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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1409th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 February 2023

**On double standards in the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human
dimension by some Western participating States**

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union bloc and the US Government have been consistent in their pursuit of a total politicization of human rights, its use to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, and the imposition of double standards in their consideration of certain issues.

Over the past year, the Western Alliance countries, supported by the former Polish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, have been intent on filling the agenda with the issue of Ukraine. This prioritization – as usual, under the guise of noble causes and higher ideals – has allowed them to deflect attention from the ongoing abuses in their own countries. The situation in Russia, on the other hand, has been thoroughly and methodically demonized, with the unhesitating use of the various resources and mechanisms of our Organization.

However, this all sounds hypocritical not to say sanctimonious, given the deplorable human rights situation in the Western OSCE participating States.

Take, for example, the right to freedom of assembly, which Russia has been accused of violating for years. Let us turn to some instances of the violent dispersal of demonstrations in “Western democracies”.

Over the past few days – or even months – we have seen shocking footage of demonstrations in France during which police officers do not hesitate to use tear gas. And it happens so regularly that a curtain of gas has become the *de facto* calling card of French protests.

A similarly unpleasant picture is to be found in Germany – on 15 January in Lützerath, police used batons to disperse eco-activist protesters. Last autumn smoke bombs were employed against protesters in Genoa, Italy, and batons were used in Chişinău, Moldova. This list could be continued.

The problem of excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies persists in the United States of America, with racial profiling as a distinctive feature. According to reputable non-governmental

organizations, more than 400 people died as a result of police action in 2022. African Americans are three times more likely to be killed by the police than whites. One of the most recent high-profile cases was the brutal beating of Tyre Nichols by police officers on 7 January 2023. Three days later he died in hospital of the severe injuries he had sustained. After his death, video footage of the brutal police action was made public.

Another favourite subject of Western countries concerns the “trampling” on the right to freedom of worship in third countries, usually accompanied by claims of full respect for religious freedoms at home.

Take Norway, for example. On 22 December 2022, Jehovah’s Witnesses were deregistered as a religious community by the authorities. The reason was their systematic breaking of the law and the unwillingness of their leaders to abandon unlawful practices. An important nuance is that deregistration does not prevent the continuation of activities, but merely limits certain rights and privileges.

Such rectitude does not prevent the Norwegian Government from criticizing our country for taking action when Jehovah’s Witnesses fail to respect Russian law. Moreover, Norway regularly and actively participates in anti-Russian initiatives of the EU bloc and the US Government.

It should be recalled that this is one and the same structure about which Russia and Norway have similar criticisms. However, when this happens in Russia, it causes anger and indignation among the Western Alliance countries. The US State Department has issued another accusatory statement. At the same time, they have no complaints about their “mentees”.

At the last Permanent Council meeting, the issue of the rise of Islamophobia in the OSCE area was discussed following the desecration of the Koran in a number of participating States. On 27 January, Rasmus Paludan, leader of the extreme right-wing Hard Line party, again burned a Muslim holy scripture in front of the Russian embassy in Copenhagen. The incident, clearly aimed at inciting sectarian strife, took place with the connivance of the authorities – this time in Denmark.

Such action could have been condemned, for example, by the Canadian representatives, who remained silent on this subject last Thursday. After all, it is they who regularly talk about “violations” of religious rights in Russia, including those of Muslims. We are told this, incidentally, by representatives of a State that has been shaken over the past few years by a series of high-profile murders of followers of Islam. It may be recalled that, in January 2017, an attack by an extremist on visitors to an Islamic cultural centre in Quebec City left six people dead. In September 2020, a mosque worker died of a stab wound in Toronto. In July 2022, a man ran over a Muslim family in London, Ontario. Moreover, according to the most recent updated calculations, the number of attacks on followers of Islam in Canada rose by 71 per cent to 144 cases in 2021. Incidentally, according to civil society organizations, between 2016 and 2021, Canada ranked first among the G7 countries in the number of murders of members of the Muslim community.

