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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1419th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 April 2023

On the issue of political repression in Russia

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to exercise our right of reply in connection with the statements that have been made.

We regard as categorically unacceptable the insinuations about the sentence handed down by the Moscow City Court to Vladimir Kara-Murza, a citizen of the Russian Federation, in a case involving high treason and the spreading of fake stories about the Russian army. It is evident that the various public pronouncements in support of this convicted individual are an attempt to exert pressure on Russia's justice system. There are legitimate questions as to the basis on which the "accusers" venture to pass judgement on the fairness of court verdicts concerning the citizens of other countries in a jurisdiction that has no relation to them whatsoever. Such disrespectful if not downright provocative behaviour constitutes gross meddling in Russia's internal affairs.

The discussion initiated today by the Western alliance countries, together with the demands for the release of this "agent of influence" funded by them, is yet another manifestation of double standards. We know perfectly well how the authorities of the United States of America, the European Union, Canada and the United Kingdom brazenly violate human rights and persecute dissenters within their own borders. One has only to think of the way participants in the so-called storming of the Capitol or those who took part in the Freedom Convoy in Canada were pronounced to be "domestic terrorists".

It is worth drawing special attention to the United Kingdom, which hides behind the dubious argument that its judiciary is independent. "Merry England" is notorious for blatantly politically motivated rulings against independent journalists. In particular, the inhumane attitude of British justice towards Julian Assange is highly telling – it has elicited a legitimate wave of indignation around the world. This brings us to the assertions by the US representatives that "journalism is not a crime." In other words, we are to understand that the United States plans to release Mr. Assange, rolling out the red carpet for him and issuing a flurry of apologies as soon as he sets foot on hospitable American soil after being extradited by the United Kingdom. However, Canada has gone farthest of all: amid a campaign of rabid Russophobia, its representatives have declared that the strategic goal of their country's foreign policy is "regime change in Russia". That is direct interference in the internal affairs of the Russian Federation.

We believe that it is high time for the representatives of the Western alliance countries to grasp that attempts to exert pressure on Russia's authorities and its independent judiciary are most certainly doomed to fail. Any actions by those who wish us ill aimed at inciting enmity and discord within our society will be roundly thwarted.

One final point. To those who, without getting to the bottom of the matter, seek to accuse Russia of applying a law on foreign agents, I would point out that a similar law, known as the Foreign Agents Registration Act, has been in force in the United States since as far back as 1938 and is applied to this day – what is more, it is applied very zealously. I do not want to take up your time. Just cast an eye over the publicly available data on the use of that law. The figures are startling. Almost 500 natural persons and legal entities are featured there.

Thank you for your attention.