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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1415th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 March 2023

**On the ongoing crimes by the Kyiv regime and the dangerous policies of the countries
from the Western alliance to escalate tensions**

Mr. Chairperson,

At the instigation of its foreign handlers and with their full approval, the Kyiv regime continues to violate international humanitarian law and Ukraine's international legal commitments, including those undertaken at the OSCE.

Inherently terrorist attacks on peaceful neighbourhoods continue unabated. The majority of the most egregious instances of slaughter of civilians are now taking place with the use of NATO weapons supplied to the Kyiv regime for the purpose of advancing the hegemonistic aspirations of the United States of America. Last week alone, targeted attacks on the civilian population killed at least seven people and injured over forty, including children.

On 8 March, residential areas in the Russian cities of Donetsk, Panteleimonovka and Gorlovka (Donetsk People's Republic) were subjected to intensive shelling with NATO-standard 155 mm calibre artillery. Seven civilians, including two children, were injured. In addition to destroyed and damaged residential buildings, a children's social centre in the city of Donetsk also suffered damage.

On 11 March, two 155 mm NATO shells were fired at Yugoslavskaya Street in Donetsk. Shrapnel damaged a taxi in which a man and his son were sitting. They both died as a result of their injuries. Little Nikita Safronov, who had turned eight that very day, was left desperately fighting for his life on his birthday, but he succumbed to his injuries in the ambulance on his way to hospital. This dead young citizen of Donetsk had never known peace at all – he spent his entire short journey through life being regularly shelled by Ukrainian formations, which had been instructed, trained, equipped and supplied by the United States, the United Kingdom and their NATO satellites. The aforementioned countries have not only been arming the Kyiv regime's formations but also encouraging them to attack the civilian population. As we can see, in Washington, D.C., and a number of other capitals, there is not a hint of regret for the victims of these attacks: not a single word of concern or condemnation has been heard either in this room or at any other international forum. Instead, they will keep on pushing the narrative that all of this is some kind of "Russian disinformation". Eight-year-old Nikita joined the sad list of the Alley of Angels in Donetsk in

memory of the children killed by Ukrainian shelling, a memorial that the foreign sponsors of the Kyiv regime so stubbornly ignore.

Yesterday, on 15 March, again in the city of Donetsk, a teenager (born in 2009) was injured when a shell hit an apartment building at 26 Saltykov-Shchedrin Street.

On 12 March, another horrific attack occurred at the bus station in the Russian city of Perevalsk (Luhansk People's Republic). The strike was launched using a US-made HIMARS multiple-launch rocket system from the outskirts of the city of Chasov Yar (Donetsk People's Republic, Russia), which is temporarily occupied by Volodymyr Zelenskyy's formations. The US-made missile killed three civilians standing at a bus stop, including a child. Sixteen people were injured, including four children, one of whom is in serious condition. You may remember that, on 14 September 2022, a boarding school in this city was shelled using the same kind of HIMARS system.

The Kyiv regime's Ministry of Defence recently published, via its official online channels, video footage showing how these strikes are carried out using HIMARS systems: the missiles are launched directly from roads that are in use, without the civilian traffic travelling along them being restricted. The Kyiv regime spares no one – neither those whom it fires upon, nor those who may find themselves caught up in retaliatory fire directed against a launch pod.

Since the beginning of last week, targeted attacks by Mr. Zelenskyy's formations have resulted in damage to functioning educational facilities for children, specifically to schools Nos. 51, 52 and 58 in Donetsk. A primary school teacher and a laboratory assistant were injured. Fortunately, there were no fatalities or injuries among the children present in these schools. We must stress that general educational institutions in Donbas have been operating under these conditions for nine years now, since the start of the Kyiv regime's military aggression against the civilian population of Donbas in April 2014.

What kind of protection of children's rights are the representatives of the Kyiv regime and their foreign sponsors hypocritically lecturing us about here? After all, it is because of the aforementioned monstrous, brutal and inherently terrorist shelling attacks that children, youngsters and their parents have to be evacuated from areas near the line of contact deep into Russian territory. Social services in the regions of the Russian Federation not only help to keep these children alive, but also provide them with psychological counselling and support, guided by child protection priorities.

In supplying the Kyiv regime with lethal weapons, NATO countries bear a large share of the responsibility for the casualties resulting from their use. Not to mention the international legal aspect of the issue, when such deliveries are made to a conflict zone in violation of the export control regime for military goods or when their transfer to the end user is carried out without the permission of the producer State.

The Kyiv regime, which has set itself the task of "destroying Russia as a country" (as explicitly stated by the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, Oleksii Danilov, on 1 December 2022), intends to continue the hostilities against the will of the people of Ukraine themselves in the interests of the country's foreign handlers. Mr. Danilov admitted this on television on 9 March: "I heard one political figure from the Lviv region who said that we need negotiations, we need to sit down and reach an agreement. Bear in mind that there are more and more such people. This is a very dangerous trend when even people from western Ukraine start talking about such things."

