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**STATEMENT BY MR. VLADIMIR ZHEGLOV,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1290th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

19 November 2020

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Nuremberg Tribunal

Mr. Chairperson,

Seventy-five years ago, on 20 November 1945, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg commenced its work, namely the trial of Nazi war criminals. Incidentally, it was the USSR that insisted on the judicial proceedings being open and public.

The Nuremberg trials represent the triumph of right, goodness and justice over world evil. During proceedings that lasted for over 300 days, more than 250 Nazi war criminals and their accomplices were publicly condemned. It was indeed at Nuremberg that the term “genocide” came into international use. Without the Tribunal, many people around the world might not have found out about the Holocaust, Auschwitz, the tragic events at Khatyn and Babi Yar, and the extermination of millions of completely innocent people.

The Nuremberg Tribunal convicted not only high-ranking officials of the Third Reich but also its political system, ideology and criminal organizations such as the SS. Significantly, the hunt for war criminals continues to this day.

The Tribunal directly and decisively shaped the emergence of the modern system of international law, which now operates under the aegis of the United Nations. The principles of universal jurisdiction of States with regard to international crimes and the non-applicability of statutory limitations to such crimes were confirmed, among others. The Nuremberg trials demonstrated the determination of progressive States and peoples to co-operate in the post-war period in order to strengthen international peace and security.

Yet, today the terrible lessons of the Second World War are unfortunately being forgotten in some OSCE participating States, where for several years now attempts have been made to revise the history of the war and its outcomes. In some countries, the idea is aggressively being advanced of the allegedly equal guilt of the Nazi regime, which the Nuremberg Tribunal pronounced a criminal regime, and the USSR, one of the principal members of the anti-Hitler coalition and a founder of the United Nations. All this is accompanied by a selective approach in references to the past. For example, a blind eye is turned to such episodes of

European history as the Munich conspiracy [i.e., the Munich Agreement of 1938], which preceded the outbreak of the Second World War.

A revival of hate-filled ideas is taking place; Nazi values and neo-Nazism are being openly touted; radical nationalists are rearing their ugly heads. Quite often, criminals – those who tainted themselves by collaboration with Nazis and fascists, or who actually fought in the ranks of the Axis powers – are made out to be heroes.

We would remind you that the erection of monuments in honour of members of the SS and other acts of glorification of Nazis and their accomplices defile the memory of their countless victims, have a negative impact on younger generations and are utterly unacceptable. These acts include the annual gatherings and marches of former members of the SS and their admirers. Particularly alarming are the attempts to justify such acts by invoking the allegedly absolute nature of freedom of expression or the right to peaceful assembly. That is inadmissible. What is more, a veritable war has been declared on monuments to the liberators of Europe. Actions of this kind, whose purpose is to gloss over the sinister taint of collaboration with the Nazis, are disgraceful.

We are convinced that the real facts of history must not be disregarded. It is important today to do everything possible to prevent the heroic deeds of those who fought against fascism from fading into oblivion, to ensure that young people do not forget what national egoism, isolationism and the toleration of any manifestations of chauvinism, xenophobia and aggressive nationalism can lead to.

This is all the more important given that we have already seen, from the history of the Second World War, how the attempts to put into practice one of the ideological foundations of National Socialism, namely the theory of racial superiority, resulted in tens of millions of victims and brought untold suffering to the peoples of the world. It is deplorable that these cruel lessons of the past are being ignored in a number of countries, where society is being fragmented according to ethnic, religious or linguistic criteria and the “non-titular” population is declared a threat to national security.

Our common goal should be to prevent any revision of the Second World War’s outcomes in international law, including the judgments of the Nuremberg Tribunal. It is important that an absolute majority of the members of the international community are together making a stand on this issue. This is confirmed by the fact that a resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism is adopted at the United Nations General Assembly every year. We are pleased to inform you that the draft of such a resolution has again been approved, namely yesterday by the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

The OSCE, too, cannot stand idly by when the foundations of the modern human rights system, which are derived from the judgments of the Nuremberg Tribunal, are being undermined. History and its lessons must not be forgotten.

Thank you for your attention.