Speaking of this OSCE participating State, we cannot avoid touching on another subject, namely violations of the rights of indigenous people. In January this year, the latest sad find was reported by the Star Blanket Cree Nation, Saskatchewan’s First Nation association. A preliminary soil survey of the grounds of the former Qu’Appelle residential school, in operation from 1884 to 1998, revealed some 2,000 underground graves, including the remains of a five- to six-year-old child. Yet somehow we have not heard any condemnation of these egregious cases at the OSCE from participating States that also have large numbers of indigenous peoples living on their territories.

Now on to children’s rights. The notorious double standards can be clearly seen in relation to this issue as well.

A few words about the situation in the United Kingdom, whose representatives ardently accuse Russia of a wide range of violations of the rights of minors. Meanwhile, in foggy Britain itself, the state of affairs in this area is dismal. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published its report in October 2022. The seven-year investigation found that child abuse was “epidemic” and the extent of the abuse was described as “extremely worrying”.

Moreover, according to the British media (for example, *The Daily Mirror*), nothing in fact is being done in the country to prevent the criminal phenomenon of paedophilia. According to this publication, 870 rapists, including child sex offenders, avoided prison after they issued apologies. The case of British paedophiles travelling to Poland under the pretext of humanitarian aid to Ukrainian refugees was also shocking.

Media freedom and pluralism of opinion have also been held hostage to political gamesmanship by the West. While accusing Russia of violating these rights, they turn a blind eye to the lawlessness that is going on in their own country in the media space.

In France on 21 January, the accounts of RT France were frozen at the request of the General Directorate of the Treasury within the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, ostensibly in connection with the provisions of the ninth package of anti-Russian sanctions. By the way, the television channel itself is not mentioned in the document, only a shareholder in the parent company. Overnight, its 123 employees could become unemployed and the channel could stop broadcasting.

We have repeatedly told the OSCE how France has been waging a fierce battle against this broadcaster for the past five years. Its journalists have been deprived of the opportunity to carry out their professional activities in full. The channel’s reporters were denied accreditation for the Elysée Palace and a number of other ministries and government agencies. In addition, the country’s officials have been openly stirring up a climate of hostility towards them, calling on the public to boycott them. So France is to be congratulated, and it may very soon achieve its goal of depriving French viewers of points of view that differ from the Western mainstream. We fully share the opinion of the channel’s staff regarding the clear involvement of the authorities in a blatant act of censorship of the European media space.

The offensive against Russian-language media in the Republic of Moldova continues. On 19 January, the Information and Security Service blocked access in the Republic to the Russian-language news portals Eedaily.com and Bloknot.ru, which are charged with promoting information that incites hatred while the country is in a state of emergency. Let me remind you that access to the website of the Sputnik Moldova news agency has been banned in the country since 26 February 2022. Similar restrictions have also been imposed on the websites of a number of other Russian and Russian-language media outlets in Moldova. Since March 2022, Russian news and current affairs television programmes have been suspended in the country. Since 19 December 2022, the licences of six Russian-language channels have been revoked for “flawed coverage” of national events and the conflict in Ukraine.

We consider the blocking of the aforementioned resources to be another gross violation by the Moldovan authorities of their commitments regarding freedom of speech, media and access to information. Far-fetched pretexts such as protecting the population from manipulation and disinformation have nothing to do with freedom and democracy. Please consider this statement as a formal appeal to the Secretary General and relevant OSCE structures, especially the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, to respond and provide a principled assessment of what is happening in Moldova, in line with their mandates.

In conclusion, we should like to point out that neither Russia nor any other OSCE participating State is perfect when it comes to human rights. Our country has never opposed honest dialogue on this topic. However, the examples we have given clearly demonstrate that the so-called “paradise” is in fact far from being a paradise and that you have no moral right to lecture other countries. Stop discrediting the very concept of human rights, using it merely to interfere in the internal affairs of others. Take care of your own problems, put your own house in order in accordance with your international obligations. And then share the positive practice with everyone. That would be a constructive approach.

Thank you for your attention.