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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1517th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 April 2025

**In response to the report by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Braathu,

We thank you for the fairly balanced report that you presented to the Permanent Council today for the first time in your capacity as OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. We support the Representative's efforts aimed at promoting freedom and pluralism of the media in the OSCE area, ensuring safe working conditions for journalists and combating disinformation.

The situation with regard to ensuring the safety of professional journalists and other media specialists and the prosecution without fail of offences committed against them has not only failed to improve but has in fact deteriorated noticeably in recent years.

With regard to your assessment that the special military operation in Ukraine is increasing the risks for journalists, we should like to remind you that it is the Kyiv regime that hunts down Russian media representatives with ruthless fervour. Our journalists – Semyon Eremin, Valery Kozhin, Nikita Tsitsagi and Yulia Kuznetsova – died at the hands of Zelenskyy's militants in 2024. Correspondents Yevgeny Poddubny and Alexey Ivliev miraculously survived targeted attacks by drones, as did Olga Bryantseva. Since the beginning of this year, correspondents Alexander Martemyanov, Anna Prokofieva and Alexander Fedorchak, cameraman Andrey Panov and camera crew driver Alexander Sirkeli have been killed, and correspondents Maxim Romanenko, Mikhail Kevkhiev, Svetlana Larina, Isabella Liberman, Yuriy Sholmov, Nikita Goldin and Mikhail Skuratov have been seriously injured. We recall that, under international humanitarian law, journalists and media workers are civilians and must be protected at all times, and that a deliberate attack on them constitutes a war crime. We believe that the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media should condemn such egregious cases directly, without any vague wording.

In Ukraine, the entire information space and independent media have been subjected to a complete purge and replaced by the notorious "Telemarathon", which broadcasts the Zelenskyy regime's Russophobic propaganda around the clock. The head of the Ukrainian Institute of Mass Information, Oksana Romaniuk, stressed that nearly 90 per cent of the country's so-called media outlets were operating courtesy of external

cash injections, what is more not from charities, non-governmental organizations or civil society representatives, but from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Incidentally, the same structure sponsored, through grants, the media in other countries too, including Western ones, requiring them to pursue a policy of “strategic silence” on those issues that were disadvantageous to the previous administration in the White House, notably with regard to the conflict in Ukraine. This can be described as freedom of expression “by arrangement”.

Mr. Braathu,

We are obliged to note that the West has switched once and for all to a policy of completely cleansing its media space of inconvenient facts, using the entire repressive arsenal of political censorship. Usually under the spurious pretext of safeguarding national security, States that consider themselves to be “champions of democratic values” impose bans on broadcasts by television and radio channels, block Internet resources, cut off access to financial services, shut down news offices, group sources of information according to the principle of desirable and undesirable, and to all intents and purposes keep their citizens in an information bubble.

The victims of this kind of unjustified repression are primarily Russian journalists and other media representatives. Under the spurious pretext of combating foreign interference and disinformation, in February of this year, the European Union imposed new restrictions on the following Russian media outlets: the Eurasia Daily website, the NewsFront agency, the SouthFront website, the RuBaltic.ru portal, the Lenta.ru online publication, the Zvezda television channel, the *Krasnaya Zvezda* newspaper and the Strategic Culture Foundation.

In recent months, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* foreign affairs correspondent Alexander Kudel in France and Rossiya Segodnya news agency correspondent Gennady Melnik in Greece have had their work obstructed. Denis Davydov, a journalist working for the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company’s Belgrade office, was detained at Bucharest airport and expelled from Romania. At the end of last year, the German authorities ordered Russian Channel One correspondents Ivan Blagoy and Dmitry Volkov to leave the country for spurious reasons. The latter, by the way, was subsequently injured by a Ukrainian mine in the Belgorod region. The websites of seven Russian magazines have been blocked in Latvia since 23 March of this year, in addition to dozens of others that had been blocked earlier. All in all, since 2022, the list of restrictions of this kind imposed by EU and NATO countries runs to dozens.

At this point, we should also like to recall that, in accordance with paragraph 2 of OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 193 on the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Representative “will address serious problems caused by, *inter alia*, obstruction of media activities and unfavourable working conditions for journalists”. For now, unfortunately, this obligation is not being properly fulfilled, and this has been the case for many years.

It should be noted that, unlike the European Union, Russia adheres to the principles of freedom of speech, does not impose groundless restrictions on the media, and is not afraid of different opinions. Contrary to the restrictions on the activities of foreign journalists attributed to Russia, foreign correspondents in our country, including those from States with unfriendly governments, have the opportunity to work in accordance with the laws of our country and to carry out their professional activities. Journalists are issued with visas and accreditation, and are invited to official events. At the same time, unfriendly steps against representatives of Russian media outlets abroad will result in reciprocal measures being taken against media workers from the countries concerned in our country.

Mr. Representative,

Your work cannot be easy at a time when journalists throughout the OSCE area are being mobilized as soldiers of information warfare, and censorship and repression of undesirable journalists and media outlets are concealed under the fig leaf of safeguarding national security interests. We realize that you are under unprecedented pressure and they also want to enlist your efforts in the trenches of information warfare. Hence also the Western notion that OSCE officials should be impartial but not neutral, which is nonsense according to the letter and spirit of international work and undermines the foundations of the work of the OSCE's specialized institutions.

We are confident, however, that these attempts will prove futile thanks to your inherent professionalism and responsible attitude towards the matter at hand. We are counting on appropriate and balanced coverage of media freedom issues, both politically and geographically, in strict compliance with the existing mandate.

For our part, we are ready to co-operate in good faith with the Office of the Representative on a wide range of relevant issues. The key to such co-operation will be your strict fulfilment of the mandate and an appropriate response to our legitimate concerns.

Thank you for your attention.