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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1533rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 September 2025

**In connection with the
International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances**

Madam Chairperson,

The International Day of the Disappeared, or International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, is observed annually on 30 August. That date was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010 to draw attention to the need for this criminal phenomenon to be eradicated. Enforced disappearances constitute a violation of a range of human rights, including the right to life, liberty and security of person and the right to a fair trial.

The law enforcement authorities in the Russian Federation place appropriate emphasis on the combating of crimes of this kind. Relevant offences are painstakingly investigated and the statutory punishments applied to perpetrators.

Madam Chairperson,

For many a year now, we have been speaking in this room about the Kyiv regime's heinous crimes – about political assassinations, about the mass enforced disappearance of journalists, civil society activists, public figures and even ordinary citizens. Such “stabilization measures” began to be implemented by the Kyiv regime immediately after the events on the Maidan in 2014, and the terrorizing of the civilian population by the Ukrainian armed forces and right-wing radical groups has just kept on increasing since the start of the special military operation. The juggernaut of repression has rolled over all those who expressed their disagreement with the policies of the neo-Nazis in Kyiv and displayed the slightest sympathy for Russia and the residents of Donbass.

More than 180,000 criminal cases involving prosecution under “political” articles have been opened in Ukraine in the three years that the special military operation has now been under way. A significant proportion of the charges brought – in around 30,000 proceedings – have to do with the “protection of national security”, but in reality, people are being prosecuted for expressing their views and opinions. It is telling that there were only seven such cases in the entire history of post-Soviet Ukraine until 2014. Only seven – compared with tens of thousands of arraignments in post-Maidan Ukraine, which aspires to be

admitted into the family of Western “civilized democracies”. In a country where, over the past ten years, a system has been built up of so-called secret prisons to which those suspected of being “insufficiently loyal” to the authorities in Kyiv are taken. There are dozens of such prisons and they are located mainly in front-line areas. Moreover, the people detained there are not included in official registers. They are subjected to torture and abuse, with many not surviving. Very often their relatives have no inkling of their fate.

For obvious reasons, the authorities in Kyiv do not allow representatives of international organizations to set foot in these torture chambers, although there is copious information on the location of such “high-security prisons”. For biased Western human rights defenders it is easier to pretend that the torture chambers of the Security Service of Ukraine do not exist and to continue cobbling together reports packed with unfounded and legally meritless accusations against the Russian Federation.

Madam Chairperson,

The situation in the EU Member States is by no means satisfactory either. Specialized international organizations are concerned about the prevalence of enforced disappearances in the Netherlands, above all in the context of the harsh treatment meted out by that country’s authorities to asylum seekers and illegal migrants, including unaccompanied children. There have thus been cases of trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation on the islands of Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten. Human rights bodies of the United Nations note that children disappear without a trace while attempting to reach these territories – we are talking here about victims of slave trade.

Nor is everything fine in Austria. According to local non-governmental organizations, migration-related problems continued to get worse in 2024, these having to do, in particular, with the disappearance of refugee children and their exposure to over-incarceration.

The problem of underage migrants’ rights being violated is also of relevance to the United Kingdom. Human rights defenders have expressed serious concern at the authorities’ failure to adequately provide safety and decent living conditions for children entering the country illegally and without their parents.

Of particular concern is the fate of minors who have disappeared from hotels, partly on account of inadequate supervision and security measures. Between 2021, when hotels started to be used to house asylum seekers, and January 2024, when that practice was terminated, 440 children went missing. As at 2024, the fate of 118 of these children was still unknown. According to a report by University College London presented in July 2024, it is very likely that they have become the victims of human trafficking and been compelled by local criminal groups to subsequently be involved in unlawful activities. In addition, the children who remained in the hotels encountered racism and threats of violence from members of the hotel staff.

The relevant United Nations treaty bodies have found much fault with Belgium, too. In its concluding observations published in April 2025, the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances expressed its concern about “reports of the disappearance of migrants arriving in or transiting through Belgium, including in the context of trafficking”, and regretted “the insufficient measures taken to investigate such cases”. Furthermore, the Committee noted that “migration control practices ... undermine the principle of non-refoulement, as also noted by the Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Committee, putting persons in need of international protection at risk of serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearance.”

Madam Chairperson,

We have cited just a few facts, but they once again serve to confirm the relevance of the problem being discussed today. We call upon the participating States to fulfil their international obligations and the OSCE executive structures to respond adequately to enforced disappearances or similar practices. Especially seeing how these practices are systemic in a number of countries and are used there as a tool of political repression.

Thank you for your attention.