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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1374th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 May 2022

**On the ongoing crimes by Ukraine against the civilian population with the support of a
Western alliance of OSCE participating States**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 16 May, the withdrawal of members of the Ukrainian nationalist formation Azov and military personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces from the Azovstal plant in the city of Mariupol in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) began. Hundreds of them have already stopped offering resistance, unconditionally laid down their arms and, after a special corridor was established for them, left the premises of the Azovstal plant. They are currently on DPR territory, under the supervision of the law enforcement authorities, and will no longer be carrying out the criminal orders of the Kyiv regime. A total of 1,730 have surrendered since 16 May. The withdrawal of those who have given up their pointless armed resistance continues. No active hostilities are being conducted in the area of Azovstal.

The Permanent Representative of Ukraine informed us today that, as it turns out, some sort of "evacuation" process for the remnants of the Mariupol garrison was initiated at the behest of President Zelenskyy and under the supervision of the Security Service of Ukraine together with, apparently, some other Ukrainian services. Well, if in the view of the representative of Ukraine the unconditional surrender of the Azov fighters and military personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces, followed by their being transported to DPR territory, constitutes an evacuation, it would be desirable in that case for all remnants of Ukrainian armed formations to be "evacuated" in the same way.

It is worth recalling how in 2018–2019 the United States Department of State categorized the Azov battalion together with other extremist groups, such as C14, as "hate groups". Now, though, the situation has evidently changed, for they are being referred to as "freedom fighters". To us this does not come as a surprise, since it is par for the course in US political practice. As I remember, in Syria, when Islamic fundamentalists opened fire on US soldiers, they were referred to as terrorists, but when they killed military personnel from the Syrian government army, they immediately became "freedom fighters". The same rhetoric is at work here now.

The Ukrainian leadership were apparently quite satisfied with this turn of events, for on the day following the start of the surrender process, that is, on 17 May, President Zelenskyy was already making an

appearance at the inauguration of the glamorous Cannes Film Festival. While knowledgeably discoursing on the problems of contemporary cinema, he just mentioned Mariupol and Azovstal in passing.

We must stress that the true defenders of Mariupol are those who liberated the city from neo-Nazis, ensuring that these self-proclaimed Übermenschen will no longer be able to terrorize the local population or stir up inter-ethnic hatred. The cessation of the Ukrainian neo-Nazis' armed forays is undoubtedly having a positive effect on the process of establishing a peaceful life in Mariupol. Calm is returning to a city that for eight years was effectively being held to ransom by the Azov fighters. The DPR authorities are ensuring that the supply of water and electricity to residential buildings is restored; the public utilities are eliminating the consequences of the fighting in the city; public transport has resumed.

The law enforcement agencies of Russia and the DPR are accumulating further new testimonies from real eyewitnesses to the criminal actions perpetrated in Mariupol, that is, to Ukrainian fighters' targeted firing at residential areas; to the use of the population as human shields; to violence against civilians; to the establishment of military strongpoints in schools, hospitals and public institutions; to the deliberate setting of blocks of flats on fire so as to create a smokescreen while units of the Azov battalion and the Ukrainian armed forces abandoned their combat positions. All these facts and testimonies will, of course, receive a proper legal evaluation.

Over in Kyiv they continue to display an inhumane attitude towards the fate of civilians and disdain for the norms of ethics and international humanitarian law. Over the past week, the Ukrainian armed forces have inflicted a series of strikes on residential areas and civilian infrastructure facilities of the DPR and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), as a result of which at least 12 people were killed and more than 55 were injured. In total, on DPR and LPR territory between 17 February and 17 May there have been at least 147 confirmed fatalities and more than 580 confirmed casualties among the civilian population of the People's Republics owing to the operations of Ukrainian armed formations. The victims include many children. The data on those killed and injured are being updated: unfortunately, these numbers keep on rising inexorably as reports are checked and verified.

We are obliged to note that at the OSCE it has so far not been possible to have a substantive conversation on verified facts in relation to what is happening in Ukraine. This room reverberates with lots of emotions that are not backed up by real evidence. The representatives of a number of countries have made it a rule to relay the Kyiv regime's propaganda – they do not trouble themselves to check the facts, or they consciously participate in the spreading of disinformation. What really takes the biscuit is the story of “the rape of an 11-year-old boy in front of his mother” that was related here just one day after the Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson for Children), Daria Herasymchuk, publicly admitted that the authorities were not in possession of a single confirmed fact pointing to violent actions against children by the military.

