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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: Security Dialogue
Subject: OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful for the convening of a Security Dialogue devoted to the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and we acknowledge the contribution made by the panellists to the discussion.

Adopted at the CSCE/OSCE Summit in Budapest in 1994, this document of central importance for the politico-military dimension of the Organization's work remains a benchmark that lays down principles for responsible State behaviour in the politico-military sphere. The Code of Conduct comprises two dimensions: inter-State co-operation and intra-State elements. These elements should be considered not only at regular meetings of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), but also during the Annual Discussions on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct, pursuant to FSC Decision No. 12/11. Nevertheless, in recent years, implementation of the inter-State principles of co-operation has not once been reviewed at the FSC, nor have there been any Annual Discussions, these being systematically blocked by anonymous delegations acting behind closed doors during consultations with the rotating Chairmanships. The discontinuation of the Annual Discussions is in breach of an FSC decision and deals a blow to the basic principles of the Forum's work as an autonomous decision-making body of the OSCE.

Today, the Chairmanship is inviting the participating States to focus, for at least the second time this year, on Chapter VII of the Code of Conduct, which deals with compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law by armed forces personnel. This is an extremely important topic, but it should not be discussed at the expense of other dimensions of the Code. Moreover, experience has shown that Security Dialogues on the Code of Conduct very often turn into "fertile" ground for politicization, antagonization and the stirring up of further confrontation at the FSC, which at the end of the day is causing the essence, goals and objectives of that document to be distorted. Similarly, we are baffled by the eagerness of a number of participating States to attempt to consider a whole range of issues – including the plight of women and children in conflicts, climate, etc. – through the prism of the Code of Conduct. Taken together, these factors create a state of affairs in which many participating States are simply unable to see the wood for the trees,

the “wood” in this case being the root causes of the current deplorable security situation in the OSCE area, which are linked to violations of the fundamental principles of inter-State co-operation enshrined in the Code of Conduct.

This state of affairs needs to be rectified as a matter of urgency. We expect the rotating Chairmanships and the OSCE Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre to undertake the necessary efforts and steps to ensure that the FSC reverts to proper work related to the Code of Conduct.

Mr. Chairperson,

Turning to the concept you have proposed for this Security Dialogue, we should like to point out that the Geneva Conventions, the Protocols Additional thereto, the Hague Conventions and customary international humanitarian law clearly establish a framework for the conduct of parties to an armed conflict – a framework that does not need to be rewritten. Nor is it necessary to look for new formats for interpreting that framework. This year, our delegation has on several occasions highlighted the Russian Federation’s approaches to fulfilling its obligations with regard to ensuring that armed forces personnel comply with the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. Russia stood at the cradle of the development of international humanitarian law, and the system of training for military personnel that we currently have in place ensures that these possess the necessary level of knowledge and practical skills in the field of international humanitarian law and human rights when performing their tasks, including in connection with the conduct of the special military operation. Colleagues can peruse more detailed information on this matter in previous statements of ours (in particular, FSC-PC.DEL/66/26, FSC-PC.DEL/20/26 and FSC.DEL/181/26).

We should like to focus today on one of the principal threats to the international humanitarian law regime, one that has to do with the selective application and interpretation of the relevant norms and with double standards in the discussion of violations thereof. This is also manifesting itself clearly at the FSC.

First, a great many participating States make histrionic appeals here for observance of international humanitarian law, yet continue to deliver arms to conflict zones. For example, Germany, which was one of the first countries to endorse, in 2022, the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, is now in the dock at the International Court of Justice, where hearings were recently held in a case concerning deliveries of weapons that are being used in Gaza.

This is not deterring either Germany or other participating States of our Organization, which are at the same time sponsoring Ukrainian terrorism against the civilian population, in violation of the CSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers (1993) and the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2000). In particular, these documents contain commitments whereby participating States are expected to refrain from arms transfers that would be likely to: “be used for the violation or suppression of human rights and fundamental freedoms; ... prolong or aggravate an existing armed conflict ...; ... introduce destabilizing military capabilities into a region ...; be used for the purpose of repression; support or encourage terrorism; ...” However, all these principles related to international humanitarian law are simply being ignored by Western OSCE participating States. In their twisted perception, the principles of international humanitarian law can be applied selectively, depending on political expediency.

How is this compatible with the provisions of the Code of Conduct?

