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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MS. IULIA ZHDANOVA, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY  
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 98th JOINT MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION AND THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 February 2026

**Agenda item: Security Dialogue  
Subject: Treatment of prisoners of war – obligations and responsibilities**

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

The Russian Federation is committed to international humanitarian law, including the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (“Third Geneva Convention”) and the 1977 Additional Protocol I. We also regard the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security as an important political instrument for strengthening trust and transparency in the politico-military realm.

Our country stood at the cradle of the development of international humanitarian law and participated most actively in the drafting of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Protocols Additional thereto of 1977. Strict adherence to the principles and norms relating to protection of the rights of prisoners of war is an unconditional priority for Russia in the conduct of its special military operation.

Contrary to the assertions by the authorities in Kyiv, which profess commitment to their obligations under the Third Geneva Convention of 1949, the situation of Russian military personnel who have fallen into Ukrainian captivity remains quite simply appalling. The ultranationalists have flooded the Internet with video evidence of their crimes. If one wishes, one can easily find recordings of prisoners of war being subjected to torture and abuse – recordings that show them being castrated or kneecapped, that show wounded captives being finished off with a shot to the head. Corpses are desecrated, their eyes gouged out. The family members of captives, including those who have already been killed, are blackmailed. Things have got to a point where video footage is published of tanks running over people who are still alive.

We shall cite just a few examples of Ukrainian atrocities captured on videos whose authenticity (I emphasize this specifically for the information of the UK delegation) has been verified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In March 2022, a video clip appeared showing Russian servicemen being abused. Some had their throats slit and were then finished off as they lay on the road. Others were shot in the leg with assault rifles. Thugs from the Georgian Legion took part in these atrocities.

In late March 2022, Ukrainian nationalists from the Slobozhanshchina grouping shot dead three unarmed Russian soldiers.

In November 2022, the Ukrainian butchers intentionally killed more than ten immobilized Russian soldiers in Makeevka, dispatching them with a shot to the head.

In February 2023, three Russian servicemen lying on the ground were shot dead at point-blank range by Ukrainian “fighters”.

In April 2023, French mercenaries shot dead three Russian captives at point-blank range.

In September 2023, video footage emerged of two unarmed captives wearing Russian army uniforms being prodded at gunpoint towards a minefield by Ukrainian “fighters”. Shortly afterwards, a member of the Ukrainian armed forces opens fire in their direction and then an explosion is heard.

In July 2024, *The New York Times* ran a feature story containing revelations by foreign mercenaries who were fighting in the ranks of the Chosen Company, an outfit forming part of the Ukrainian armed forces. They spoke about the killing of unarmed and wounded Russian soldiers. By their own account, they witnessed such executions on more than one occasion. The newspaper also gained access to group chats among the soldiers from that foreign outfit in which they discuss these killings. No charges whatsoever have been filed against them whether in Ukraine or in the United States of America.

At around the same time, the media reported that a mercenary was on trial in Czechia who had fought in Bucha and Irpin, among other places, as part of the Ukrainian armed forces’ Carpathian Sich battalion. He had been charged with serving illegally in the Ukrainian army and with looting. When questioned, he opened up about how he would make off with valuables belonging to soldiers and civilians who had died, and how he did so as a matter of course, because it was standard behaviour – that is, everyone else was doing the same. He also told of the arbitrary executions that his unit engaged in, including executions of prisoners of war. As he put it, “we were the police, we were the court, we were also the firing squad, for that matter.”

It is not only militants of the Azov regiment, designated as a terrorist organization in Russia, that took part in these heinous acts, but also Ukrainian armed forces military personnel carrying out criminal orders from their commanders, members of radical organizations and foreign mercenaries. Their commitment to a humanity-hating ideology and how they are putting its principles into practice eloquently testify to the criminal nature of the Zelenskyy regime. For example, on 10 January 2026, the Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* published an interview with a soldier of fortune in which he recounted how those “serving” in Ukrainian units would flaunt photographs showing severed heads, boast about torturing captives, give Nazi salutes, and hang up swastikas and portraits of Hitler’s accomplices in their headquarters. All these outrages are being sponsored with the money of taxpayers in the Netherlands, among other countries ...

Ample evidence of violations of international humanitarian law is also coming to light in the context of the ongoing exchanges of prisoners of war, including those who are seriously wounded or ill. Servicemen repatriated to Russia are telling the true story of what is going on in Ukrainian dungeons; they cite examples of physical and psychological pressure, beatings and the infliction of grievous bodily harm.

