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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1489th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 September 2024

On the tragic anniversary of the “Munich betrayal” of 1938

Mr. Chairperson,

On 30 September 1938, the Reichskanzler of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier and the Prime Minister of fascist Italy, Benito Mussolini, concluded the so-called “Munich Agreement”, one of the most tragic chapters in history. As we have mentioned before, in translating the name of that deal into Russian, the word “betrayal” is used, which more accurately conveys the gist of the document that was signed. Under the agreement, Czechoslovakia was to cede the Sudetenland to Germany within ten days, and the country’s delegation was simply not allowed to participate in the negotiations.

The Munich betrayal was the result of the perfidious sell-out of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France. From the testimony at the Nuremberg Tribunal of Field Marshal Keitel, Chief of Staff of the High Command of the Third Reich: “We were extraordinarily happy that it had not come to a military operation, because throughout the time of preparation we had always been of the opinion that our means of attack against the frontier fortifications of Czechoslovakia were insufficient. From a purely military point of view we lacked the means for an attack which involved the piercing of the frontier fortifications.”

As is well known, the main result of this “appeasement” of the aggressor was a protracted war, the bloodiest war in human history; with tens of millions of dead, injured and missing; Nazi death camps, the Holocaust, famine, devastation and other forms of immeasurable suffering for millions of people.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today, the Western alliance countries deliberately distort the outcome of the Second World War and persistently deny the decisive role of the USSR in defeating the Third Reich and liberating Europe from Nazi hegemony. No wonder they ignore the hateful manifestations in their own backyard. In particular, in August this year, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was very critical of the situation in the United Kingdom. Its experts noted the persistence of racism and violence against ethnic and religious groups, migrants and refugees by extremist far-right individuals and groups advocating white supremacy.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the European Union, the United States of America and the United Kingdom continue to condone the crimes of the Kyiv regime. They are not bothered that the glorification of Nazis and their accomplices and the rewriting of history have been elevated to the rank of State policy in the country, and those who served in Hitler's armies are being rehabilitated.

Paramilitary organizations professing neo-Nazi ideology are an integral part of the Ukrainian armed forces and volunteer formations. The commitment of right-wing radicals to criminal ideology is confirmed by their actions against the civilian population of Donbass and, in recent months, against the inhabitants of the Kursk region of the Russian Federation. Numerous accounts of victimization of the local population by Ukrainian neo-Nazis have been recorded. Mention might also be made of the incitement of hatred towards the Russian and Russian-speaking population, the persecution of clergy and parishioners from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, forced Ukrainization and much more besides in the territories of Ukraine controlled by the Kyiv regime.

We note the "special" attitude of representatives of the Kyiv regime towards "commemorative" moments related to the activities of the Nazis and their henchmen on the territory of Ukraine during the Great Patriotic War. Let us cite a few recent examples. Billboards with a picture of one of the ringleaders of the Third Reich were recently seen in Lviv. This is how they "celebrated" the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Brody, when the Red Army defeated Banderite formations and the Nazis.

The glorification of the Nazis is accompanied by a campaign against memorials to the Red Army liberators. Reports of vandalism of such memorials appear with alarming regularity. The authorities in the Ivano-Frankivsk region are planning to dismantle 78 monuments. Recently, in the village of Sadzhava in this region, the local authorities, with the support of far-right radicals, destroyed the grave of Antonina Gavrilovna Vereshchagina, a secret radio operator. The obelisk was demolished and her remains exhumed.

Events like this are also commonplace in Estonia. On 20 September this year, the remains of 17 Soviet soldiers were exhumed from a common grave in the village of Tsooru, Võru County. In July this year, a similar incident occurred on the island of Saaremaa near the village of Tehumardi. There are plans for the transfer of the graves of hundreds of Red Army soldiers to a local cemetery without gravestones with the names of the fallen Soviet soldiers and officers. In May of this year, staff of the Estonian War Museum desecrated the burial site of 38 Soviet soldiers in Tallinn military cemetery. Their remains were removed and buried elsewhere. Estonian officials estimate that there are up to 100 such burial sites in the country, all of which are to be dismantled by the end of 2025. Such measures by the authorities violate Estonia's obligations under Article 34 of Protocol Additional I to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, according to which a ratifying State must respect the gravesites of those who died as a result of hostilities on its territory. Exhumation of remains is possible only in exceptional cases and only after notice has been given to the home country of the deceased.

This sacrilegious mockery is taking place against the backdrop of the most reverential upkeep of monuments to Nazi collaborators and even the erection of new ones. In July this year, a monument to two Estonian legionnaires of the 20th Waffen-SS Division was ceremoniously unveiled in the town of Jõhvi in eastern Estonia. The Estonian History Museum had an exhibition dedicated to Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg as one of the "internationally renowned personalities born in Tallinn". What is this if not a blatant example of the rewriting of history?

A veritable "war" against memorials, monuments and the common graves of Red Army soldiers has also been unleashed in Latvia. More than 120 such objects have been demolished. Moreover, in

mid-September of this year, a decision was taken to dismantle cultural sites, including even a memorial stone to the great poet and writer Alexander Pushkin, which apparently fell victim to the “passions” of those who oppose the Soviet heritage. There is also discussion about the demolition of the memorial to the military leader Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly. We regard the lack of a reaction by the OSCE participating States and the Organization’s relevant executive structures to the actions of the Latvian authorities as condoning these unacceptable manifestations and encouraging violations of our Organization’s commitments in this regard

We call upon the Western alliance countries also to carefully study the facts set out in the recent report by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the problems of neo-Nazism, racism, racial discrimination and other types of intolerance and to take concrete steps to rectify the deplorable situation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The examples we have given today prove that the rise of neo-Nazism, racism, the falsification of history and other related trends, an uncomfortable topic for many countries, continue to gather momentum in the OSCE area. In that connection, we reaffirm our country’s position of principle regarding the imperative need to actively include this problem in the work of the human dimension. We trust that the future heads of the executive structures, first and foremost the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, will finally begin to respond to these manifestations and make principled public assessments of them.

Thank you for your attention.