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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1448th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 November 2023

**In connection with the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against
Journalists**

Mr. Chairperson,

Today, 2 November, we are marking the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Freedom of speech is a key component of any democratic society. The exercise of this right is inextricably tied to the existence of independent and protected media and to safe working conditions for journalists.

We are forced to note that the information attacks unleashed by the countries of the collective West against Russia are gathering momentum. Essentially, a one-sided, pro-Western approach to world events is being imposed on the international community. Moreover, any media resources with a point of view different from the Western mainstream continue to be brutally and crudely suppressed, usually under the pretext of security concerns or combating disinformation. States that consider themselves model democracies impose bans on broadcasts by television and radio channels, block Internet resources, cut off access to financial services, shut down news offices, rank sources of information according to the principle of right and wrong, and impose hundreds of sanctions on members of the media community. The primary victims of such repression are Russian journalists, who are feeling the brunt of the hypocrisy of “advanced democracies”. I shall give a few recent examples.

On 31 October, journalists’ rights were once again violated in Sofia. Without explanation, the country’s authorities cancelled the accreditation of *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* journalist Alexander Gatsak and notified the reporter of his impending extradition. In his articles, incidentally, this correspondent often focused on Bulgaria’s internal and foreign policy problems, and also, for example, on cases of desecration of monuments to Russian soldier-liberators in the country.

On 5 October, a similar unlawful incident occurred in Cyprus. Alexander Gasyuk, an accredited correspondent in Nicosia of the same *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* newspaper, was attacked by Cypriot police near his home. Under the pretext of depriving the Russian journalist of his residence permit on the standard charge of posing a threat to national security, they attempted to detain him using brute force. The journalist was first thrown behind bars and then expelled from the country. As a result of this act of physical violence, he sustained bodily injuries and seriously damaged his hand. We consider such provocative and brutal

behaviour by the Cypriot security forces to be absolutely unacceptable, and references to the inappropriate activities of the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* correspondent and his violation of the conditions of his residence permit in Cyprus to be far-fetched. It is outrageous that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus did not even bother to respond to timely and pertinent enquiries from our embassy in Nicosia.

Over the past few months we have also recorded a number of incidents involving gross violations by OSCE participating States of their international commitments to ensure media pluralism and access to information. Here are just a few examples. The European Union has suspended the licences of media outlets such as RT Balkan, Oriental Review, Tsargrad, Katekhon and New Eastern Outlook, and significantly expanded the list of “undesirable” journalists, war correspondents and Russian media executives. Ekaterina Nadolskaya, editor-in-chief of the federal portal *Russia News*, was denied access to the French President’s press conference during the G20 summit in New Delhi.

The appalling situation with media freedom in the Baltic republics deserves special mention. I recall that, in addition to the huge number of blocked Russian and Russian-language Internet resources, and radio and television channels, more than 30 journalists are being criminally prosecuted there. The approval of the National Security Concept by the Latvian Saeima (parliament) on 28 September marks the latest attempt to censor its media space. According to this document, Latvian public media will be prohibited from broadcasting in Russian from 1 January 2026. And this is in a country where the Russian language is the main means of communication for 40 per cent of the population.

Unlike the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, by the way, the Director General of the European Broadcasting Union, Noel Curran, condemned this gross act of discrimination and segregation of the media. The journalist appealed to the Prime Minister of Latvia to preserve Russian-language broadcasting. “I am writing to you on behalf of the European Broadcasting Union, the world’s leading alliance of Public Service Media (PSM), to express our deep concern over the proposal to ban Russian language content on Latvian Public Radio and Television and to ask you to reconsider this proposal,” he wrote. In his words, “If adopted, this proposal would run against fundamental human rights. [...] Latvia is a member of the UN, EU and Council of Europe and is legally bound to act within the scope of the international, EU and European human rights law. Governments should serve the interests and needs of the whole population, including minorities, ‘to access the media and impart and receive information, including in their own language’ in accordance with the principles of pluralism, tolerance and broad-mindedness.”

