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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY
MS. IULIA ZHDANOVA, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1112th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

16 July 2025

Agenda item: Any other business

Subject: In exercise of the right of reply to the statement by the delegation of Canada at the 95th joint plenary meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation and the OSCE Permanent Council

Madam Chairperson,

At the 95th joint plenary meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and the OSCE Permanent Council, the delegation of Canada delivered an unfounded, confrontational statement (FSC-PC.DEL/32/25) by way of an emotional reaction to the distribution among the participating States of a report by the International Public Tribunal on the Crimes of Ukrainian Neo-Nazis entitled “Atrocities and War Crimes of the Kiev Regime in the City of Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)” (SEC.DEL/231/25/Rev.1, Note Verbale No. 55). It is regrettable that, in an attempt to criticize the extensive activities of that non-governmental organization, our Canadian colleagues did not find time to immerse themselves in the subject matter and resorted, instead, to the distortion of facts.

First, the delegation of Canada stated that the International Public Tribunal was “established in March 2022 by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation”. That is not the case. The creation of the Tribunal was an initiative by Russian and foreign human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists, the practical implementation of which was announced at an international conference that took place in the building of the Civic Chamber in March 2022. Its task is to gather evidence of the Kyiv regime’s crimes, to present information about these at Russian and international platforms and to transmit this information to the judicial authorities of countries around the world so that the perpetrators can be punished.

Our colleagues in this room are surely aware that history is replete with examples of such associations, including the tribunal established by Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre to investigate war crimes in Vietnam. In particular, Russell was convinced that it was essential to prevent the “crime of silence”: “We are not judges. We are witnesses. Our task is to make mankind bear witness to these terrible crimes and to unite humanity on the side of justice in Vietnam.” The International Public Tribunal’s objectives are the same.

Incidentally, we also noticed the disparaging undertones that shone through in the statement by Canada with regard to our Civic Chamber, which operates on the basis of a relevant Federal Act of the Russian Federation. And this coming from a country that, alongside its like-minded Western partners, has been taking the floor at various international platforms over so many years to express concern for the fate of civil society in Russia. Just look at how “actively” it is standing up, together with its associates, for the security interests of completely innocent people who have been subjected to illegal aggression by Ukraine with the assistance of NATO and EU countries – an aggression that, as far as Donbass is concerned, bears all the hallmarks of genocide.

Secondly, the delegation of Canada falsely asserts that “claims that this body includes representatives from 35 countries, including Canada, are entirely false and unsubstantiated.” However, no such claims have ever been made by the Tribunal. It is composed of civil society representatives from more than 30 countries, including Canada. If the authorities in Ottawa are in any doubt as to the participation of Canadian citizens in the Tribunal, we are willing to request the FSC Chairmanship to arrange for these to be connected live to one of our plenary meetings.

Thirdly, the delegation of Canada asserts that the International Tribunal “lacks transparency, procedural safeguards, and impartiality”, and that its testimonies “are not independently verified”. That is mere wishful thinking. The Tribunal’s work on gathering evidence of crimes is being conducted much more transparently than that of any other international entity mentioned by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Canada. The identity of not a single victim of Ukrainian crimes and not a single eyewitness to the killings perpetrated by the Ukrainian armed forces is being concealed. Video recordings of their testimonies have been made and presented to a wider audience.

More than 1,600 victims of, and eyewitnesses to, the Ukrainian armed forces’ crimes have been interviewed by representatives of the Tribunal since 2022. Twelve reports and four books have been prepared on the basis of these testimonies and are freely available on the Internet in Russian and English. They contain virtually no value judgements and conclusions – each reader may make such judgements and draw his or her conclusions based on the massive quantities of evidence of the atrocities committed by Ukrainian militants and foreign mercenaries. In addition, video footage of the interviews that were conducted is available in the public domain. These videos give the surname, first name and patronymic of victims, along with their age and place of residence. Representatives of foreign States and international media outlets who are interested may cross-examine the victims with their consent and satisfy themselves of the veracity and impartiality of the information that has been published.

Many reports by international organizations are not subject to such verification: the witnesses cited remain anonymous and it is sought to fob the public off with unverifiable conclusions and assessments. A case in point is the heinous provocation in Bucha. Thus, on 7 December 2022, a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, with the pretentious title “Killings of Civilians: Summary Executions and Attacks on Individual Civilians ...” was presented, in which data is cited on non-combatants killed in the Kyiv region and in Bucha that was obtained from the Facebook page of the Main Department of the National Police in the Kyiv region. The only trouble is that the links to the primary source that are provided in the report do not work – if one tries to open them, all one gets is a notification that “the author has blocked or deleted the content.” All the figures cited in the report can, therefore, not be checked, as they were taken from a biased, unverified and no longer available source.

That is not all, though. If one carefully studies the “selected cases” in the aforementioned report, it becomes clear that there is no real corroboration of facts, just hearsay that has nothing whatsoever to do with the elementary principles for ensuring the chain of custody in the preservation of evidence and that does not give any details about the victims. In 2024, the Prosecutor General’s Office and the Investigative Committee

of the Russian Federation submitted an official request to the United Nations for co-operation on the criminal case related to the events in Bucha, but that request remains unanswered to this day. The United Nations Secretariat has provided neither the information requested by us, nor the documents required to ensure the proper administration of justice. Such a prolonged silence from the Secretariat merely proves that no “documentary evidence” corroborating a massacre in Bucha actually exists.

What does exist is, for example, evidence of the massacre of civilians that really did take place in the town of Selidovo and that was organized by the Ukrainian armed forces prior to and during their withdrawal in 2024. There is simply no getting away from that evidence. The corresponding report by the International Tribunal will be distributed by us today after the meeting. It contains real testimonies by victims and eyewitnesses to shootings of unarmed persons on the streets of Selidovo, in houses and apartment buildings, during which entire families would sometimes be murdered. These killings were frequently perpetrated in full view of the eyewitnesses who would go on to give testimony. Would those who try to wave all this off as “disinformation” be brave enough to come to Selidovo and tell the victims to their face that everything that happened to them and their loved ones was simply “lies” and “propaganda”? We doubt it. Maybe that is why many representatives of Western participating States ran away from the FSC meeting of 15 March 2023, when the floor was given to the Chairman of the International Public Tribunal, Maxim Grigoriev, who has been personally conducting interviews with the victims.

Madam Chairperson,

Over the past six months, we have heard pronouncements by the Canadian FSC delegation on “disinformation”, “propaganda” and “fake news” on at least 15 occasions. But, surely, before looking for the mote in the other’s eye, it is necessary to notice the beam in one’s own. And only then may one call for united efforts in “defending the integrity of this Organization and the principles upon which it was founded”.

Thank you for your attention.