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FSC.DEL/343/22
30 September 2022
ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1023rd PLENARY MEETING
OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO OPERATION**

28 September 2022

**Agenda item: General statements
Subject: Special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

In the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and in the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions the popular will has been expressed in referendums on the future of these territories as part of Russia. People came to the polling stations to cast their vote, despite the unrelenting bombardment by Ukrainian shells. The official results are currently being tallied. These plebiscites took place in conditions of transparency and were in line with all electoral standards, as foreign observers from 40 countries were able to see for themselves. As stated by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, our country will respect and support the democratic decision taken by a majority of the inhabitants of the Donbas people's republics and the Ukrainian territories liberated from the neo-Nazi yoke.

We categorically reject the senseless insinuations by the foreign policy chiefs of European States, who are spreading fables about how the participants in the referendums were "shot at" and "raped", then "forced to put a cross on the ballot paper while a soldier with a Kalashnikov stands next to them". It is deeply regrettable that anti-Russian lies in the spirit of the Kyiv regime's ombudsperson Liudmyla Denisova have gained such traction in Europe. The one thing which the aforementioned representatives have actually got right is that the citizens of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions were subjected to armed violence. The point, though, is that this was done by those who previously called themselves their brothers. I must reiterate that the only threat looming over them was the continuous shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces, which was intended to intimidate these citizens and disrupt the expression of the popular will. The election commissions in some population centres were obliged to work in bomb shelters. Fire was opened using NATO weapons. There are casualties, also among children. We shall come back to this.

Amid the anti-Russian hysteria that has taken hold of the Forum for Security Co-operation nowadays, the Western participating States overlook, as always, the fact that the referendums that took place were the result of the hate-filled policy, going back many years, of the Kyiv regime, which came to power following the bloody and anti-constitutional coup d'état in 2014. Those who did not agree with the coup's

outcomes were at the time declared to be terrorists and condemned to a struggle for survival under air strikes and bombardments. A former Prime Minister of Ukraine, Arsenii Yatseniuk, called the residents of Donbas “non-people”. Ex-President Petro Poroshenko prognosticated that the children of Donbas would “rot” in basements, while the current Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy recommended all those living in Ukraine who regarded themselves as Russians to “go away to Russia for good” for the future peace of their children and grandchildren. That is in fact what the inhabitants of the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions are now doing, albeit taking their lands with them – lands on which their ancestors lived for centuries.

We are constantly hearing emotional assertions about how the outcomes of the referendums that have taken place are not going to be recognized in the West. What can one say in response?

First, if NATO enlargement may proceed without consideration for Russia’s opinion, our country will likewise take decisions on the outcomes of the referendums without taking the views of the Alliance’s member States into account. We are fully entitled to do so.

Second, it strikes us as highly odd to hear demands for international law to be respected from States that regularly invent for themselves exemptions from its fundamental provisions. That was the case in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria. I would remind you that in connection with the rendering by the International Court of Justice of an advisory opinion on whether Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence was in accordance with international law, EU countries submitted written statements justifying the “right” of part of a country’s territory to “leave” the State in question in the event of a real threat that the rights of the people living in that territory could be infringed. In contrast to Kosovo and the mythical “threat” to its inhabitants, the horrific crimes of the Kyiv regime are all too real – they have been going on for eight years now, yet the Western countries display exceptional political blindness together with egregious double standards with regard to the legal side of the matter.

Third, the Western OSCE participating States have in the past repeatedly invoked the principle of self-determination of peoples to justify their own selfish interests and actions when determining the status of territories. Suffice it to recall how in response to the Argentine Government’s non-recognition of the results of a referendum held in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), a former UK Prime Minister accused Argentina of colonialism. We may also recall how after granting Mauritius independence in 1968, the British illegally kept part of its territory under their control, namely the Chagos Archipelago, by forcibly deporting local Mauritian inhabitants from there, including those of Chagossian ancestry. The same pattern may be seen in the fate of Mayotte, the Scattered Islands in the Indian Ocean and other territories. In other words, our colleagues should take a close look at themselves in the mirror before pronouncing international legal verdicts on others. Your double standards are plain for all to see.