That brings me to my second point. A great many OSCE participating States remain blind to Ukraine’s systematic violations of international humanitarian law, which date back to 2014 and stand out for

their extreme cynicism. The “fighters” from the Ukrainian armed forces deliberately target places where civilians congregate and civilian vehicles, realizing perfectly well that it is precisely non-combatants, including children, who will fall victim to their criminal actions. In doing so, they are making use of intelligence data and cutting-edge weapon systems and military equipment supplied by NATO countries.

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.”

However, this has not been stopping the Kyiv regime from using drones to hunt Russian civilians, from destroying educational establishments and civilian vehicles, or from attempting to obstruct Russian citizens’ free expression of their will in the parliamentary elections held from 18 to 20 September. Incidentally, the Ukrainian armed forces’ artillery, missile and drone attacks on Russian civilian objects peaked during that period, coming very close to 9,000 munitions per week. Has any of the European countries “championing” international humanitarian law reacted to these terrorist attacks?

The Kyiv regime’s “fighters” have “notched up” more than 35,000 civilian casualties on Russian territory in total since late February 2022, with over 26,340 injured, including 1,520 minors, and at least 9,006 killed, including 305 children. All in all, the Ukrainian armed forces have fired more than 550,000 munitions at Russian civilian objects. Compared with last year, the number of such strikes has at least doubled. Over 95 per cent of the civilian casualties inflicted by the Ukrainian armed forces’ strikes are victims of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the tactical and technical characteristics of which, in the vast majority of cases, allow the target to be accurately identified.

The West’s unapologetic hushing up of these crimes is nothing less than a carte blanche for the Kyiv regime to continue using the weapons supplied by its sponsors against the civilian population. They remain silent in the West because the profits obtained from arms contracts for the military-industrial complexes of NATO and EU countries outweigh the value of human life and international obligations.

How is this compatible with the provisions of the Code of Conduct?

Thirdly, a great many OSCE participating States stress the importance of the contribution made by international humanitarian organizations to the observance of international humanitarian law, while at the same time hushing up the Ukrainian armed forces’ attacks on the representatives of such organizations. For example, on 6 October, first at 3 a.m. and then at 5.45 a.m., Ukrainian B-2-type fixed-wing drones attacked the premises of a warehouse of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Donetsk. Those premises were marked with Red Cross protection emblems in full compliance with the requirements of international humanitarian law. Furthermore, the Ukrainian side had been receiving the necessary notifications regarding the location and operation of the warehouse. The authorities in Kyiv should in these circumstances have been aware that the warehouse was storing food, medical supplies and building materials being used to assist the affected residents of Donbass. However, this was no obstacle to the conduct of deliberate attacks on that facility, the consequences of which you can see on the screens.

How is this compatible with the provisions of the Code of Conduct?

That the Kyiv regime was able to commit such a crime underscores Ukraine’s disregard for the norms of international humanitarian law, which provide for special protection for ICRC staff and property. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the Ukrainians had been duly informed of the warehouse’s

location in line with established procedure, yet they attacked it deliberately all the same. We expect an unequivocal appraisal of the Kyiv regime's criminal acts from those States that genuinely support the work of the ICRC and respect the norms of international humanitarian law. It is necessary to establish all the circumstances of the strikes, identify those responsible and give a legal assessment of their actions.

Fourthly, a great many OSCE participating States are demonstrating outrageous partisanship when it comes to the humane treatment of prisoners of war. It is high time they opened their eyes to the fact that the conditions of detention in Ukrainian captivity are strikingly different from those which the Zelenskyy regime shows to foreign visitors in a carefully selected model camp. Such "stagings" are designed to deliberately mislead people. The Russian Investigative Committee has opened at least 172 criminal cases concerning the violence and other forms of ill-treatment to which prisoners of war are subjected by the Ukrainian side. According to the testimonies of Russian military personnel who have suffered such treatment, among various other forms of abuse (deprivation of food, confinement in conditions unfit for humans, beatings, mauling by dogs, mock executions by firing squad, and so on), they were stripped naked, tortured through electrocution, and threatened with castration and sexual violence. We have been circulating relevant verified materials among the participating States (notably under distribution symbol SEC.DEL/77/26) detailing the kinds of abuse to which our soldiers have been subjected by the Ukrainian armed forces, nationalist battalions and foreign mercenaries. They run to hundreds of pages!

How is this compatible with the provisions of the Code of Conduct? Again, there is silence on this at the OSCE.