We realize that ideological blinkers, put on as part of “Euro-Atlantic discipline”, are preventing many from seeing things properly. After all, apart from their cheap smears on the military personnel of Russia and the Donbas republics, some participants in the discussion stubbornly pretend that the Ukrainian armed formations, as a matter of course, do not commit crimes against the civilian population. They refuse point-blank, as they have been doing all these past eight years, to notice how the Ukrainian armed forces use cluster munitions against peaceful towns and indiscriminately shell residential areas and civilian infrastructure facilities that have no military positions nearby and never had any. The Ukrainian fighters are being portrayed pretty much as if they were “angels”, yet among those who are whitewashing them not one has stopped to think of true angels such as those at the Alley of Angels memorial site in the centre of Donetsk. It was erected to commemorate the scores of innocent children killed as a result of the brutal Ukrainian shelling.

The Ukrainian armed formations continue to wage war against the civilian population. On 16 May, a Smerch multiple-launch rocket system was used to strike at residential areas of Kherson. It is important to note that the shelling was deliberately directed at the civilian population, since there are no units of Russian troops in that city. All ten rockets that were fired were intercepted by Russian air defence systems as they approached the city. Who among the Ukrainian Government's external handlers has condemned this barbarous shelling? None.

On 18 May, militants from the Ukrainian "territorial defence" published photographs of six civilians from Sievierodonetsk (LPR), temporarily occupied by the Ukrainian armed forces. They had been savagely murdered in Kyiv on suspicion of having set up "beacons" of some sort. Their disfigured bodies and faces were captured from various angles on these pictures. All this was accompanied by jeering comments and even a video confession by one of the Ukrainian militants, who threatened other civilians outright with extrajudicial reprisals. It was reported that all these victims had previously been members of an opposition party. So that is how the Kyiv regime and its stooges "uphold" the celebrated "European values"?

The Western representatives are currently silent about all this. Not one word on this matter has passed their lips today. On the contrary, they are in "Xerox mode", putting together their emotional statements on the basis of empty slogans. What we are actually dealing with here may be described as the whitewashing of the Ukrainian armed formations' crimes against the civilian population of Donbas and Ukraine. It is saddening for us to observe how diplomats from a number of Western OSCE participating States are involved in this and are effectively giving the green light for further violence to be perpetrated with impunity. Is it a case of pandering or complicity?

As for the deliberate murders of inhabitants of Ukraine, the DPR and the LPR and of Russian citizens, there is every reason to believe that many of them were committed with the aid of the lethal weapons supplied to the Kyiv regime by Western States. Moreover, the "leading" NATO countries try to publicly distance themselves from acknowledgement of the fact that it is precisely through the use of weapons and shells supplied by them that people continue to be killed in Ukraine. This is reprehensible. Mind you, such dichotomizing and hypocrisy have long since become calling cards of many in the West.

There is one question I should like to put to those organizing these shipments: are you absolutely certain that the weapons being sent to Kyiv will not end up in the hands of thugs from the nationalist battalions who boast swastika tattoos and extol neo-Nazi and racist ideas? Or that they will not find their way to terrorist groups operating in the pan-European space? Moreover, can Germany, for example, be quite sure that the military goods it is supplying to Ukraine will not end up in the hands of armed "fanboys" of Hitler and of SS murderers?

When withdrawing from positions they had occupied, the Ukrainian armed forces mine areas of Donbas using anti-personnel mines, including those prohibited under international agreements. I am referring, in particular, to PMN-2 pressure-operated blast mines. Additionally, depots have come to light in Mariupol containing MON-50 and MON-90 mines, which were abandoned by the Ukrainian nationalists during their retreat. The Kyiv regime routinely, year in, year out, deceived the international community and the OSCE, making out that it was fulfilling in good faith its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Convention) of 1997, that it had destroyed its stocks of such mines, and so on. Is there anyone who today seriously believes the assurances by the Ukrainian leadership that foreign weapons would not be used against the civilian population?

How is one to explain the attack carried out on 27 April on the peaceful city of Enerhodar and the nearby Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, in which two Polish-made Warmate unmanned combat aerial

vehicles equipped with high-explosive munitions were used? I would remind you that both devices were launched from territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces and were shot down over Enerhodar before they could reach their targets. Carrying out such provocations involving the use of foreign weapons jeopardizes the security of nuclear facilities and imperils the life and health both of the Ukrainian population and of the inhabitants of European countries. After checking and verifying the facts, the Russian Federation last week sent proof of this attack on a critical civilian infrastructure facility to the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), requesting it to bring this evidence to the attention of the IAEA Member States.