Ukraine and Moldova are no less zealous than their Western handlers in this witch-hunt, having effectively established totalitarian censorship and a regime of zero tolerance for any criticism of the authorities. Another blatant example of violation of the right to freedom of speech concerns the decision of the Moldovan authorities on 30 October this year to close six more television broadcasters and the websites of 31 media outlets, including TASS, Interfax and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in the run-up to the local elections. Moldovan publications reporting in Russian have also been blocked. In line with the campaign to eliminate inconvenient sources of information, the head of the Sputnik Moldova news agency, Vitaly Denisov, was expelled from Chişinău on 13 September. The journalist was not given time to pack his belongings, nor to complete the necessary paperwork to take his pets with him. I would like to remind you that since December last year, 12 television channels, including Pervy, RTR, NTV, Zvezda, REN TV, Vesti, TV Centre and Tsargrad, and 22 Internet resources have been banned. The agreement on the operation of the inter-State radio and television company Mir in Moldova has been terminated. A licence to show Russian cinema and entertainment content was denied to Cinema 2, one of the local media resources.

As for Ukraine, the Kyiv regime has long ago turned to openly terrorist methods of fighting dissenters with the brutal murders of Darya Dugina, Vladlen Tatarsky, Oleg Klovov and

Rostislav Zhuravlov. It has long ceased to bear in mind not only its obligations under international law, but also the requirements to respect even the basics of legal order. By the way, the fact that the journalists Darya Dugina and Vladlen Tatarsky were killed with the direct involvement of the Ukrainian Security Service is acknowledged even by reputable publications in the West that are not seen as sympathetic to Russia, such as *The Washington Post*. The newspaper noted that the Ukrainian intelligence services prepared these terrorist acts with the participation of the CIA.

The Kyiv regime also continues to carry out acts of intimidation with threats of physical violence against Russian journalists or reporters sympathetic to Russia. The latest target of this country's intelligence services was the military correspondent of *Izvestia* Valentin Trushnin. For his professional work covering the special military operation, he has repeatedly received messages and calls from Ukrainian subscribers threatening to "slaughter his entire family". In another of their extremist antics, a pentagram with a pig's head appeared outside the reporter's flat. According to the testimonies of detainees, the pressure exerted on the war correspondent was intended to bring about his physical elimination.

Not only Russian reporters but also those foreign journalists who dare to express an alternative point of view on world events are persecuted in the OSCE area. Attempts by "non-systemic" publications to deliver information outside the mainstream are brutally suppressed. This includes the aggressive search and then detention in France of investigative journalist Ariane Lavrilleux because of her reporting on French involvement in the deaths of Egyptian civilians. "This is not just a case of muzzling an individual journalist and threatening the confidentiality of her sources. These actions are part of a wider attack on public interest journalists who attempt to expose the opaque actions of the French intelligence services," said Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

Another clear example is the ban on the head of the Republika Srpska Association of Journalists, Danijel Simić, from entering Croatia because of his reporting on the special operation in Ukraine. There is also a campaign to discredit the online portal NachDenkSeiten for refusing to follow the Russophobic course of the German establishment.

The lack of reaction by the OSCE's relevant structures to such incidents testifies to the bias and prejudice of the Organization's current leadership and the inability of these structures to comply with their mandates. Silence about problems with freedom of speech gives the authorities of Western countries an excuse for further repression of undesirable media and journalists, and in fact turns human rights institutions into accomplices of the censors.

A media dictatorship has long been established in the Western world, where only the officially agreed point of view is allowed. The right of full access to information is not being implemented. Puppet regimes encourage direct repression of the media. The Kyiv regime is the clearest example of this. As everyone knows, there are no media resources left in the territory controlled by Zelenskyy that are not answerable to his administration. And it has been done under the direct supervision of the embassies of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Moldova is going the same way. This is not going to end well for it.

As for the authorities in Washington, D.C., Brussels, London, Berlin and other Western centres, they have been getting what they deserve. A servile class of media troops, the contempt and distrust of the traditional mainstream media audience, a dichotomy between official propaganda and reality – everything that is so fiercely condemned in the so-called free world. Now this world has unleashed an information war. And it will lose this war.

Thank you for your attention.