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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1523rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 June 2025

**Anti-democratic and repressive practices of the Kyiv regime as a result of Ukraine  
being under external control since 2014**

Mr. Chairperson,

Several decades ago, Hitler's criminal Nazi regime was nurtured in Europe with the tacit consent and indeed connivance of leading European powers. In the early twenty-first century, these same countries in effect carried out yet another dangerous geopolitical experiment by creating the Kyiv regime. Inveterate neo-Nazis, direct disciples of the Hitlerite butchers and their henchmen, make up its hard core and mainstay.

Following the externally orchestrated bloody and anti-democratic coup in 2014, its Western masterminds and sponsors set a straight course to turn Ukraine into an "anti-Russia" and a battering ram to be used against Russian statehood in the military, political, cultural and economic dimensions. The nominal leaders of the puppet regime, first Petro Poroshenko and then Volodymyr Zelenskyy, quite unashamedly deceived the people and abused the public trust deposited in them. After coming to power to the accompaniment of slogans about striving for peace in Donbass and developing democratic institutions, they continued, egged on by their foreign handlers, to pursue the entrenchment of authoritarian practices and to seek military escalation. Society was excluded from the decision-making process – people were first promised referendums on any issue, but were then deprived of that right. There were promises to "negotiate with the devil himself" if it would bring peace closer. However, exactly the opposite has happened.

Political assassinations, extrajudicial killings and the criminal prosecution of dissenters have become commonplace. Discriminatory practices in the areas of language, culture, education and the media have intensified. There has been a large-scale assault on religious and other freedoms.

February 2022 breathed new life into the Kyiv regime's criminal activities, finally giving the neo-Nazi authorities a free hand. Under the pretext of "national security", opposition parties (including the Opposition Platform – For Life) have been banned, their leaders persecuted and their assets seized by the State. Thousands of political figures, journalists and civil activists have been arrested and tortured; some of them have disappeared without a trace. Among them are Dmitriy Marunych, Viktor Shestakov, brothers Mikhail and Aleksander Kononovich and many others. Local historian and author Yuriy Pogoda and blogger Gonzalo Lira were tortured to death. And these are just the high-profile figures.

Another case of cynical political persecution is the targeting of well-known human rights defender Elena Berezhnaya, who in March 2022 was detained by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). In December 2024, a Kyiv court sentenced her to 14 years' imprisonment with confiscation of property. However, in March 2025, the European Court of Human Rights ruled her arrest unlawful and ordered Ukraine to pay compensation for non-pecuniary damage. The Kyiv regime openly ignored this judgment. No payment has been forthcoming, nor were there any attempts to improve the conditions of her detention.

Ms. Berezhnaya is currently in a prison hospital under guard in an extremely serious condition. She is unable to stand, is suffering from facial nerve paralysis and has trouble speaking – all signs of a massive stroke. No one is allowed to visit her – neither her relatives, nor independent doctors, nor international observers. As a result of Ms. Berezhnaya being imprisoned, a stroke can be much more life-threatening. We believe that authoritative institutions claiming to be human rights bodies should make every effort to secure her unconditional release. We would ask that this statement be regarded as an official appeal to, first and foremost, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ms. Maria Telalian, to take the necessary measures within the framework of her mandate. We also ask the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Christophe Kamp, to pay attention to this outrageous situation.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is not only prominent public figures and human rights defenders who are being mercilessly trampled by this unprecedented steamroller of repressive measures. The number of residents of the Kherson region accused of collaboration for having participated in the referendum that approved the region's becoming part of Russia already runs into the thousands. As we have noted on previous occasions, the majority of the political prisoners in Ukraine are elderly women, whose entire "guilt" consists in having distributed humanitarian aid, drawn up lists of those in need of social benefits and taught children in schools.

It is estimated that up to 13,000 political prisoners are currently being held by the Kyiv regime. This is a huge figure, given that the total number of people in detention facilities does not exceed 40,000. This means, in effect, that every fourth person serving time in prison is a political prisoner of some sort. At the same time, the independence of the legal profession is also at risk. Independent lawyers, such as Svetlana Novitskaya or Vladimir Yevglevsky, are behind bars on the same trumped-up charges. The relatives of prisoners are intimidated, since they also live in constant fear for their lives and freedom. And the lawyers appointed by the SBU are certainly not interested in defending the interests of their clients and publicizing the criminal actions of the Ukrainian intelligence services.

