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Delegation of the Russian delegation

**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1036th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

15 February 2023

**Agenda item: Security Dialogue
Subject: Mine action issues in the OSCE area**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina for having convened a plenary meeting on the best practices of OSCE participating States in the field of mine risk reduction. We welcome the keynote speakers and thank them for their informative presentations.

The Russian Federation has historically given priority to the topic of mine action, which is relevant in the context of resolving regional crises, dealing with their consequences and combating terrorism. We are making a conscientious effort to create a mine-free world. Our approaches are being implemented under the Inhumane Weapons Convention and its Amended Protocol II on mines. The results of this work are reflected annually in our national reporting under this Convention and in the responses by the Russian Federation to the OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War.

We devote attention to assisting interested States with the conduct of humanitarian demining operations – among other things, by deploying teams of military engineers and explosives experts, together with the necessary equipment. We are actively pursuing the exchange of experience with military deminers, primarily from Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam.

One of our country's priorities remains the provision of assistance to the States of South-Eastern Europe that suffered from NATO's barbaric "humanitarian intervention" against Yugoslavia. For example, the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations provided technical support for assistance projects in the Western Balkans from 1998 to 2020 within the framework of a Russian Federation Government order, under the aegis of the United Nations and in co-operation with the International Civil Defence Organization. As a result of that work, some 800 hectares were cleared of more than 13,000 unexploded remnants of war, including aerial bombs, shells and cluster munitions.

Demining is also an integral part of the peacekeeping operation in Nagorno-Karabakh, made possible by the agreements of the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia of 9 November 2020 on a complete

ceasefire and termination of all hostilities. Since the beginning of the mine clearance operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, units of the Russian Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Emergency Situations have cleared over 2,500 hectares of land, 1,940 buildings and 687 kilometres of roads of mines. Russian deminers not only contribute to the elimination of the mine threat on the ground, but also transfer their expertise to local specialists.

These systematic efforts by Russia are our practical contribution to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2365. We intend to continue to step up these efforts. We reiterate our openness to the exchange of professional experience with all interested countries, not least at the International Mine Action Centre of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and during the International Conference on Mine Clearance held in Moscow.

Mr. Chairperson,

At present, following the instructions of the leadership of the Russian Federation, extensive work is being organized in the zone of the special military operation to clear the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics of explosive devices. It is extremely difficult to fully clear the zone as Ukrainian nationalists continue to shell civilian targets with cluster munitions and lay anti-personnel and anti-tank mines on a large scale.

The Ukrainian Government's Western arms sponsors, who are interested in generating bumper profits for the military-industrial complex of their countries, routinely ignore Ukraine's flagrant violations of its international obligations under the 1949 Geneva Conventions with regard to the rules of engagement, Amended Protocol II to the Inhumane Weapons Convention and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Convention). This is entirely in keeping with the policy of substituting existing international law with whatever rules that are favourable to the United States of America and its allies and that are applied only to exert pressure on "undesirable" countries.

The competent Russian authorities regularly receive confirmation that the United States, NATO and the European Union, along with the Kyiv regime, are responsible for the contamination of Ukrainian and Russian territories with foreign-made mines and for the civilian casualties caused by them.

The Ukrainian armed forces have recently begun actively using US-made remote anti-armour mine (RAAM) system mines of the M70 and M73 series against civilians in the Luhansk People's Republic. They are delivered using 155-mm NATO-standard shells and their spread over the terrain is up to 600 metres. The explosive devices often end up on public roads. In recent months alone, the Ukrainian armed forces fired on the settlements of Svatove, Lysychansk and Krasnorichenske with shells containing M70 and M73 mines, leaving at least 12 people injured. These facts require the most serious consideration and condemnation by the international community.

In line with its policy of double standards, the United States regularly announces at the Forum for Security Co-operation millions of dollars' worth of investment in international demining efforts in Ukraine, but at the same time continues to pump the country full of prohibited anti-personnel munitions. Another weapons package for the Kyiv regime worth almost 2.2 billion US dollars was announced in Washington on 3 February this year, which will again include M18A1 Claymore anti-personnel landmines. In view of the recent high-profile report by Human Rights Watch that pointed out to the whole world the use of anti-personnel landmines by the Ukrainian armed forces against civilians, this step by the US Government looks like a deliberate attempt to push the Kyiv regime towards committing further war crimes.

The OSCE participating States remember well the admissions of former German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former French President François Hollande, who pretended to mediate a settlement of the conflict in Ukraine and in doing so laid a mine under the peace process. Now German and French mines are being laid in a literal sense in Donbas, bringing fresh pain and destruction to that long-suffering land.

Engineering forces of the Russian Federation regularly detect German-made LOS, DM31 and high-explosive fragmentation DM11 munitions in the People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk. DM1399 mines, which are deployed from NATO-standard MARS II multiple-launch rocket systems, and DM1274 scatterable anti-tank mines for LARS rocket launchers pose a great danger. In July 2022, Russian military personnel discovered several dozen French-made HPD F2 mines south of Artemivsk; these are mines that cannot be defused or retrieved. The use of such weapons violates Protocol II to the 1980 Geneva Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

We emphasize that the collective West, which is actively involved in the mine contamination of Ukraine, is vitiating international efforts in the field of demining and striking a blow to international humanitarian law with its actions. At the same time, it continues to keep silent about the Ukrainian authorities' war crimes that have been documented by reputable non-governmental organizations. We will tell you about them – the truth cannot be hidden.

After the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine was the second country in the post-Soviet space in terms of the numbers of various weapons held, including PFM-1 Lepestok anti-personnel landmines, the stockpiles of which the Ukrainian Government pledged to dispose of as a signatory to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. However, another use was found for these highly dangerous mines without a self-destruct mechanism – Ukrainian nationalists have been randomly shelling Donetsk, Yasynuvata, Makiivka and Panteleimonivka with them since July 2022. PFM-1 mines have been found near schools, hospitals, kindergartens, parks and entrances to residential buildings. In the Donetsk region, 91 cases have been recorded of civilians being blown up, including seven children. All this is done solely to inflict physical and psychological harm on the civilians of regions that were not afraid to express their will and join the Russian Federation. Citizens in territories under Ukrainian control are also suffering. According to the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch, at least 50 civilians in Izium have fallen victim to the mass planting of such mines.

Given the numerous documented facts concerning the Kyiv regime's gross violations of its commitments under the Inhumane Weapons Convention and the Ottawa Convention with the direct assistance of the United States, NATO and the European Union, the Russian Federation is making every effort to ensure that the entire civilized world is made aware of the real information about these atrocities. Reports of crimes committed by the Ukrainian armed forces, nationalist battalions and their Western handlers are being carefully recorded and relayed to the international community using all available channels.

Once again, we call upon the OSCE participating States, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other relevant international organizations to exert influence on the Ukrainian Government and take measures to prevent the grave humanitarian consequences of the Ukrainian nationalists' war crimes for the civilian population. The international community needs to respond immediately to the violations of the principles of international humanitarian law, including the provisions of the Inhumane Weapons Convention and the Ottawa Convention, committed by the Kyiv regime, and the perpetrators need to be brought to justice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.