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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 1149th PLENARY MEETING OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION

14 October 2026

Agenda item: General statements
Subject: Special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

On 12 October, the North Atlantic Alliance finally took off its mask. The "Theory of Victory", presented at the Warsaw Security Forum by General Alexus Grynkewich, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, provided crucial details that complete the picture of the bloc's preparations for conducting high-intensity combat operations against our country. The "Russian invasion" – an idea that NATO countries themselves are obsessively implanting in the minds of citizens of European States – is to be halted in three stages, using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), minimally crewed systems and artificial intelligence. Of course, these arguments about an "invasion" serve to conceal altogether different plans.

At present, one of the key elements in adapting the military-industrial complexes of NATO member countries to the conflicts of the future has been the introduction of a distributed production model to complement the traditional export of ready-to-use weapons and military equipment. The plan envisages, among other things, investment in relatively inexpensive drones to supplement NATO's arsenal, drawing on the Ukrainian experience. As part of the simplification of all components, the focus is on dual-use products. Such an approach not only makes the end product cost-effective and reduces its production time, but also enables production volumes to be scaled up quickly. History shows that the defence industry's shift towards high-volume output of cheap and simplified products is a sign that production is being placed on a wartime footing.

It is telling that, in a recent interview with Bloomberg, General Grynkewich admitted that NATO member countries are facing a shortage of personnel. That, in essence, sums up the whole theory of victory. Until there are enough people, the fighting will be done using cheap military hardware. And until that has been produced, it will be done using others as a cat's paw in the Ukrainian theatre of hostilities. That is why European States are also putting obstacles in the way of any progress towards a peaceful settlement. This is the clearest possible illustration of the strategy of waging "a war down to the last Ukrainian".

Needless to say, this strategy will lead its architects neither to victory nor to anything good at all.

Mr. Chairperson,

The militarization of the NATO bloc and the supplying of arms to Ukraine have already led to an uncontrolled and unprecedented – perhaps in the entire history of warfare – illegal trade in Western weapons and military equipment. Taking advantage of EU support, the illegitimate Kyiv regime, which is very much under the tutelage of the Europeans, has let Ukrainian and international organized criminal groups engage in the illegal reselling of weapons. A key role in these "grey" schemes is played by both the command of the Ukrainian armed forces and those in charge of the national intelligence services.

I shall cite just a few official figures, as confirmed by the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities. For example, according to the National Police of Ukraine, since the beginning of 2026, around 200 searches have been conducted as part of investigative activities involving individuals suspected of theft, and more than 2,200 units of firearms and explosives have been confiscated. Charges relating to the unlawful possession and illegal sale of these items have been brought against 32 defendants in criminal cases.

During a seminar held in June this year on the problem of illegal weapons proliferation from Ukraine to EU countries, German experts noted that around 35 million unregistered weapons of various types are in circulation within the European Union. Just think about that figure!

Weapons intended for the Kyiv regime are popping up in regions far away from the zone of the special military operation. For example, in early August this year, the US Department of War launched an investigation into instances of Western-manufactured weapons being used by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF). During a special operation conducted by the Sudanese armed forces against the RSF near the town of Bara, US-made MK19 mounted automatic grenade launchers and M72 hand-held anti-tank grenade launchers, along with Swedish-manufactured AT4 hand-held anti-tank grenade launchers were seized. A preliminary examination of their markings established that this weaponry had been transferred to the Ukrainian armed forces free of charge in December 2024 from the stocks of the US Department of War.

In Ukraine itself too, this scourge is supposedly being combated, but it is clear that this is being done either to "showcase efforts" in front of its Western backers or to reshape the black market for the sale of these goods. In any event, following a joint operation by the Security Service of Ukraine and the National Police, seven Ukrainian citizens suspected of illegal arms trafficking were detained on 12 May in the city of Zaporizhzhia. During the investigation, it was established that these individuals had acquired weapons from Ukrainian armed forces personnel stationed near the town of Orikhiv (58 km south-east of Zaporizhzhia), after which they had transported this dangerous cargo to the border areas of the Lviv region for onward shipment to Poland. More than 50 assault rifles, 10 rifles, 25 pistols, 20 hand grenades with igniter sets, plus some 8,000 rounds of ammunition for these weapons and over 7 kg of explosives were seized.

There is also another example. On 17 May, a lorry travelling from Ukraine was stopped at the border between Romania and Bulgaria (the Dobromir–Krushari border crossing); it was carrying a Strela-3-man-portable air defence system, a warhead for a Lancet-3 UAV, more than 30 NLAW anti-tank missile systems, and RPG-28 Klyukva and RPG-76 Komar anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers. According to the paperwork, the cargo was registered as ferrous scrap and was intended for a recipient in Montenegro.

