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**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 101st JOINT MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION AND THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 July 2026

**Agenda item: Security Dialogue
Subject: OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security –
Conflict-related human rights violations**

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

We are grateful that, within the format of a joint meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and the OSCE Permanent Council, this Security Dialogue devoted to the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security has been convened.

Adopted at the CSCE/OSCE Summit in Budapest in 1994, the Code of Conduct remains an important politically binding document that lays down principles for responsible State behaviour in the politico-military sphere. Since our discussion today is focusing on Section VII, which deals with observance of the norms of international humanitarian law by armed forces personnel, we should like to dwell in detail on the Russian Federation's approaches when it comes to implementing the corresponding obligations.

In conducting the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, our country's armed forces are strictly guided by the norms and principles of international humanitarian law, including the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the 1977 Additional Protocols thereto, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, and the relevant provisions of Russian legislation.

In accordance with Order No. 95 of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation from 2019, we traditionally attach particular importance to the military and political training of service members, including in the field of international humanitarian law as a key element of the legal culture of military personnel. The aim of this approach is to "foster among members of the Armed Forces a high level of military and political awareness and culture; the qualities of a warrior, a proponent of a strong State, a patriot and person of high moral character; and a conscious and responsible attitude towards military duty and the requirements of legislative and other regulatory instruments of the Russian Federation, military regulations and military discipline". Furthermore, an integral part of the training of Russian military personnel consists in an in-depth study of the provisions of the Internal Service Regulations of the Armed

Forces of the Russian Federation, the Manual on International Humanitarian Law for the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and other normative instruments governing the procedures for the preparation and conduct of combat operations.

These documents enshrine the obligation of military personnel to comply with the norms of international humanitarian law, including the rules for the conduct of combat operations and for the treatment of the wounded and sick, prisoners of war and the civilian population. Moreover, under the legislation of the Russian Federation, violations of the norms of international humanitarian law are subject to the corresponding penalties, including criminal punishment.

The system of training for military personnel currently in place in our country ensures that they possess the necessary level of knowledge and practical skills in the field of international humanitarian law and human rights when carrying out their duties in situations of armed conflict.

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

On 19 May this year, Andrii Melnyk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations, stated at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council that Ukraine “never target[s] civilians”, adding that “we only destroy military assets in full compliance with international humanitarian law.” The relevant Russian ministries and agencies have in their possession a vast amount of evidence showing that for the Kyiv regime it has become par for the course to kill completely innocent civilians – children, women, the elderly and those attempting to help victims – and also to abuse Russian military personnel who have been taken captive. In addition, the worse things get for Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the battlefield, the more intense the Ukrainian armed forces’ attacks become on civilians and civilian objects within our country.

Article 3(1) of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, to which Ukraine is a party, says: “Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.”

But what do we see in reality?

The Kyiv regime is most eagerly exploiting the carte blanche it has received from its Western backers “authorizing” it to commit crimes in Russian regions. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are flying over the peaceful neighbourhoods of our towns and cities; residential buildings, kindergartens, schools and hospitals are being destroyed; ambulances, passenger buses and basic infrastructure assets are being deliberately targeted.

The neo-Banderites’ incursion into the Kursk region of the Russian Federation in August 2024, followed by the temporary occupation of a part of that region, was unprecedented in its brutality. All this was caught on camera by the Ukrainian “fighters”, who then braggingly posted the content online: blood-curdling acts of abuse against local residents, plundering and pillaging, the abduction of civilians by force, executions. Several captured “fighters” from the Ukrainian armed forces have already been sentenced to long prison terms for crimes against residents of the Kursk region and Russian military personnel. Some of them (the terrorists Volodymyr Parafilo and Yevhen Fabrysenko) have been given life sentences for war crimes committed in the village of Russkoye Porechnoye, including murders and sexual violence. These criminals will not evade justice.

The civilian population of the Kherson region of the Russian Federation are forced to live in inhumane conditions as they endure around a quarter of all Ukrainian strikes. Since the line of engagement runs directly through the region, the Zelenskyy regime has unleashed all-out terror against the people of Kherson. The Ukrainian armed forces are using UAVs and artillery to deliberately target the civilian infrastructure and residents of that Russian region; they are conducting remote mining of public roads. By the end of the first half of this year, 545 civilians had been killed and 3,724 injured in the Kherson region as a result of aggression by the Ukrainian “fighters”.

The barrage attack by enemy drones on the college building and dormitory of the Starobelsk branch of the Lugansk State Pedagogical University on 22 May this year provided irrefutable evidence of the Kyiv regime’s brutality. Twenty-one young lives were cut short; an additional 42 youngsters were injured.

Early in the morning of 3 June this year, a scheduled passenger bus travelling from Moscow to Simferopol came under fire in the centre of the Yenakiyevo municipal district in the Donetsk People’s Republic. Seven people were killed, while a further 11 people, including one child, sustained injuries of varying degrees of severity.

The Kyiv regime’s attitude towards civilians is very aptly summed up in some remarks made by Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the Head of the Presidential Office: “It is a matter of principle for me that we liberate the Kherson region – there is no question about that – and the Zaporozhye region, giving short shrift to collaborationists and Russian military personnel. I’m all for people in the Kharkov region dropping the word *rosiiany* (‘Russians’) from their vocabulary altogether. I’m all for people in Lugansk and Donetsk dropping the word *rosiiany* from their vocabulary altogether. And I want to see all those criminal elements who call themselves the authorities disappear. Physically disappear.” Notice that he is not talking about protecting people. He is talking about ensuring that people “physically disappear”, that the word for “Russians” is dropped from everyday language forever. This is, incidentally, related to the problem of dehumanization that has been brought up today. Once all this is taken into account, it becomes quite understandable why Ukrainian UAVs are hovering over peaceful neighbourhoods, why schools, ambulances, buses, residential building and basic infrastructure assets are being destroyed.