In February 2026, the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Tatiana Moskalkova, reported that she was in possession of information about cases in which Russian military personnel had been tortured in Ukrainian captivity and died. Many Russians returning from captivity say that they did not always receive medical assistance.

All this attests to how Ukraine is flagrantly violating international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and international human rights norms, including the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Nor should one forget that the Ukrainian war criminals have on more than one occasion demonstrated their attitude to those of their “comrades-in-arms” who surrendered into Russian captivity. The attack on the pretrial detention facility at Elenovka on 29 July 2022 conducted using HIMARS missiles and the Ukrainian military’s downing of an IL-76 aircraft carrying 65 Ukrainian (yes, Ukrainian) prisoners on 24 January 2024 serve as a graphic illustration of that attitude.

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation is looking into facts concerning the inhumane treatment of Russian military personnel. Staff from the military investigating agencies under the Russian Investigative Committee communicate with each individual returning from Ukrainian captivity. The information thus obtained, which points to the systematic nature of Ukraine’s violations of international humanitarian law, is incorporated into existing criminal cases opened on evidence of a crime under Article 356, paragraph 1, of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (the use of prohibited means and methods in armed conflict). The perpetrators will be punished.

We once again urge all interested parties to familiarize themselves with the content of the relevant reports published by Rodion Miroschnik, the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Ambassador-at-Large working on the crimes committed by the Kyiv regime, including two thematic reports entitled “Violations of international humanitarian law by the Kiev regime regarding the treatment of prisoners of war: ‘Secret prisons’”, which were disseminated in 2025 and 2026. This is verified data we are talking about here.

The copious evidence of crimes continues to be disregarded by the collective West, which is actively supporting the Kyiv regime in all respects. Such approval by the regime’s NATO handlers makes them complicit in the actions of the Ukrainian radicals whom they are nurturing.

Our position remains unchanged: every one of the Kyiv regime’s crimes must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice in full compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law.

Co-Chairpersons,

In line with the requirements of the Third Geneva Convention and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, Russia is actively co-operating with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and paying special attention to the protection of the rights of prisoners of war. The Committee’s recommendations following its visits to prisoners of war held in our country are fully taken on board by the competent Russian authorities. We intend to continue the dialogue on this and other aspects of the protection of protected persons.

Nor can we fail to mention the positive experience of trilateral co-operation between the ICRC and the Russian and Ukrainian Commissioners for Human Rights, as part of which practical solutions are being found for, *inter alia*, issues related to safeguarding the rights of prisoners of war.

At the same time, we are obliged to issue regular reminders that the dialogue between the parties to the conflict and the ICRC on matters that have to do with compliance with international humanitarian law must remain strictly confidential. The planting of misinformation about our joint work and the attempts to subject the Committee's senior officials to public obstruction and induce them to deviate from the fundamental humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence are ultimately harming the interests of protected persons, including prisoners of war.

We note that Western participating States have today presented a standard repertoire of sweeping accusations to the effect that our country is violating international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including references to the notorious reports of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). First, it should be recalled that the ODIHR has no mandate to deal with issues of international humanitarian law. Secondly, the Russian Federation has repeatedly flagged problems with the aforementioned reports, which contain virtually no specific details. Most of the "facts" presented come from the statements of anonymous witnesses; the methods used for gathering information are questionable; and the findings are based primarily on "information" from Ukrainian Telegram channels and media outlets, but also from reports by biased "experts" from countries that are hostile to Russia.

Co-Chairpersons,

A few words about Russia's national experience. Our country continues to work on the premise that the humane treatment of detainees is an unconditional obligation. The Russian armed forces operate in strict compliance with international humanitarian law and national legislation. The training of their personnel includes compulsory instruction in the norms of international humanitarian law, as expressly provided for in the OSCE Code of Conduct.

The armed forces of the Russian Federation have a systematic legal training programme in place, which encompasses the compulsory study of international humanitarian law at military educational institutions, regular sessions of legal training for troops, activities by military prosecution bodies and the military justice system to monitor compliance with legislation, and the personal responsibility of commanders for the orders issued by them.

Russian law explicitly prohibits torture and cruel or degrading treatment. Any violations identified are subject to investigation. The principle of individual criminal responsibility applies regardless of military rank.

In closing, we should like to emphasize that a topic such as the treatment of prisoners of war calls for professional and depoliticized discussion at specialized platforms. Attempts to make blanket use of this topic for political insinuations are counterproductive.

Thank you for your attention.