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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1429th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 June 2023

**On the occasion of the tragic date of 22 June 1941:  
the start of the Great Patriotic War**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 22 June 1941, Hitler's troops treacherously attacked the Soviet Union, marking the beginning of a tragic but heroic chapter of history – the Great Patriotic War. This monstrous twentieth-century tragedy was born of the aggressive ambitions of those who were convinced of their racial superiority and uniqueness and who imagined themselves to be the masters of peoples' destinies. In Russia, 22 June – the day the Great Patriotic War began – has been declared a Day of Remembrance and Sorrow.

We remember that it was the Red Army, uniting in its ranks all the peoples of the Soviet Union, that managed to stop the invaders and made a decisive contribution to the defeat of the Nazi Third Reich and the liberation of the States of Europe from the horrors of fascism and National Socialism. It is our shared victory. We shall never forget the unprecedented courage and self-sacrifice of the front-line soldiers, partisans, participants in the anti-fascist resistance and workers on the home front. Thanks to their tremendous willpower and sacrifice, the future of all humanity was secured and the fundamental right to life defended.

We mourn the 27 million dead Soviet citizens. We pay tribute to the millions of people of different nationalities and faiths who laid down their lives in the name of freedom and justice and the triumph of good over evil.

We have no right to forget these terrible lessons of history, let alone repeat the mistakes of the past. We cannot accept attempts to consign this historical period to oblivion, to revise or distort the moral and legal assessment of the outcome of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War, to equate victims and executioners, liberators and aggressors, to cast doubt on the judgments of the Nuremberg Tribunal and generally to create an alternative historical reality to serve the current geopolitical agenda.

We know very well how indulging in nationalist sentiments has allowed the ideology of hatred and contempt for humanity to grow and take hold. We strongly condemn any form of glorification of the Nazi movement, the whitewashing of former Waffen-SS members and their accomplices, and the condoning of

manifestations of neo-Nazism. This is an outright mockery of the memory of the millions who fell on the battlefields or were brutally tortured by the Nazis in prisons and concentration camps. The terrible crimes of Hitler's Germany have no statute of limitations.

The "war" unleashed by a number of OSCE participating States on memorials to the liberating soldiers and common graves is blasphemous and morally and historically unacceptable. The manipulation of historical memory and the flirtation with supporters of racial superiority for selfish interests must cease. Such manifestations must be dealt with firmly and nipped in the bud. In that respect, we note the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted on 15 December 2022 on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The day 22 June 1941 is forever inscribed in our common history in inexpressibly tragic letters and must never be repeated. After more than eight decades, we again call for international efforts to unite against racism, xenophobia and neo-Nazism, and to preserve historical memory. The feat of millions of those who gave us the chance for freedom and prosperity must not be forgotten.

Thank you for your attention.