I could continue providing further cases of this kind. There are already quite a few such examples.

For those who are sceptical about what they have heard, I should like to add that offers to buy and sell weapons and military equipment are openly posted on Ukrainian websites. Right now, while sitting in

this room, you could pick up your mobile phone and visit, for example, the websites stvol.ua or gunshub.com.ua and purchase an assault rifle. For the convenience of their users, the websites are available in several languages, the prices are listed, and an online sales representative will help you choose the right equipment to arm a small army or a group of terrorists. The relevant slide lists just a few of these websites where you can easily buy offensive and defensive weapons (ukrarmor.com.ua, patriot-armor.com.ua, olx.ua, nemesis.army, sotnyk.net, pancer.com.ua, lunarisoptics.com.ua, astreiatactical.com.ua, prof1group.ua, vm.in.ua, eua.biz, gunshub.com.ua and wroom.com.ua).

Criminals are actively using popular, publicly accessible messaging apps, including Telegram, to sell weapons. In the comments sections of news articles, interested parties post advertisements for the sale of military equipment and indicate an account through which they can be contacted. To enhance the security of transactions, sellers avoid personal contact. Payment is made through cryptocurrency transfer. The weapons are transferred via hiding places (caches), with the relevant co-ordinates and photographs being forwarded to the customer once the goods have been paid for. An international parcel delivery service is available for an additional fee.

Uncontrolled flows of illegal weapons are by no means the only evil emanating from Ukraine at the instigation of its backers. The Kyiv regime is actively recruiting foreign mercenaries in violation of international law. This recruitment campaign is continuing through Ukraine's diplomatic missions abroad and their official channels. A prime example is the Kyiv regime's embassy in Latvia. These actions constitute a gross violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1989 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (which entered into force on 20 October 2001).

It should be recalled that the Zelenskyy regime's Ministry of Defence has announced its aim of filling between 30 and 50 per cent of positions in assault groups and infantry units with foreign nationals. Centres for the recruitment of foreign citizens and stateless persons for military service have been set up within the Ukrainian armed forces, the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, and the National Guard (Ministry of Internal Affairs) of Ukraine. At least 20,000 foreign mercenaries have taken part in combat operations on the side of Ukraine since 2022. The Russian investigative authorities have identified more that 4,000 soldiers of fortune from over 70 countries. The largest number of identified mercenaries came from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Georgia (with more than 700 people from each country). A total of 1,094 mercenaries have been charged as defendants; 296 cases have been referred to court and 243 sentences have been handed down.

We are obliged to note that many of the foreign mercenaries are career military personnel from NATO countries. Most of them are operating undercover. Poland serves as a transit hub for these soldiers of fortune, as it is home to large training centres operated under the supervision of the Alliance's military specialists. One of these is located in the city of Rzeszów.

A separate category of mercenaries consists of members of criminal organizations and drug cartels, who send their representatives to combat zones in order to gain experience of modern warfare – primarily in the use of UAVs – so that, upon returning home, these criminal elements can utilize this knowledge in their battles with the legal authorities.

But what unites all foreign mercenaries fighting on the side of the Ukrainian armed forces is their lack of integrity, their greed, their cavalier attitude towards human life, and their complete disregard for the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. The Russian Ministry of Defence is tracking and recording the names of all mercenaries who arrive in Ukraine to take part in combat operations. We have warned repeatedly that we are not going to treat them with kid gloves. The armed forces of the Russian

Federation are systematically conducting strikes against their temporary bases in Ukraine using long-range, high-precision weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are closely monitoring the security situation in the Black Sea region. On 6 October, the oil tanker *Aframax Rio*, which was sailing from Novorossiysk to India, was attacked by uncrewed surface vessels off the coast of Sochi. We are convinced that, in terms of ensuring the safety of commercial shipping in these waters, the best solution would be to exert collective international pressure on the "disturber of the peace" – the Kyiv regime. This could yield a swifter and more tangible result than signing legally non-binding documents, particularly in the light of the experience of the failed Black Sea Initiative of 2022–2023, which served as a cover for Ukraine's military logistics.