Since we have started talking about the legal side of the matter today, I invite the Western OSCE participating States to acquaint themselves with the Hague Convention of 1907 respecting the laws and customs of war on land and the Hague Convention, also of 1907, relating to the status of enemy merchant ships at the outbreak of hostilities. They clearly stipulate that transfers of weapons to a belligerent State preclude those supplying such weapons from being able to claim the status of a neutral State, that is, one not participating in the conflict. In this context it is worth recalling that the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Poland and the Baltic countries are ahead of everyone else in terms of the range and volume of military goods they are delivering to meet the needs of the Ukrainian armed forces. Indeed, the British Isles have altogether been turned into a sprawling boot camp, where basic military training of new Ukrainian recruits and specialized training of gunners, sappers and sailors are provided in conveyor-belt fashion. We must emphasize once again that supporting the Ukrainian Government in combat operations is tantamount to participating *de facto* in the conflict.

In this regard, we are keeping a very close eye on the attempts by the United States to enlist its satellite countries for an even more ferocious confrontation with the Russian Federation. While modernizing its own nuclear capabilities, the US Government is egging its British allies on to engage in an irresponsible escalation of nuclear rhetoric as they openly declare their unconditional readiness to press the “red button” if necessary. We warn the US and UK Governments not to take reckless steps that could push the situation around Ukraine close to a dangerous tipping point. As President Putin has said, in the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of our country, all the means at our disposal will be used to protect Russia and our people. We shall act in strict accordance with the provisions of our Military Doctrine and with the “Basic Principles of the Russian Federation’s State Policy on Nuclear Deterrence”.

Mr. Chairperson,

It has long since become clear that the Ukrainian Government’s handlers in Washington, D.C., view the whole world as one large testing ground and make use of any armed conflict, even where they are not participating in it directly, to test the effectiveness of their weapons. According to a report published on 8 March this year by the Congressional Research Service on the military engagements of the United States around the world, the US Government has unleashed 469 wars and military interventions since 1798. The US scholar James Lucas has come to the conclusion that the wars waged by the United States since the Second World War have with impunity claimed around 25 million human lives. But over in Washington, D.C., they have no intention of calling it a day.

US weapons today continue to be tested on civilians courtesy of the Ukrainian military and radicals. The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence has openly invited companies belonging to the US military-industrial complex to carry out pilot projects before starting mass production, which would, so it is argued, enhance the competitiveness of such weapons, given that these would have been tested in a zone of hostilities. Well, this is not something new. The international community no doubt remembers how in August 1945 the United States “tested” nuclear weapons on the civilians of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What we are dealing with today is the *de facto* State-level legalization of using as cannon fodder Ukrainian military personnel and civilians, against whom the aforementioned weapons will be directed.

The examples which we shall now cite are merely a drop in the ocean of Ukrainian war crimes committed at the US handlers’ instigation. They all occurred during the days that the referendums were held in Donbas and the liberated territories.

On 22 September this year, an indoor market in the city of Donetsk came under fire from the Ukrainian armed forces. A bus was hit by a shell, killing at least six people, including a teenager, and injuring seven. In this video our colleagues can see how the doctor who arrived at the scene is phoning the parents of the youth who was killed to inform them of the tragedy that has just happened. On 24 September this year, a US-made AGM-88 HARM high-speed anti-radar missile was used in an attack on the city of Yenakiieve in the Donetsk People’s Republic, as a result of which a man was injured, a school was destroyed and seven apartment buildings were damaged. On that same day, a missile attack was launched on a market in Nova Kakhovka using an M142 HIMARS multiple-launch rocket system. On 25 September this year, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation recorded the consequences of the shelling of Alchevsk in the Luhansk People’s Republic from a HIMARS system. A maternity hospital came under fire and the women there had to take shelter in the basement. At the same time, a HIMARS strike was launched against a hotel building in Kherson, killing Oleksii Zhuravko, a physically disabled former member of the Ukrainian national parliament. Russian journalists who were staying at the hotel reported that there was in effect nothing left of their room afterwards and that a cameraman was crushed by a concrete slab. In Donbas alone over the past week, at least ten people have been killed and 39 injured, while 131 civilian houses and civilian infrastructure facilities have been destroyed.

