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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1495th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 November 2024

**In connection with the
International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**

Madam Chairperson,

The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, established by a decision of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, was observed on 2 November. However, despite the inclusion of this official commemorative date in the international calendar, the situation with regard to ensuring the safety of professional journalists and other media specialists and the prosecution without fail of offences committed against them has not only failed to improve but has in fact noticeably deteriorated in recent years.

Over the past year alone, four more Russian journalists – Boris Maksudov, Semyon Eremin, Valery Kozhin and Nikita Tsitsagi – have died at the hands of Kyiv regime militants. Yevgeny Poddubny and NTV correspondent Alexey Ivliev miraculously survived targeted attacks by Ukrainian armed forces drones. A veritable hunt for Russian war correspondents has been announced. The press badge on their clothes no longer protects them from the threat of reprisals, but makes professional journalists essentially a target. They are the first to be hit by those who have declared war on free speech. We recall that, under international humanitarian law, journalists and media workers are civilians and must be protected at all times, and that a deliberate attack on them is a war crime.

The perpetrators of these murders are not only not prosecuted by the law or condemned politically in any way, but are actually encouraged by Volodymyr Zelenskyy's regime to continue their bloody atrocities. Earlier this year, it became known that Chilean-American journalist Gonzalo Lira had died in a Ukrainian detention centre. He was tortured and killed for his professional journalism. However, since then we have seen no sign of an attempt to prosecute those responsible for this brutal murder of someone for his beliefs and professional activities. On the contrary, even the authorities of the United States of America and Chile, whose citizenship the tortured journalist held, have simply ignored this tragic event.

We are obliged to note that the West has switched once and for all to a policy of totally cleansing its media space of inconvenient truths, using the entire repressive arsenal of political censorship. In most cases under the pretext of combating disinformation or safeguarding security, States that consider themselves

advanced democracies impose bans on broadcasts by television and radio channels, block Internet resources, cut off access to financial services, shut down news offices, rank sources of information according to the principle of right and wrong, and impose hundreds of sanctions on members of the media community. The primary victims of such repression are Russian journalists, who bear the brunt of the hypocrisy of the advocates of a “rules-based order”. In reality, the promises enshrined in numerous international documents to respect the rights of journalists have been trampled upon. A deathly silence in this matter also persists in the relevant international structures, such as UNESCO and here in the OSCE.

In stark contrast to the ideals celebrated by the international day, this state of affairs has a simple explanation. Those who should be fighting impunity for crimes against journalists are themselves suppressing any pockets of dissent and imposing political censorship in a variety of ways. Hypocritically setting aside all international obligations to protect freedom of access to information, with their own hands Western countries are creating a fertile environment for this impunity and lawlessness, condoning any acts of aggression, terrorism and harassment of undesirable media and journalists by themselves and their underlings in Kyiv, Chişinău, the Baltic States and other parts of the world.

The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists will only regain its original purpose when the international obligations established in this area are implemented in their entirety and interrelatedness and without double standards by all States without exception. Otherwise, this day will degenerate into a meaningless date in the calendar of international events.

In conclusion, we should like to quote paragraph 3 of the 2018 Milan Ministerial Council decision of the OSCE participating States on the safety of journalists: “Condemn publicly and unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists such as killing, torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary detention and arbitrary expulsion, intimidation, harassment, and threats of all forms, such as physical, legal, political, technological or economic, used to suppress their work and/or unduly force closure of their offices, including in conflict situations”.

Thank you for your attention.