more besides.

International human rights bodies continue to have serious reservations about Canada. Following his visit to that country, the United Nations Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata, published some observations in September 2023 that look most bleak for Canada. He expressed his deep concern over the fact that Indigenous peoples, including First Nations members, are victimized or at a higher risk of being victimized in contemporary forms of slavery. Among the reasons for their being "highly susceptible" to these criminal phenomena, including the sexual exploitation of girls and women, the Special Rapporteur referred to the legacy of colonialism, poverty, inequality, systemic racism, the lack of opportunities for decent work, and many other factors. As is known, similar conclusions are to be found in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The United Nations Special Rapporteur also noted in his observations that Indigenous girls and boys were disproportionately represented in the out-of-home care system, where they could be subject to sexual, labour and criminal exploitation, either by their foster families or by traffickers.

Moreover, a large number of the Special Rapporteur's interlocutors had noted that, despite "the serious nature and extent of exploitation and abuse experienced by Indigenous peoples", the country's law enforcement authorities "[did] not investigate these crimes seriously and proactively". The picture offered by the "Land of the Maple Leaf" is thus not a very pretty one.

Madam Chairperson,

The facts we have cited confirm the ubiquity of the problem of trafficking in human beings in the OSCE area and the need for States to implement their relevant commitments in good faith. To help to prevent this phenomenon, the root causes must be eradicated and the perpetrators prosecuted, but it is also necessary to refrain from manipulating the whole topic for the purposes of advancing narrow, opportunistic approaches. And that is, indeed, what we urge everyone to do.

Thank you for your attention.