The members of the Kyiv regime do not shrink from provocations involving chemicals. On 16 May, in temporarily occupied DPR territory near the village of Mazanivka, the Ukrainian intelligence services blew up a landmine that had been filled with up to one tonne of ammonium nitrate to make it more explosive. As a result of the explosion, a toxic cloud was formed, rising to an altitude of around 1 km and subsequently drifting towards Kramatorsk.

Another incident of this kind, already mentioned by us, was the blowing up of chemical tanks in Rubizhne by the Ukrainian military on 5 and 9 April, including tanks at the local Zarya plant. The city of Rubizhne has now been liberated. A few days ago, the personal data of seven US citizens killed there who had been participating in the fighting alongside the Ukrainian nationalists were made public. According to the testimony of Ukrainian military personnel who surrendered to the law enforcement authorities, US and Polish mercenaries who were in Rubizhne commanded the Ukrainian soldiers, having deliberately turned the premises of the aforementioned plant into a military objective. These mercenaries ruled the roost there and had no qualms about wasting human life.

The Kyiv regime consistently rejects opportunities for a political and diplomatic settlement. Contacts have been *de facto* terminated at the initiative of the Ukrainian side. As far as we understand, this has been done under pressure from the regime's external handlers, who do not hide their desire that the situation be resolved "on the battlefield" (Josep Borrell) and that a "strategic defeat" be inflicted on Russia in Ukraine (Antony Blinken, Victoria Nuland and others). Our country is in possession of information indicating that the Ukrainian negotiators are being "steered" from London and Washington, D.C. In these circumstances, unfortunately, one cannot count on genuinely independent decisions being taken by what is essentially a puppet regime in Kyiv, for the upkeep of whose State apparatus the United States of America plans to earmark around 7.5 billion dollars in the near future.

We understand that both the deadlocking of political consultations and the military "beefing up" of Ukraine are being undertaken with a view to dragging out the crisis in that country and not allowing its inhabitants to return to a peaceful life for as long as possible. We stress that foreign military supplies to Ukraine are legitimate targets in the context of the Russian special military operation and will be destroyed. We recommend that you keep a close watch on the regular announcements by the Russian Ministry of Defence about the precision strikes carried out on sites where these supplies were being stored and stockpiled.

All of this confirms once more that Ukraine is merely "expendable material" in the West's all-out hybrid war against Russia. For years, Ukraine was deliberately remodelled into a hotbed of Russophobia and a source of military and biological threats to its own inhabitants and to the populations of neighbouring States. Ukraine's territory and resources are the key asset, whereas the lives of Ukrainians themselves are of interest to the external handlers of the Kyiv regime only insofar as they can be put to further use against Russia. The leadership in Kyiv was being consistently geared for military confrontation: it did not suit the plans of its foreign handlers to support the development of friendly and good-neighbourly ties to Ukraine's neighbours.

Just a couple of words now regarding the statements by the participants in today's discussion with regard to Russia's alleged responsibility for the onset of a global food crisis. It is clear that efforts are already under way to develop a new propaganda narrative in which Russia has been declared responsible for the rise in prices and imminent shortages in global food markets. However, let us turn away from propaganda and take a look at reality. Before the start of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine (24 February 2022), the price of wheat, for example, had been constantly going up over a period of two years. In 2021, the wheat price increased by 25 per cent. By February of this year, the price forecast had surpassed the five-year average for 2017–2021 by as much as 62 per cent. Similarly, by February, the price of maize had gone up by 162 per cent and that of oilseed rape by 175 per cent.

What caused this? As part of their response to the COVID-19 crisis, the United States, Japan and the European Union countries "pumped" more than 8 trillion dollars into crisis response measures, thereby accelerating inflation. Freight costs increased significantly for the same reason. The cherry on the cake, so to speak, was the anti-Russian sanctions, which, despite the Western countries' awareness of Russia's role in the global collaborative supply chain for food markets, were introduced all the same. That dealt a heavy blow to supply logistics and, ultimately, to the prices and volumes of foodstuffs reaching markets. So it is no good blaming our country.

Those who today dream of turning Ukraine into Europe's latest "black hole" ought, instead, to concern themselves with issues in the development of their own countries and stop investing in tensions far away from their borders. We would remind them of a fine Russian proverb: "He that digs a pit for another will fall into it himself." We once again emphasize that, regardless of any vicissitudes, the objectives of the Russian special military operation, namely the denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine, will be accomplished fully.

Thank you for your attention.