Mr. Chairperson,

This is by no means the first year that the Kyiv regime's Western handlers have hypocritically turned a blind eye to – or even justified – the neo-Nazi authorities' all-pervasive repression of their own population. The boundless cynicism and even pride with which the local security forces report on the scale of persecution is not surprising in this regard. And this persecution is not inconsiderable. For example, in February 2025, the head of the SBU, Vasyl Maliuk, speaking at the "Ukraine: Year 2025" forum, stated that "since the invasion began, more than 3,000 people have been served with charges of treason, and over 1,300 people have been sentenced by the courts. The average prison sentence is between 12 and 15 years, and there is additional imprisonment for officials." The scale of the repression is so great that even such figures as the head of the Kyiv City State Administration, Vitalii Klitschko (who can hardly be suspected of spreading "pro-Russian narratives"), recognize this. Let us quote his recent observation: "I once said our country smells like authoritarianism. Now, it reeks."

And what about the countless cases of forced mobilization of people into the armed formations of the Kyiv regime? A law has already been passed on the so-called voluntary mobilization of young men aged 18–25 years. Recently, a new draft law was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) on the mobilization of men over 60 years of age. The Internet is awash with video clips by concerned eyewitnesses documenting crimes committed by employees of the “territorial recruitment centres” against their fellow male citizens. I am making this remark especially for those who, as usual, will try to blame everything on “Russian propaganda”. What is more, the Ukrainians have even come up with a specific term for these “slaughtermen”, namely “people-catchers”.

Civilians captured on the streets are first turned into prisoners on the people-catchers’ home turf. They are detained illegally on the premises of the military enlistment offices, and then forced to agree to become cannon fodder on the front line. After which they are literally sent to be slaughtered. Such measures are dictated by the dismal situation on the battlefield. Mr. Zelenskyy is throwing into the cauldron of the conflict ever more tens and hundreds of thousands of ordinary Ukrainians who once elected him, believing in the slogans about the desire to bring peace closer at any price. The confirmed losses of killed and wounded run to many hundreds of thousands.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Zelenskyy regime continues to make the most vigorous efforts to destroy canonical Orthodoxy. Monasteries belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are being expropriated, and Orthodox holy places are being illegally seized. The attempts by officials in Kyiv to conduct an “inventory” of relics located in places that are sacred to Orthodox believers can be called nothing short of sacrilege.

In October 2023, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy confiscated the relics of three saints from the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chernihiv. To this day nothing is known about their fate. Now a similar inventory is under way in the catacombs of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves. Clergy from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are not allowed to be present at these “checks” as they are considered to be unwelcome witnesses. This is taking place amid statements by the so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine that the “wrong” remains are being held there. There is thus a manifest threat of forfeiture or loss of the relics of saints who do not conform to the “canons” of the schismatics. Everything that is being done by the Kyiv regime is nothing but an act of State-sponsored vandalism.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is utterly inexplicable – even from the point of view of basic decency – why the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship is silent on this matter. We are seeing no reaction from our Organization’s relevant institutions, above all the ODIHR. The current Western “overlords” of the territories still controlled by the Kyiv regime are not reacting either. All this is arguably a most eloquent testimony to the results of the efforts to “promote democratization and the rule of law” on the part of the external forces that arranged and financed the armed coup d’état in Ukraine in February 2014.

Mr. Chairperson,

And now to conclude. Why such an anti-democratic reality was created in present-day Europe on the territory controlled by the Kyiv regime is a legitimate question for all right-minded people. The answer to this question is, alas, a simple and extremely disheartening one. The current regime in Kyiv is the result of social and political engineering by a Western anti-Russian alliance, and in accordance with this logic the

Ukrainians are just expendable material. The main thing is to have the “democracy in Ukraine” signboard flashing brightly while the Kyiv regime keeps up a regular supply of cannon fodder to the front.

Thank you for your attention.