Responsibility for the civilian deaths and shattered futures rests with the criminal regime in Kyiv and its handlers. These people's blood is on your hands.

Mr. Chairperson,

The special military operation has specific objectives, namely the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, on the achievement of which hinges not merely the welfare but the lives of millions of people. For what is at stake is to save the population of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk from the physical annihilation that Ukrainian radicals have been engaging in for eight years now. It was once the dream of Hitlerite fascism to exterminate the entire Russian population. The movement's modern-day acolytes, guided by Hitler's precepts, are trying to accomplish that same infamy using Slavs as their tool. Russia will not allow this to happen.

As part of the demilitarization of Ukraine, the armed forces of the Russian Federation destroyed in the air more than 180 shells from HIMARS and Vilkha multiple-launch rocket systems over the past week. At least three firing platoons operating US-made M777 howitzers and one firing platoon operating a HIMARS system were hit in the Dnipropetrovsk and Mykolaiv regions. Our operational and tactical aviation, army aviation, missile troops and artillery hit at least 56 enemy artillery units, including personnel and military equipment, in more than 160 districts. Three MiG-29 aircraft of the Ukrainian air force that had been refitted to fire US-made HARM anti-radar missiles were shot down. We emphasize once again that the Russian armed forces will continue to systematically destroy Western weapons arriving in Ukraine.

At present, the Iziurm-Balakhia battle group has been redeployed to enhance the combat power of the Russian troops in Donbas. It is planned to reinforce the entire front line, which spans over a thousand kilometres. The aggressive NATO bloc's advance towards our borders remains a destabilizing factor. In this regard, the decision has been taken to increase the number of troops in the Russian armed forces by 137,000 as from 1 January 2023, with these additional troops bringing up to full strength the new military formations.

The Ukrainian Government's military and political impotence continues to be attested to by the growing number of atrocities and instances of torture committed by Ukrainian soldiers against Russian prisoners of war. The 55 military personnel from Russia and the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk who were repatriated from Ukrainian territory under the Kyiv regime's control as part of a prisoner exchange say that during their captivity they were held in inhuman conditions. They were subjected to simulated drowning and beaten up; threats were made to smash glass bottles against their teeth; they were given electric shocks; soldering irons were used to brand them with the letters "Z" and "V". As a result, the prisoner of war Viktor Belov lost his spleen and was left with heart problems. Ilya Yun said that during the first six days after being taken captive, soldiers were not fed at all; one bottle of water was the daily ration for two men. Even the wounded could not count on any mercy. Their testimonies are confirmed by the US mercenary Ben Velcro, who has spoken frankly about the torture inflicted on an 18-year-old Russian soldier: the tendons in his legs were cut through and then, "just for fun", he was forced to swim across the Seversky Donets River. As we can see, the assertions by the delegation of Ukraine that the security forces of that country observe international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions and the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security are empty words. It is shocking that Ukraine has sunk so low as to engage in such unrestrained cruelty, in such blind radicalism and extremism that would do ISIS proud. Europe no doubt remembers well who has been coaching the Kyiv regime's thugs for almost a whole decade now.

It is not surprising that the population of Crimea turned their back upon the Ukrainian Government some time ago, followed by the inhabitants of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. As they see this, our country's citizens realize even more strongly the need for the special military operation being conducted by Russia and how there is no alternative to it.

The Russian Federation's absolute priority continues to be to end the suffering of the civilian population of Donbas and the people of Ukraine by putting a halt to the combat operations initiated by the Ukrainian Government eight years ago. The threats arising from this regime in its death throes to the national security of our country and to that of the whole of Europe will most assuredly be neutralized, and the validity of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations on the territory of Ukraine will be restored.

Thank you for your attention.