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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1456th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 December 2023

**On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Mr. Chairperson,

The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was celebrated on 10 December. This crucial document was adopted by the international community after the bloodiest war in human history and is aimed at preventing a repetition of its horrors. The Declaration exercised a decisive influence over the formation of the international regime for the protection of human rights and over the evolution of international law as a whole. The principles enshrined in it take account of the national, cultural, religious and historical specificities of countries. It continues to carry unifying potential that – provided a correct interpretation is made – can be conducive to the development of equal and mutually respectful dialogue.

Unfortunately, this venerable anniversary of the Declaration is being marked in most lamentable circumstances. The NATO countries are aggressively trying to impose their notorious “rules-based order” instead of the existing universal system of international law. Human rights issues are being actively exploited by the Western alliance to interfere in the domestic affairs of sovereign States, constituting a glaring example of the application of double standards. Selective and opportunistic interpretation of the principles and provisions of international legal instruments also takes place as a way of advancing the neoliberal concepts of those countries. The aim of such intrusions is obvious, namely to force the diverse social, cultural, economic and political systems of nations into the mould of Western “standards”, which are alien to many of them.

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past two years, our Organization has found itself particularly compromised by the unscrupulous approaches taken by the Chairmanships of Poland and North Macedonia with the active support of the Brussels bloc and the United States of America. Co-operation in the human dimension, which for a long time was the OSCE’s calling card, has been almost completely destroyed. Dialogue on human rights issues has in effect been wound down; that very area of work has been “Ukrainianized”, despite our repeated warnings and remonstrances.

The Western alliance countries and international human rights bodies subordinated to them regularly churn out, with the help of “experts” they themselves have appointed, “anthologies” of alleged violations by Russia of the norms of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. These do not contain any references to trustworthy sources. Instead, they feature copious paraphrasing of unverified information from biased Ukrainian and Western media and from web pages belonging to the Kyiv regime. These attempts to present as “documentary evidence” hastily cobbled-together collections of unverified facts do not stand up to scrutiny and cannot be taken seriously by authoritative institutions.

The atrocities against the civilian population committed by the Kyiv regime over the course of many years are quite simply “not noticed” by our opponents. The same goes for the outrages that the Zelenskyy regime is now perpetrating in the religious sphere, which are aimed at legitimizing a ban on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for the complete restriction on the Russian language, and for the flagrant violations of a wide range of rights of members of ethnic groups and national minorities.

At the instigation of those steering the OSCE unscrupulously, violations of the Rules of Procedure have become the norm, as has the holding of events under the third “basket” without consulting all the participating States. Another accelerating trend is the organization of certain thematic “international conferences” in the Hofburg under the auspices of the OSCE. Participants from the “right” countries are invited to those conferences, where they voice anti-Russian positions as needed by the organizers. At the same time, attempts are being made to portray these gatherings as OSCE events that supposedly command the support of all the participating States. In order to suppress inconvenient points of view, other methods are also being brought into play, too, such as physically barring “awkward” individuals (including civil society representatives) from accessing events; the imposition, at the last minute, of additional restrictions on the number of participants; the artificial creation of logistical difficulties; and much more besides. The aim of such actions is evidently to maintain the anti-Russian pitch at a high level, to silence alternative viewpoints, to create a semblance of Russia being isolated and to try to turn the OSCE into an exclusively “pro-Ukrainian forum”. What about much-vaunted freedom of expression, though? Or do the Brussels bloc and the United States only have need of that freedom when they need to justify the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and “get-togethers” of Waffen SS veterans?

All the other issues that the Organization should be addressing are simply being ignored. Such an approach is very convenient for the countries “west of Vienna”, insofar as it allows them to conceal the gross human rights violations occurring on their home turf. A reluctance to listen to well-founded criticism directed at oneself often gives rise to emotional outbursts à la “Who are you to be lecturing us?”. Of course, in these circumstances any sort of constructive, mutually respectful dialogue is quite out of the question. We for our part will continue to draw attention to the problems of countries in the Western camp, including religious intolerance, the infringement of social and economic rights, and violations of the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, children, migrants and refugees.

Mr. Chairperson,

The incoming Maltese Chairmanship will be receiving a most complicated legacy, one that may be likened to a pile of ruins, if not, for that matter, to an expanse of scorched earth. Rebuilding what has been destroyed will call for non-standard decisions from the authorities in Valletta. We are, of course, not referring to the so-called creative diplomacy of our opponents, the aim of which is to circumvent what is most important, namely the principle of consensus. What we have in mind is the search for joint solutions, discussion of the agenda for the human dimension, a respectful attitude towards the opinions of all 57 participating States.

The Russian Federation will remain committed to the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We stand ready to continue co-operating with all interested partners. We take the position that it is essential to promote the development and strengthening of an effective and fair system for safeguarding human rights that is equal for all.

Thank you for your attention.