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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**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 World Refugee Day

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to exercise the right of reply, as a number of delegations have focused on the situation of Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons.

The problem that has arisen as a result of the aggressive actions of the Kyiv regime to violently suppress dissent in Donbas has been extremely critical for quite some time now. For eight years, the Kyiv regime, with the full support of its Western patrons, has refused to implement the Minsk agreements and has continued armed attacks against the civilian population and civilian infrastructure in Donbas. All this led, among other things, to a mass exodus of the inhabitants of these territories to Russia. In 2014 and 2015, some two million refugees from what were at the time regions of Ukraine ended up in Russia.

Together with earlier arrivals, more than 4.5 million people, including thousands of children, have taken refuge in our country since the beginning of the special military operation. That is more than in any other country on the European continent. These figures put paid in no uncertain terms to the false argument of representatives of the Kyiv regime that our country is waging some kind of “war to destroy Ukrainians and their identity”. On the contrary, millions of Ukrainians are seeking refuge in Russia for fear of armed attacks or other persecution by the Kyiv regime. A significant number of them have expressed a desire to return to their places of origin once these threats have been eliminated.

Russia has been endeavouring for many years to take in and accommodate victims of the Kyiv regime’s armed violence. The help provided includes assistance in finding employment, securing places for children in kindergartens and educational institutions, and providing welfare payments and benefits. They receive free medical care. Procedures for regularizing their legal status have been simplified. They can work without a work permit or licence. Lump-sum material assistance and monthly financial payments are made.

Significantly, unlike NATO member countries, the Russian State does not permit the recruitment of refugees from Ukraine in Russia in order to secure their participation in terrorist groups and nationalist battalions committing crimes against the civilian population. Russia is endeavouring to ensure that a long-awaited peace comes to these people's lives.

Thank you for your attention.