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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1416th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 March 2023

On the anniversary of the Khatyn tragedy

Mr. Chairperson,

Together with our friends from Belarus, we grieve for the innocent victims of Nazism's monstrous crimes. On 22 March 1943, exactly 80 years ago, the Belorussian village of Khatyn was destroyed by the Nazis and their henchmen. They claimed that they were building a new world order – an order based on their rules. A key role in perpetrating this crime was played by the thugs from the Dirlewanger Brigade, a penal battalion of the SS, and the Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft Battalion 118, formed in Kyiv and made up principally of Ukrainian nationalists.

On that day, after a brief skirmish with partisans on the outskirts of the village, those thugs began going into the houses of civilians and rounding people up on the streets. All the inhabitants, who were of highly diverse nationalities and included 75 children, were driven into a wooden shed and locked up there. The building was then set on fire and those who tried to escape from it were mercilessly shot dead. Only five children and one adult survived that inferno of flames.

Of course, this is not the only monstrous crime committed by the Nazis on Soviet territory, nor even the largest-scale one. Nevertheless, it became a symbol of the Nazis' brutal contempt for humankind, and the distress it elicits continues to be felt to this day in virtually every one of our families.

Some of those involved in that terrible crime managed to abscond to the West – for example, the Nazi criminal and votary of massacres “for the glory of Ukraine” Volodymyr Katriuk, who after the war somehow ended up enjoying a quiet life in Canada. In Russia, an investigation was conducted into his complicity in genocide, but this creature of the Nazis did not live to stand trial: he passed away in 2015.

Nowadays, life in Ukraine is a bed of roses for the disciples of those who, together with the Ukrainian nationalist ringleaders Bandera, Shukhevych, Melnyk and others of their ilk, swore allegiance to the Nazis, stoked hatred and encouraged or committed massacres of civilians. As a rule, modern-day manifestations of neo-Nazism in the territories controlled by the Kyiv regime go unpunished. Moreover, the image of neo-Nazi bandits brandishing swastikas and other such symbols is used in nationalist myth-making to typify “freedom fighters”.

We would recall that it was under those very same “for the glory of Ukraine” slogans that, on 2 May 2014, Ukrainian radical nationalists drove dozens of civilians who supported constitutional reform into the Trade Union House in Odessa and then burned them alive there. Again, those who survived were finished off by gunfire. Not for nothing did many people in Odessa and Ukraine start to refer to that massacre as “Odessa’s Khatyn”. After all, the same methods were used there to advance ideas that are just as full of contempt for humankind.

Almost nine years have passed since then, but the Kyiv regime has not only not taken steps to bring the true perpetrators of the tragedy in Odessa to justice – it has even attempted to pin the blame on the very victims of that horrendous crime, while those who really do have blood on their hands continue to this day to walk about freely. Not a single verdict has been pronounced that would help to shed light on that tragedy.

Mr. Chairperson,

We regret that today we are not hearing the representative of Germany speak about the crimes committed in Khatyn by the Nazis and their henchmen. One would think that the German people had first-hand experience of the horrors of Nazism – that “Brown Plague” of the twentieth century which strove for global dominance. As part of those aspirations and in line with “Generalplan Ost”, the barbaric extermination of civilians in all the republics of the USSR was undertaken.

In that regard, we should like to draw attention to a statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of Russia entitled “On the Genocide against the Peoples of the Soviet Union by Germany and Its Accomplices during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945”, which was unanimously adopted on 22 March 2023.

I shall read out an excerpt from that statement: “The decisions adopted in recent years by the courts of St. Petersburg, the Republic of Crimea, the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories, and the Belgorod, Bryansk, Leningrad, Novgorod, Oryol, Pskov and Rostov regions unequivocally classify the criminal acts of the Nazis and their accomplices as genocide against the national, ethnic and racial groups that constituted the population of the USSR – the peoples of the Soviet Union. These court decisions are a logical continuation of the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the decisions of subsequent trials of Nazi criminals and their accomplices, during which, in particular, individuals who were guilty of supplying Hitler’s troops with lethal weapons were convicted.”

We stress that there can never be any compromises with regard to the rehabilitation of Nazism or the fostering of neo-Nazism. It is categorically unacceptable to forget what terrible price was paid by humanity in ridding itself of the “Brown Plague” and who made a decisive contribution to liberating Europe and the world from Hitlerism. The dreadful lessons from history need to be remembered – otherwise humanity risks seeing them repeated in the most monstrous guises.

Thank you for your attention.