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**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1568th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 June 2026

**In response to the remarks by the
Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Alain Berset**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am taking the floor in exercise of my right of reply.

Having listened carefully to the address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, we note that, ever since Russia decided to withdraw from that organization in March 2022, the Strasbourg-based Council has not given us a single reason to doubt that this was absolutely the right move. All of that organization's current activities merely confirm that we were dealing not with an international institution that had strayed off course, but with a systematic agent of geopolitical pressure.

The era when the Council of Europe was regarded as a representative multilateral platform for co-operation in the field of human rights and as an instrument for building a common European legal space is now well and truly over. Today, we are essentially dealing with an appendage of NATO, whose entire work is reduced to deepening the dividing lines on the continent and providing "humanitarian and legal" support for the hybrid wars being waged by the Alliance's member countries. Double standards have come to prevail in Strasbourg – whether the toolbox that has been put together for safeguarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law is used depends entirely on the geopolitical positioning of the "focus countries" and on the orders coming from the European Union and NATO in Brussels.

From this perspective, the outcomes of the session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe held in Chişinău on 14 and 15 May are very revealing. They confirmed a shift towards replacing diplomacy with accusations, and the search for compromises with the cultivation of hostility. The so-called Special Tribunal and the Claims Commission are legally void entities. Their promotion by the anti-Russian coalition is not a "step towards justice" but a political provocation that does not have a mandate from the United Nations Security Council. And under the euphemistic label of "combating foreign information manipulation and interference" (FIMI), a tool for suppressing dissent is being created. In effect, the Council of Europe is becoming involved in efforts to legitimize State censorship in EU countries and Ukraine.

A clear indication of the Council of Europe's moral decline is its consistent and deliberate ignoring of the crimes committed by the Ukrainian armed forces against the civilian population in Russian regions. An organization that prides itself on its commitment to human rights is persistently turning a blind eye to the Kyiv regime's bloody crimes. The lack of any reaction whatsoever to the tragedy in Starobelsk is telling. On 22 May 2026, Ukrainian troops launched a massive strike involving 16 drones against a civilian object there – the dormitory of a teacher training college – killing 21 people and leaving dozens injured. The disregard for what happened in the Lugansk People's Republic is not an isolated incident; it is a case of systematic blindness to the atrocities being committed by the Kyiv regime. Here is a far from complete list of the Ukrainian armed forces' crimes that have gone unnoticed by the Council of Europe over the past week alone. On 4 June, a suburban train travelling from Azovskoye to Kerch was attacked. Four people were injured and one person was killed. The day before, a passenger train was hit at the Dzhankoy railway station. There were casualties, including children. On the same day, a Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicle struck a passenger bus near Yenakievo. Seven civilians were killed and 11 were injured. On 8 June, a Ukrainian drone hit the diesel locomotive of a Moscow-Simferopol passenger train, killing the assistant driver. Where is the condemnation from Strasbourg, and the call for an investigation into these war crimes? Instead, we have silence, which is tantamount to complicity in these bloody acts by the Kyiv regime.

No less cynical is the Council of Europe's complete disregard for the systematic and widespread violations of human rights, the principles of democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine itself, a country which that organization is currently shielding with maniacal obstinacy. How can there be any talk of democracy when freedom of speech is completely prohibited in Ukraine, when any opposition has been outlawed, when political rivals are being imprisoned or forced to flee abroad, and when elections have been cancelled indefinitely? What rule of law are you harping on about when people are being rounded up directly on the streets, like cattle, to be slaughtered in the inhumane "meat grinder" of mobilization, without any legal protection? When people are banned from speaking their native Russian language in all spheres – from education to the media, when the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church is being driven out of its churches, and priests are being beaten up and prosecuted on fabricated charges? The Council of Europe, which is duty-bound to act as the guardian of the European Convention on Human Rights, is not merely remaining silent – it is through its own actions legitimizing this lawlessness. You are deliberately shielding the Kyiv regime, turning your monitoring mechanisms into a tool that is designed to cover up for a dictatorship that is against the people. There is no objectivity, no impartial investigation – just the refining of a politically motivated anti-Russian agenda.

The personal contribution by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, appears no less odious either. We note that Mr. Berset has gone to great lengths to devise a pseudo-humanitarian justification for the ongoing hybrid war against Russia. His trips, statements and initiatives serve a single purpose: to legitimize the aggressive policy of the Kyiv regime and its Western patrons. Instead of demanding that Ukraine cease its violations of human rights and democratic norms, the leadership of the Council of Europe is promoting instruments of hybrid warfare against Russia, namely the Register of Damage for Ukraine and the Special Tribunal.

In this regard, I should like to draw attention to the historical continuity in the West's policy towards our country. Today we are witnessing a revival of rhetoric that is all too familiar from the dark chapters of the Second World War. Ideological templates in the spirit of anti-Soviet posters calling for a "great crusade against Bolshevism" – which the Nazis used in their time to raise troops for the "expansion eastwards" – are being dusted off once again. Only the names have changed – instead of "Bolshevism" we now have "Russian aggression" – but the essence remains the same: an obsession with wanting to destroy Russia, and a willingness to sacrifice millions of lives to preserve Western hegemony.

In conclusion, I wish to state in no uncertain terms that Russia will never, under any circumstances, recognize the instruments of so-called accountability being promoted within the framework of the Council of Europe. This applies to the Register of Damage, the Claims Commission and, even more so, the notorious Special Tribunal. All of these initiatives were, from the outset, conceived not to establish the truth or ensure justice. Their sole purpose is to prevent a peace agreement from being reached through diplomatic means and to make the confrontation between Russia and the West long-lasting and systemic in nature, taking it beyond the scope of the current Ukrainian conflict.

Russia will be able to defend its vital security interests and protect its citizens by any means available. As for the destruction of the present world order – including by bodies such as the Council of Europe – the responsibility for this lies entirely with those who do not care about the future of our continent.

Thank you for your attention.