It would take us days just to enumerate all of the crimes committed by the Kyiv regime. However, it is reasonable to ask this: how many more Russian civilians must lose their lives before the countries of Europe realize the extent of the Kyiv regime’s punitive operations and that it is unacceptable to continue sponsoring Zelenskyy’s “war machine”?

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

We should like to draw the attention of the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, the Georgian FSC Chairmanship and the Organization’s participating States to the concrete steps taken by the Russian Federation to uphold respect for the rights of the civilian population and combatants, including through close co-operation with international humanitarian organizations.

First of all, we are continuing to compare notes on such matters with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Thanks to our working closely with the ICRC, around 1,700 captives have already been traced, more than 1,000 of whom have been able to return home. Joint aid delivery campaigns are being supported, with more than 5,000 parcels and over 4,000 letters having reached prisoners of war in this way.

Secondly, a permanent channel of communication has been established between the Human Rights Commissioners of Russia and Ukraine, Yana Lantratova and Dmytro Lubinets. The parties are liaising

closely on updating and exchanging lists of missing persons, prisoners of war and civilians, with a view to getting them back to their home countries as soon as possible. During the first half of this year, Russia and Ukraine conducted seven major prisoner swaps, enabling 1,575 of our soldiers to return home. What is more, three such exchanges took place in May and June of this year alone (specifically on 15 May, 5 June and 26 June), with 550 military personnel returned by each side. Three families have been reunited, and residents of the Kursk region who were being unlawfully held by the Ukrainian armed forces have been released. Each such return is the result of a complex, diligent and meticulously planned humanitarian mission, and at the same time it is a source of immense joy to those who for a long time had been living in a state of anxiety and uncertainty.

Thirdly, five exchanges have taken place this year to repatriate the bodies of those killed in action. The bodies of at least 4,048 fallen Ukrainian troops have been handed over. The remains of 188 Russian soldiers have been recovered. The ratio of losses since 24 January 2025 has been as follows: 19,826 versus 547 repatriated bodies of, respectively, Ukrainian and Russian armed forces personnel. As a reminder, following the capture of Konstantinovka on 4 July this year, the Russian Ministry of Defence stated its readiness to conduct a humanitarian operation to hand over the bodies of Ukrainian military personnel killed in action there. However, the Kyiv regime decided that it had evidently more important matters to attend to.

Fourthly, the relevant Russian authorities are systematically gathering irrefutable evidence of the Kyiv regime's crimes, including violations of international humanitarian law. In this regard, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation has repeatedly called upon relevant United Nations bodies to respond immediately to the barbaric attacks carried out by the Ukrainian "fighters" and to give them an international legal assessment. As a result, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has requested information from us regarding the findings of our investigation into the circumstances surrounding the strike on the teacher training college in Starobelsk (by the way, an ICRC delegation has already been there). Earlier, in April this year, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Vanessa Frazier, undertook a working visit to the Belgorod region, where she was able to witness first-hand the humanitarian situation in a region that is being systematically subjected to artillery, missile and drone attacks of a terrorist nature by the Kyiv regime's armed formations. Going forward, we will keep presenting verified facts to the international community.

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

I am also obliged to highlight the torture of prisoners of war, an issue that was actively touched upon in a one-sided manner in the statements of many delegations. The aim of all these insinuations is obvious, namely to denigrate our country and to put together an "evidential base" for pseudo-legal mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court, which has long since turned into a repressive apparatus in the pocket of Western countries, the "special tribunal" being established under the auspices of the Council of Europe, and other illegitimate bodies.

At the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, we have on numerous occasions circulated relevant verified materials among the participating States (notably under distribution symbol SEC.DEL/77/26) detailing the forms of ill-treatment to which our soldiers have been subjected by the Ukrainian armed forces, nationalist battalions and foreign mercenaries. I would stress once again that all this is being posted online by the Ukrainians, as if over there they regarded it as something to be singularly proud of. They terrorize the relatives of prisoners of war, phoning them up one after the other and using their smartphone camera to show them those they are abusing, telling them about the suffering being endured by these people, temporarily redirecting the phone's microphone so that the family members can hear the victims' voices, and demanding money.

Contrary to Ukraine's international obligations as well as universally recognized laws and customs of war, Russian military personnel taken hostage are being held in appalling conditions and subjected to horrific acts of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. This is also confirmed by international monitoring mechanisms, such as the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the OHCHR. In early July this year, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk reacted to the numerous appeals by the Russian Federation's Human Rights Commissioner and condemned the torture of Russian military personnel. He said: "Around half the prisoners of war captured by Ukraine interviewed by my Office described torture or other ill-treatment ... The prohibition of torture is absolute." Yet, silence on this issue continues to reign at the OSCE.

Distinguished Co-Chairpersons,

The West is perfectly aware of the inhumane practices employed by the Zelenskyy regime against civilians and prisoners of war. However, to acknowledge that the Ukrainian armed forces are grossly violating key norms and principles of international humanitarian law would be tantamount to owning up to the failure of the chosen strategy of unconditionally supporting the Kyiv regime and escalating the conflict at any cost. And it would also be tantamount to – let us not mince words – admitting complicity in the crimes of that regime.

It is also clear that many Western OSCE participating States are exploiting issues pertaining to the Code of Conduct primarily for political ends. As a result, they are both undermining confidence in the universal norms of international humanitarian law and hindering constructive dialogue on implementation of the Code.

I must emphasize once more that confidence- and security-building in the OSCE area is impossible while Ukraine and its overlords are artificially dragging out the conflict; it is also impossible in view of the preparations already initiated by the West for a major war against Russia.

Thank you for your attention.