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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1374th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 May 2022

**On the biological programmes and activities of the
United States of America in Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

In the course of the special military operation in Ukraine, more and more documentary evidence has come to light that components of biological weapons have in fact been manufactured for several years in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders – in violation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC). We already touched on the topic of the United States of America's military biological research in Ukraine at the Permanent Council meeting on 22 April. We spoke about specific projects involving human experimentation. Today we want to draw attention to new circumstances that have emerged confirming the imminent threats posed to international security by such activities.

As we have said previously, the US Department of Defense's network of biological laboratories covered a number of Ukrainian cities. There were more than 30 sites. As it turned out, one of the network's hubs was Mariupol, which was transformed into a centre for the collection and classification of cholera pathogens. The strains collected there were sent first to Kyiv and then to the United States. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, this activity had been carried out since 2014. In addition to cholera, the laboratories in Mariupol worked with extremely dangerous tularaemia and anthrax pathogens, as evidenced by the destruction of the pathogenic microorganisms that took place on 25 February 2022. Part of this "collection" was not disposed of in time. A total of 124 pathogenic strains were recovered from biological laboratories in the city. Among them, pathogens of diseases uncharacteristic of veterinary science – typhoid fever, paratyphoid fever and gas gangrene – were also found.

The organizers of these programmes were not satisfied with laboratory tests. They conducted experiments on people. Here are examples of the cynical experiments on civilians.

In 2020, counterfeit banknotes contaminated with a strain of tuberculosis resistant to antitubercular medications were distributed to minors in the settlement of Stepove in the Luhansk People's Republic. According to the conclusion of the Luhansk Republic Sanitary and Epidemiological Station, the banknotes were most likely contaminated artificially.

In this connection, information about the Ukrainian Government's deployment to the eastern regions of the country of unmanned aerial vehicles fitted with equipment to spray biological substances is particularly worrying. There is information that Ukraine purchased more than 50 of these devices through intermediaries in January this year. On 9 March 2022, three such drones equipped with 30-litre containers and a spraying system were detected by the Russian military in the Kherson region. Ten more were spotted in late April near Kakhovka. Could it be that the intention was to spray some kind of contagion there as well?

New details are emerging about the US Department of Defense's experiments on Ukrainian citizens in a psychiatric hospital near Kharkiv. The main category of subjects turned out to be a group of male patients aged between 40 and 60 who were in the advanced stages of emaciation. In order to conceal their affiliation with the United States, the experts conducting the biological research travelled through third countries. But data is still available about the participants in these programmes. For example, there is information about Florida native Linda Oporto, who was directly involved in such work.

There is reason to believe that such experiments were part of a conscious policy of the US and Ukrainian Governments. The testimony of an official who used to serve in the Ukrainian security services confirms that, in fact, Ukraine has for years had an outright ban on any measures by its own Government agencies aimed at protecting the safety of Ukrainian citizens when it comes to US military biological laboratories. In other words, virtually all activities carried out by the United States on Ukrainian territory are prohibited from being monitored in terms of whether they meet the requirements for ensuring the safety of the Ukrainian citizens themselves. Such collusion between the Ukrainian authorities and US military structures once again confirms that Ukraine is being externally controlled and exploited by the United States for its own benefit.

What tentative conclusions can be drawn from all these circumstances? Let us highlight the international legal aspect of this matter: at the very least, there are indications that the US and Ukrainian Governments have not been complying with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in recent years.

Work in the laboratories was carried out completely behind closed doors and research was conducted into pathogenic microorganisms – biological weapons agents. In essence, potential techniques and mechanisms are being developed in Ukraine for destabilizing the epidemiological situation in the region. This is a direct indication that the US biological laboratories in Ukraine were not at all established to search for effective means of protection against dangerous diseases, nor for broad international co-operation. Their main task is to collect biological materials and study for their own purposes the specifics of the spread of viruses and dangerous diseases. The United States has practically turned Ukraine into a testing ground for the development of biological weapons components and covert testing of new pharmaceutical samples. The facts already gathered show that the threat extends to the entire world, not just to Ukrainians and citizens of neighbouring countries. The threat stems primarily from the fact that such activities were, in fact, taken out of the legal framework and were not monitored by anyone. Not to mention the moral and ethical side of the issue, with the inhabitants of Ukraine acting as a kind of "test biological material".

Along with the conduct of secret military biological programmes, it has been established that both the United States and Ukraine have provided incomplete or misleading information to international bodies. All the reports from Ukraine indicate a lack of national research and development programmes in the field of biological defence. In addition, Ukraine has on several occasions failed to provide information on outbreaks of infectious diseases. For example, in 2017, the Ukrainian authorities did not report cases involving symptoms of botulism in Kyiv and Kherson and of hepatitis A in Mykolaiv. In 2019, no announcement was made concerning widespread evidence of diphtheria, despite the fact that there had been

reports of the disease in five regions. Ukraine has not provided information on the involvement of military personnel in the laboratories' work, nor on the transfer of biological materials or the funding of facilities and programmes by military departments.

The main question is how all these biological activities relate to the specific norms of the 1972 BTWC. This key international instrument regulates this area of research. To date, 183 States have undertaken not to develop, produce or stockpile biological weapons. However, in the Preparatory Committee for the Ninth BTWC Review Conference in Geneva in April this year, the United States failed to provide clear information about its biological programmes in Ukraine. In the light of the available evidence, the excuses that the programme is of a purely peaceful nature are clearly not enough for the international community. Of additional concern is the US Government's policy of opposing the strengthening of the BTWC regime, notably by blocking the creation of a mechanism to verify compliance with its provisions and the initiative to introduce a confidence-building measure in the form of reporting on military biological activities outside national territory. It appears that the US Government does have skeletons in its closet after all.

In Russia, a parliamentary commission has been established to investigate the activities of the United States' biological laboratories in Ukraine, and there are plans for a broad international exchange of information on the subject. Five years of US and Ukrainian reports on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention are being analysed. Russia is putting together a package of documents to launch an official international investigation into military biological activities in Ukraine in the near future. In particular, Articles V and VI of the Biological Weapons Convention will be invoked to investigate biological activities in Ukraine.

Article V of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention states in particular that: "The States Parties to this Convention undertake to consult one another and to co-operate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of the provisions of, the Convention."

Article VI of the BTWC states that: "Any State Party to this Convention which finds that any other State Party is acting in breach of obligations deriving from the provisions of the Convention may lodge a complaint with the Security Council of the United Nations."

I want to make it clear: the United States will no longer be able to gloss over this situation by simply calling the findings "lies and propaganda", as we have heard more than once in this room. The US Government will respond substantively – and not with empty words, but by revealing the truth. Russia will insist on open discussions of this dangerous issue in the relevant international bodies, including the United Nations Security Council, precisely because of the global threat posed by US military biological programmes. If the Ukrainian regime is indifferent to the fate of the people living on the territory of present-day Ukraine, it does not mean that other countries of the world will remain indifferent to the biological safety of their own citizens.

Thank you for your attention.