I would remind you that, with the direct support of Western States, the Kyiv regime attempted to block economic activity in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea between June and August. Guided by the strategy of completely destroying vessels transporting oil, petroleum products and foodstuffs, Ukraine sought to paralyse merchant shipping and food exports, partly with a view to destabilizing and reshaping global markets in the self-serving interests of its backers. In 2026, 214 such incidents have been recorded – out of a total of 228 since the start of the special military operation. They have resulted in the deaths of 28 crew members. By comparison, 12 vessels were hit in 2025, and one vessel each year in 2023 and 2024. Among the incidents recorded this year were seven major attacks on tankers carrying Kazakh oil transported via the facilities of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. On 8 July, the Ukrainian armed forces struck a vessel owned by the US corporation Chevron. The intention was to foist on Russia unacceptable terms for negotiations by escalating the situation. International energy and transport infrastructure facilities were also targeted by the Ukrainian armed forces – the TurkStream and Blue Stream pipelines, and the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, in which our Kazakh partners and the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Italy are shareholders. Our economy has indeed suffered damage, estimated at 1 per cent of our gross domestic product. However, this damage is not of a critical nature and, it goes without saying, will not force us to abandon the objectives of the special military operation.

Let us be clear: Russia does not deliberately attack civilian shipping. Our targets are vessels carrying military cargo and dual-use goods, along with port infrastructure serving the Ukrainian armed forces. Using a civilian flag to conceal military shipments means knowingly endangering merchant shipping. It was the Kyiv regime's reckless actions that led to the escalation of the situation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Attempts to lay the blame at Russia's door, however, are nothing more than blatant political speculation that cannot hide the consequences of Zelenskyy's ill-fated ventures. Under these circumstances, the primary stabilization measure should not be various kinds of "deals" without any guarantees whatsoever that Ukraine will honour them, but rather the cessation of its sabotage and terrorist activities against civilian vessels and the abandonment of the practice of creating obstacles to the functioning of existing international trade and logistics routes.

Until the other side shows readiness for a settlement of the conflict, the armed forces of the Russian Federation will continue achieving the objectives of the special military operation by military means as they hold the initiative in the liberation of Donbass and Novorossiya. Last week, from 7 to 12 October, the following military facilities on Ukrainian territory were demilitarized:

– in Kyiv and the Kyiv region – a Pulp Mill Print workshop housing a production site for missiles and long-range UAVs; the Darnitsa locomotive depot where trains used for transporting military cargo underwent maintenance and repairs; the ATM Ukrsibbank data centre, which was used by the Ukrainian armed forces to collect, process and store intelligence; the Mykulychi logistics warehouse,

which was used to store unmanned combat aerial vehicles belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces; the Smart Ammunition LLC industrial enterprise, which assembled and stored FP-5 Flamingo cruise missiles; an assembly workshop and storage facility for UAVs at PJSC Fanplit, which served as a base for the production of components for the Flamingo missile and UAVs; the Kyiv Cardboard and Paper Mill plant, where the aforementioned cruise missiles were produced and stored;

– In the Chernihiv region – the Trading House Plastmas Pryluky industrial enterprise, which manufactured and stored components for Flamingo missiles;

– In the Kirovohrad region – a workshop belonging to the Alexandria Group of industrial enterprises specializing in the manufacture of components for UAVs;

– In the Dnepropetrovsk region – a rocket and space industry facility of the State Enterprise Production Association Pivdennyi Machine-Building Plant named after O. M. Makarov, which produced, stored and supplied Flamingo missiles and FP-1 and FP-24 UAVs to the Ukrainian armed forces;

– In the Poltava region – the manufacturing plant of the AvtoKrAZ Private Joint Stock Company, which produced and stored specialized chassis for Flamingo missile launchers; the JTI Ukraine tobacco factory, whose production facilities were used to manufacture ammunition for small arms;

– In the Kharkiv region – a mechanical engineering plant that stored Flamingo missiles and their components;

– In the Odessa region – the Danube Ship Repair plant, which manufactured and stored uncrewed surface vessels and their components; the Tenet data centre in the city of Odessa, which was used by the Ukrainian armed forces for processing, transmitting and storing information;

– In the Bug estuary – a dry cargo ship that was delivering military and dual-use cargo to the port of Mykolaiv;

– In the Mykolaiv region, the Nova Poshta logistics centre in the village of Ternivka, which was used to store dual-use goods intended to supply the Ukrainian armed forces;

– At the port of Chornomorsk – at least one dry cargo ship delivering military supplies. A similar vessel was destroyed in the port of Mykolaiv, and three others were destroyed while sailing to the port of Odessa.

Having launched the special military operation in 2022 to defend the people of Donbass and Novorossiya from extermination by the Kyiv regime, Russia continues to fight for their security and rights. The goals and tasks of the special military operation, which is being conducted in accordance with Chapter VII, Article 51, of the Charter of the United Nations (as the United Nations Security Council was duly informed), will be achieved, be it through diplomacy or by military means.

Thank you for your attention.