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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1429th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 June 2023

On the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

Mr. Chairperson,

On 19 June, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 was celebrated. Its main objective, as set out in General Assembly resolution 69/293, which established it, is “to raise awareness of the need to put an end to conflict-related sexual violence”.

We draw attention to the ongoing campaign by the Kyiv regime and its Western patrons to conceal real cases of sexual violence by Ukrainian radicals committed against civilians in Donbas since 2014. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and other international institutions have published reports on such incidents in recent years. Ukrainian Government-controlled territories are also recording a sharp spike in such cases. It is our firm view that such offences require strong condemnation and severe punishment. We call upon the countries of the Western alliance to stop silencing these unlawful acts – otherwise it could be seen as complicity in these abhorrent crimes.

At the same time, groundless and absurd accusations bordering on the preposterous are being made against Russian military personnel carrying out their duty within the framework of the special military operation in Ukraine. We firmly reject these insulting and unsubstantiated claims and see them as part of the unprincipled information war that is being actively waged today against Russia. The actions of Russian military personnel in and out of combat situations are subject to the same strict rules for all personnel, regardless of rank and position.

Moreover, the conflict in Ukraine has also intensified the industry of exploitation of Ukrainian refugees on the territory of European countries. According to the available information, the relevant European Union agencies consider that there is a very high risk of refugees being involved in criminal networks, not least as in recent years Ukraine has been among the top five countries in Europe in terms of the number of victims of trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation. It would be naive to believe that this situation has changed overnight.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia strongly condemns sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, which is regulated by the norms of international humanitarian law. These include Article 27 of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and the provisions of its two 1977 Protocols Additional.

Combating sexual violence in conflicts is a primary responsibility of national governments. This is also confirmed in United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/293, to which we have referred. On the international stage, the United Nations Security Council plays a leading, co-ordinating role in countering this evil. We support the sustained appeals by the Security Council to ensure the implementation of international humanitarian law in order to effectively combat this despicable phenomenon, in particular by increasing the number of parties to the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols Additional.

We firmly believe that work to prevent and eradicate this evil should be systematic and all-encompassing, with due regard for its identified causes and origins. Targeted efforts to combat manifestations of sexual violence need to have long-lasting and sustainable results.

Thank you for your attention.