

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/1501/22
14 October 2022

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1394th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 October 2022

**In response to the report by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for
Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Mr. Valiant Richey**

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Richey, we welcome you to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We have studied your report carefully and would like to comment on it.

First of all, we urge you not to go along with the Polish Chairmanship, which is obsessed with the idea of the total “Ukrainization” of our Organization’s activities. The Secretary General, Ms. Helga Schmid, also actively supports the idea of organizing work exclusively around the Ukrainian dossier, in violation of Ministerial Council Decision No. 15/04 on the role of the OSCE Secretary General.

We urge you, Mr. Richey, to be more balanced, in terms both of the thematic content of your activities and of their geographical coverage. In particular, you characterize the measures of a number of countries to support refugees from Ukraine as “an outpouring of support”. In doing so, you somehow turn a blind eye to the fact that Russia has also been one of the main recipients of Ukrainian refugees since day one of the special military operation, providing them with the full support of the State.

Mr. Chairperson,

There is no doubt that the problem of trafficking in human beings continues to be relevant in the OSCE area and beyond. This phenomenon represents a gross violation of human rights. It is also a major component of organized crime with a clear financial dimension.

Poverty and social exclusion, the marginalization of certain segments of the population, the legalization of the sex industry, and insufficient support for mothers and children are among the main causes of trafficking in “human commodities”. The demand for these “human commodities”, including various forms of child exploitation, remains consistently high. We share your view that the abuse of new technologies by criminals is “particularly dangerous” for minors. The 2021 conclusions and trends you describe in the report are horrifying.

You also point out that there are tens of millions of victims of trafficking in human beings around the world. Ways to protect and assist victims were discussed in detail at the 22nd Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons. We are forced to note that this event, which, compared to other OSCE meetings, has always been predominantly constructive, was characterized this year by non-consensus and highly confrontational views that do not reflect the opinions of all OSCE participating States. In particular, certain judgements were made about Russia's special military operation.

Furthermore, we strongly advise you not to follow the line of one of the OSCE executive structures, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which, for the benefit of a small group of countries, is imposing a strange definition of "survivors" on the Organization. As we know, it is not a characteristic of the vast majority of legal systems. Moreover, experts fear that States taking this concept as a basis are essentially pushing real victims of trafficking in human beings beyond the framework of national protection mechanisms.

The report you have presented lists multiple areas of activity for your Office. Unfortunately, we did not see any references in your report to the hidden but no less dangerous field of trafficking for the purpose of removing human organs, tissues and cells. The relevance of this issue is confirmed, in particular, by the information from your report following your visit to Bulgaria (22 to 24 June 2021). The report indicates, among other things, that last year the country's law enforcement authorities launched an investigation in relation to 14 cases involving young people from Moldova and Ukraine who acted as organ donors for recipients from Israel, Germany and Jordan. Moreover, some of the recipients of transplants performed between 2019 and April 2021 at a hospital in Sofia used false identity documents to prove their kinship with the organ donor. The same report also contains information that Bulgarian citizens have been victims of traffickers in "human commodities" for organ removal.

What is happening in Albania is no less disturbing. We already spoke about this at the Permanent Council in July. The Parliament of Albania adopted a resolution rejecting the conclusions of a landmark report from 2010 on illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo and Albania prepared by Dick Marty, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Unfortunately, the representative of Albania responded by making a statement in this room that could be construed as justifying these actions.

Furthermore, we urge you to pay close attention to the numerous statements in the media and by non-governmental organizations about the "co-operation" between the Ukrainian intelligence services and a number of Western medical organizations affiliated to the black market for organ transplants during the Kyiv regime's punitive operation in Donbas. The hasty adoption of an order in March of this year by the Ukrainian Ministry of Health on amendments to the provisions regulating the procedure for the selection of organs for transplantation is a case in point. The history of this issue goes back to 2018, when a framework law on the transplantation of human anatomical materials was passed there. It was further elaborated in December 2021 into a law on the regulation of the transplantation of human anatomical materials.

At the same time, we are forced to note that some OSCE participating States, instead of tackling long-standing and systemic problems on the ground, are compiling dubious propaganda reports whose political motivations are readily apparent. This is particularly the case with the United States of America, whose representatives, having appointed themselves "the world's police", are trying to divide the world into different kinds of States. We would remind you that trafficking in children and sexual exploitation are rampant in the "City upon a Hill", which publishes an annual report on trafficking. Not to mention systemic problems, such as those linked to the situation of millions of migrants entering the country through its southern borders. These evaluations have been made many times, also in OSCE forums.

Mr. Richey,

Trafficking in human beings is very much a global problem: it poses a serious threat to all countries and therefore calls for an integrated response. Only constructive co-operation, also at the international level, can ensure that it is tackled successfully.

Thank you for your attention.