We would emphasize that the Kyiv regime's nominal leaders themselves have closed the door on a political and diplomatic settlement. We would remind you that, already on 30 September 2022, decisions by the highest State authorities prohibiting political and diplomatic contacts with the Russian leadership for the

purposes of a settlement were adopted in Kyiv and then given legal form. The talk about how Mr. Zelenskyy formulated some kind of “peace plan” following that decision and how he himself allegedly hankers after a diplomatic solution to the conflict are nothing more than a smokescreen for prolonging the hostilities. And such a lie about the Ukrainian Government’s readiness for diplomacy is unfortunately being spread in this room by representatives of the countries that continue to actively supply the Zelenskyy regime with weapons and military equipment and seek in this way to inflict some kind of “strategic defeat” on our country.

We see no willingness on the part of the Kyiv regime’s representatives to engage in a political and diplomatic settlement, taking into account the realities that have emerged. What this implies is that the Russian special operation will continue until all its objectives are fully achieved by military means. As soon as the Ukrainian Government and the West acknowledge the real state of affairs, eschew empty and unrealistic slogans and show a willingness to engage in substantive dialogue, contacts can be resumed.

One further point. We once again draw attention to the Kyiv regime’s flagrant violations of the universal and constitutional rights of Orthodox believers in Ukraine. Since the coup d’état in February 2014, there has been co-ordinated and large-scale repression of the clergy and parishioners of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) in Ukraine. As a counterweight to the UOC, a political structure with a pseudo-religious bent – the so-called “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” – was established in Ukraine in 2018 with the active assistance of the United States. Supported by the authorities, it immediately began to oust the canonical UOC from spiritual and public life in Ukraine. Not only did the Zelenskyy regime fail to stop the illegal actions violating Ukraine’s Constitution and obligations under international law, but it also continued with renewed vigour its attacks on the canonical UOC and interference in the life of religious communities.

In recent months, persecution of UOC hierarchs has intensified on the basis of trumped-up charges that they are undermining State security. Mr. Zelenskyy signed a decree on the introduction of so-called restrictive measures (sanctions) in relation to the clergy of the UOC, including deprivation of nationality (which grossly violates not only Article 25 of the Constitution of Ukraine but also Article 9 of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to which Ukraine has been a party since 2013).

The apogee of the persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was reached with the recently announced decision by the Ministry of Culture to deprive the UOC of its right to use a major holy site of Russian Orthodoxy, the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, and perform religious ceremonies there. The monks of the monastery (over 200 people) and the UOC leadership have been ordered to leave that sacred place by 29 March. What is more, Culture Minister Oleksandr Tkachenko said that the monks would be able to stay there only if they “exercised their choice”, in other words, if they betrayed their spiritual ideals and pledged their allegiance to the political project created by the authorities that goes by the name of “Orthodox Church of Ukraine”. Somewhat earlier, the UOC monks were deprived of the right to use the Dormition Cathedral and the Refectory Church on the territory of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves.

Against this backdrop, Mr. Zelenskyy made a cynical statement on 12 March to the effect that interference in religious life is some kind of step “towards strengthening spiritual independence”. However, it is clear that Ukrainian society itself does not accept such pressure. This is evidenced by the thousands of people who gathered at the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves on 13 March for a prayer service against the persecution of the UOC. Numerous gatherings of believers in defence of their rights have also taken place in other regions and cities of Ukraine.

The lack of response from the OSCE to the gross violation of the rights of Orthodox Christians and discrimination against them is outrageous. On 14 March, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, addressed appeals on this matter to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia Bujar Osmani, and to the OSCE Secretary General, Helga Schmid. The Director

of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Matteo Mecacci, and other structures within our Organization have been informed of the problem. We expect from all of them not only principled assessments of the Kyiv regime's unlawful actions but also real assistance in putting an end to the arbitrary treatment and long-standing repression of the UOC faithful and clergy.

One final point. The latest meeting of the Ramstein-format contact group dealing with military supplies for the Kyiv regime was convened this week. The actions of the United States and its NATO satellites show that, despite their hypocritical calls for diplomacy, they are still involved in the military planning of the conflict in Ukraine, are determined to continue their dangerous militarization and adventurism in foreign policy, to arm the Kyiv regime and facilitate escalation with a view to prolonging the bloodshed and fomenting hatred of all things Russian on the part of Ukrainians.

Of course, history will put everything in its place and will eventually provide an answer to the Western fantasies about the viability of the "anti-Russia" project, which they want to implement today at the expense of the Russians and Ukrainians themselves. We emphasize that the Kyiv regime's foreign handlers must realize the perniciousness of escalating the military confrontation in and around Ukraine. The expectation of a military breakthrough in favour of the criminal regime in Kyiv will not materialize. Russia will continue to consistently defend its legitimate national interests and protect its people by all available means.

Thank you for your attention.