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**STATEMENT BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1578th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 September 2026

**On the need to properly characterize the neo-Nazi nature of the
current Ukrainian leadership**

Mr. Chairperson,

At the last meeting of the Permanent Council on 17 September, you urged us, *inter alia*, not to use terms to describe the current authorities in Kyiv that would suggest these are neo-Nazi in nature. We feel as though you assume we are referring to the Kyiv regime as “neo-Nazi” solely out of a desire to spite the Ukrainian diplomats in attendance and our other colleagues here from the European countries that are sponsoring Ukraine. As that is a profound misunderstanding on your part, we have decided to address this issue separately.

From what, then, does our conviction stem that the regime which seized power in Ukraine in 2014 is neo-Nazi in nature? I will confine myself to the main points.

The current authorities openly base their ideology on the legacy of the leaders of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), who not only actively collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War, but also developed a fascist ideology of their own. Like the Nazis, even before the Second World War they based their philosophy on the primacy of the nation over the individual and on the superiority of the indigenous ethnic group – that is, the Ukrainians – over all others. Just like the German fascists, they promoted the slogan “Ukraine above all else”. They also adopted anti-Semitism from the Nazis. I shall quote here Yaroslav Stetsko, Bandera’s first deputy: “Moscow and the Jews are Ukraine’s greatest enemies. ... I therefore advocate the extermination of the Jews and believe it is appropriate to apply in Ukraine German methods for the extermination of Jewry, ruling out their assimilation.”

Meanwhile, such nationalist leaders as Dmytro Klyachivsky and Roman Shukhevych, for example, advocated the systematic extermination of the Polish population and endorsed the Volhynia massacre of 1943. My Polish colleague can fill you in on the details of that massacre.

Anyone who thinks that the current authorities in Kyiv have distanced themselves from these obnoxious figures is mistaken. Worse still, they are glorifying these figures, and doing so at the State level.

The most recent and utterly baffling example is the reburial of Yevhen Konovalets, the founder and first leader of the OUN, which took place on 18 August 2026 with full military honours. Volodymyr Zelenskyy personally took part in the ceremony, describing Konovalets as an “outstanding son of the Ukrainian people” and a “prominent Ukrainian statesman”. In the run-up to the reburial, members of the nationalist Third Army Corps of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (formerly the Azov battalion) organized a torchlit procession and turned the funeral service in the cathedral into a neo-Nazi spectacle. Two months earlier, another OUN leader, Andrii Melnyk, had also been reburied near Kyiv with State honours.

Incidentally, in Lviv, Ternopil, Rivne, Bucha and several other cities there are streets named after Yaroslav Stetsko and Dmytro Klyachivsky, whom I mentioned earlier and who, as I would remind you, called for the extermination of Jews, Russians and Poles. Monuments are being erected in their honour across the country, schools are named after them, and children call them heroes of Ukraine.

As for Roman Shukhevych, he has become, alongside Stepan Bandera, one of the most revered heroes of modern Ukraine: not only are streets and schools named after him, but museums dedicated to him are also being opened. I should like to ask our German and Austrian colleagues: are there any museums dedicated to Hitler, Göring, Bormann or Goebbels in your countries? Ukraine, however, has museums dedicated to Shukhevych and Bandera, who actively collaborated with them and were complicit in the Holocaust. Schoolchildren are taken to these museums and made to swear allegiance to the State whose foundations were laid by Shukhevych and Bandera. Do you think this is normal? We do not.

By the way, the Kyiv regime is planning to establish a so-called Ukrainian National Pantheon on the grounds of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, a site sacred to all Orthodox Christians, and to transfer there the remains of Konovalets, Melnyk and other butchers and criminals, including Bandera. Are you going to react to this sacrilege in any way, Mr. Chairperson, or is criticizing us for calling things by their proper names all you are capable of?

Honouring and decorating ideological followers of the Third Reich

How else can one interpret the footage published by Ukrainian media showing, for instance, Zelenskyy decorating “fighters” from the 4th Battalion of the 4th Brigade (“Rubizh Brigade”) of the Ukrainian National Guard? Moreover, the number 44 on their arm patches is stylized to resemble the double lightning bolts worn by Hitler’s SS.

Such ceremonies are, at bottom, no different from the rituals organized by the leadership of the Third Reich during the fascist occupation of Soviet Ukraine.

Journalists have pointed out that on 4 November 2025, during a ceremony to decorate personnel from the 4th Rapid Reaction Brigade of the Ukrainian National Guard, the leader of the Kyiv junta posed in front of a flag featuring the emblem of the 2nd SS Panzer Division “Das Reich”. The decorated “fighters”, too, sported fascist chevrons on the sleeves of their uniforms. This is corroborated by photos posted, incidentally, on Zelenskyy’s official Telegram channel.

In view of this, there is nothing out of the ordinary in another observation made by journalists, in this case by those who analysed the social media accounts of Anton Radko, deputy commander of the 1st Mechanized Battalion of the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In his posts, Radko shows off his tattoos featuring Nazi symbols, including a swastika and the emblem of the SS Panzer Division “Totenkopf”. He likes to caption his photos – including those in which this “fighter” poses in front

of a monument to Bandera – with quotes by Third Reich Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the Hitlerite collaborationist Roman Shukhevych whom I have already mentioned.

There is so much photographic and video material out there that the Western media have already begun to engage in self-censorship in order to prevent their readers and viewers from discovering the whole truth about the Banderites' use of Third Reich symbols.

Neo-Nazi symbols

The Kyiv regime is using the OUN-UPA flag alongside the Ukrainian national flag. It has put collaborationists, whom it regards as “participants in the struggle for Ukraine’s independence in the twentieth century”, on the same footing as veterans who fought for the anti-Hitler coalition; it is paying out pensions to Banderites and UPA militants; it has banned the celebration of Victory Day on 9 May; and it has also approved the use of a nationalist slogan, essentially a copy of the well-known Nazi salute, as a greeting for the military and the police – a greeting which, incidentally, Western politicians and diplomats, including those in this room, are fond of incorporating into their statements.

The “war” against monuments and burial sites

The soldiers who fell fighting to liberate the territory of Ukraine, the veterans who have since passed away (including Zelenskyy’s grandfather) could never, even in their worst nightmares, have imagined that their descendants would deny their heroism and glorify those against whom they had fought.

Even an entire Permanent Council meeting would not suffice to shed light on even just a tiny fraction of the arbitrariness now prevailing in Ukraine and on how the neo-Nazis are running the show there. The Ukrainian “fighters”, by the way, revealed their true Nazi colours during the 2024 attack on the Kursk region. Our investigators have plenty of video footage showing them daubing swastikas on vehicles and looted buildings, waving Nazi flags, shouting Nazi slogans and raising their arms in Nazi salutes while shooting civilians and tormenting them. What is more, the “fighters” filmed and distributed this footage themselves in order to further intimidate the local population.

We could tell you much more, but we shall not abuse the time allotted to us. All this is laid out in detail and in the clearest possible terms in the relevant reports on Ukraine recently issued by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which we have circulated at the OSCE.

We hope that, after these explanations, you, Mr. Chairperson, will finally be able to connect all the dots. And that you will not criticize us, but rather those in this room who claim that there is no neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.