Fifthly, the provocative campaign launched by the Kyiv regime and its European patrons to ostensibly uphold international humanitarian law and "save" the city of Alyoshki in the Kherson region does not stand up to scrutiny either. On 10 July this year, our delegation, together with Ambassador-at-Large Rodion Miroshnik of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held an international video conference entitled "Crimes of the Kiev Regime: Terror against the Civilians of the Kherson Region". I should like to reproduce verbatim what was said at the conference by Vladimir Saldo, the governor of that constituent entity of the Russian Federation, who provided a comprehensive overview of what is going on:

> "The situation is particularly dire in the city of Alyoshki, which lies on the road linking the left and right banks of the Dnieper. A federal road to Kherson runs through there. The Kyiv regime's propaganda claims that people are not being allowed to leave the city are based on deception. People are exiting and entering the city, albeit with allowance made for the actions of the enemy, who lay mines daily along the access routes to Alyoshki. Our troops clear these roads of mines every day, but the laying of mines continues.
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> "Despite this, we are not giving up. People continue to live in Alyoshki. Some residents are leaving, but there are others who are staying put: those who refuse to leave their homes even in the face of a lack of electricity and gas, limited food deliveries and the absence of virtually all types of public services. A hospital is open in Alyoshki which has turned into a hub for the provision of assistance: people go there for water and medical care, and to take shelter from the drones that are constantly hovering overhead.
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> "Since the start of the year, 20 ambulances serving this hospital have been damaged as a result of strikes and landmines. The safe evacuation of the severely wounded from front-line stations has become an extremely challenging task in its own right. This is a gross violation of all the rules of warfare, but there is no point in talking about it any more: the enemy has no principles left. The authorities, together with the military and with rescue workers, are seeking ways to maintain the provision of medical care, and such care is indeed being provided.

"The Kyiv regime's 'fighters' have become completely dehumanized: they claim that soldiers are being transported in these ambulances. Neurosurgeon Nikolay Kostin lost his life recently; chief physician Vladimir Kharlamov was seriously injured, and his wife was killed. In December 2025, the building housing the hospital's catering facilities was hit, killing three staff members. Medical personnel continue to carry out their professional duties, working under the most severe physical, psychological and mental pressure."

Let me repeat: the main cause of the humanitarian crisis is the blockade artificially imposed by the Ukrainian armed forces. The Ukrainian UAVs constantly hovering over the roads and the remotely laid Ukrainian mines on public thoroughfares simply make it impossible to deliver aid. Everything that finds its way into Alyoshki nowadays is being carried by hand or transported by bicycle, with people risking their lives each time.

Again, that question begs itself. We were falsely assured today that the Ukrainian armed forces are adhering flawlessly to the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. Many participating States were literally beating their chests, asserting the importance of compliance with Chapter VII of the OSCE Code of Conduct. But how is all this compatible with that chapter's provisions? The answer is obvious: it is most certainly not compatible. In this connection, we urge the Kyiv regime and Western OSCE participating States to stop churning out statements that are divorced from reality, and we call upon international organizations to provide an impartial assessment of the Kyiv regime's crimes against the long-suffering city of Alyoshki.

Direct contact has been established between the Human Rights Commissioner of the Russian Federation, Yana Lantratova, and the team of US First Lady Melania Trump regarding the provision of assistance to the city's residents. Negotiations are currently under way to organize the delivery of humanitarian aid and the evacuation of people in urgent need of assistance.

Lastly, our sixth point. To us it is clear that, when it comes to discussing Chapter VII of the Code of Conduct, what matters to a number of OSCE participating States is having a comprehensive, long-term system in place in the information sphere for the substitution of reality. Someone who is genuinely deluded can be brought back to a sense of reality, but that is not possible with those who lie consciously and deliberately. The only way to counter this is to set down the facts clearly and hold the perpetrators to account for issuing and carrying out orders that contravene international humanitarian law. That is what our country is now working on systematically. Since 2014, the Investigative Committee has opened more than 10,000 criminal cases against nearly 2,500 individuals – members of the Ukrainian leadership, members of radical groups, agents of the Ukrainian security apparatus and foreign mercenaries. A criminal case concerning the genocide of the population of Donbass has been referred to court, with 41 members of the Kyiv regime's senior political and military leadership listed as defendants. All those responsible for crimes against the civilian population of the Russian Federation will be resolutely punished.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, I should like to emphasize that achieving the objective set out by you in the concept note for this meeting – namely, to "contribute to ... FSC efforts to maintain the Code of Conduct as a functioning instrument capable of responding to contemporary security challenges while remaining grounded in the commitments agreed by all participating States" – depends on the willingness of a good three dozen delegations to resume proper discussion of the Code of Conduct, discarding double standards.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.