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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1428th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 June 2023

**On the ongoing crimes by the Kyiv regime and the dangerous policies of the
Western alliance countries to escalate tensions**

Mr. Chairperson,

In the early hours of 6 June, the Kyiv regime committed yet another terrorist crime, blowing up the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant in the Kherson region of the Russian Federation. There has been a significant rise in the water level downstream of the Dnieper. Settlements have been flooded. According to preliminary reports, up to 40,000 people have been affected by the flooding, and a mass evacuation is under way. The damage to agriculture in the region and to the Dnieper estuary ecosystem has been colossal. The Kyiv regime deliberately raised the water level in the Kakhovka reservoir to a critical level by opening the floodgates of the Dnieper hydroelectric power plant. The imminent depletion of the Kakhovka reservoir will disrupt Crimea's water supply and the irrigation of agricultural land in the Kherson region.

The incident is a terrorist act against civilian infrastructure. The sabotage was planned deliberately in advance by the Kyiv regime for military purposes as part of a so-called "counteroffensive" by the Ukrainian armed forces. Having failed to achieve success in the offensive through an exploratory attack, the Ukrainian Government intends to redeploy units and equipment from the Kherson area to reinforce its capabilities in priority areas. For this purpose, Volodymyr Zelenskyy's formations have begun building defensive positions on the right bank of the Dnieper, indicating that they intend at any moment to mount a defence here. In order to prevent an offensive by the Russian army in this section of the front, the Kyiv regime has undertaken a subversive and effectively a terrorist act that will have severe and long-lasting environmental and economic consequences.

Obviously, in the absence of victories on the front, the Kyiv regime needs some kind of escalation in order to maintain the interest of its foreign sponsors. After all, a media-hyped "environmental disaster caused by the Russians" is sure to generate funds. It is also important for Russia to continue to be portrayed as a "terrorist country", while denying all responsibility for the shelling of the hydroelectric facilities. How the Ukrainian authorities actually deal with the needs of the civilian population in terms of water supply is well illustrated by the seven-year water blockade they have imposed on Crimea.

The facts, however, suggest that this large-scale act of sabotage was planned by Ukraine in advance. Russian officials warned as early as in 2022 of the Kyiv regime's plans to hit this critical infrastructure facility. In particular, on 21 October 2022, Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations sent an official letter to the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council calling for the prevention of this heinous crime. Already at that time there was information that Ukrainian forces were considering laying sea mines downstream on the Dnieper or launching a massive missile strike on the dam. Unfortunately, it was not possible to avert this disaster.

The Russian Investigative Committee has started criminal proceedings for an act of terrorism resulting in significant property damage and other grave consequences. At Russia's initiative, the issue has already been taken up in the United Nations Security Council. We call upon the OSCE leadership to condemn the criminal acts of the Kyiv regime, which are becoming more and more inhuman and pose a serious threat to regional security.

The bombing of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant by Ukrainian armed formations has all the hallmarks of a war crime and is a gross violation of international humanitarian law. The inadmissibility of attacks on dams and dykes is explicitly stated in Article 56 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions, 1977: "Works or installations containing dangerous forces, namely dams, dykes and nuclear electrical generating stations, shall not be made the object of attack, even where these objects are military objectives, if such attack may cause the release of dangerous forces and consequent severe losses among the civilian population."

The issue of the Kyiv regime's military interest in hydroelectric facilities has been raised by us several times before in the OSCE Permanent Council. The representatives of the West, who are now shouting the loudest about the dire consequences of blowing up the dam, dismissed our words at the time.

Let us recall: at the meeting of 26 May 2022, we described in detail the situation near Svitlodarsk in the Donetsk People's Republic, where the Ukrainian armed forces had mined and attempted to blow up the dam at the Vuhlehirska power station before abandoning their positions. The Ukrainian formations had been preparing in advance for this crime against the civilian population – as early as mid-April 2022, special-purpose machinery arrived there and was used to dig a pit for the explosives. Fortunately, the attempt to blow up the dam was unsuccessful at the time.

Ukraine has also long been sizing up the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant itself. At the Permanent Council meeting of 10 November 2022, we spoke about the strike on 6 November by Ukrainian formations using US-made HIMARS multiple-launch rocket systems. The sluice gate of the power station dam was damaged. The attack was not an accident, but a deliberate act. In an article on 29 December 2022, *The Washington Post* quoted Ukrainian armed forces major general Andriy Kovalchuk speculating about the flooding of the Dnieper River. He admitted that Ukrainian formations had carried out "a test strike with a HIMARS launcher on one of the floodgates at the Nova Kakhova dam, making three holes in the metal to see if the Dnieper's water could be raised enough to stymie Russian crossings but not flood nearby villages. The test was a success, Kovalchuk said [at the time]."

Ukrainian representatives have admitted on several occasions that not a single missile is fired from HIMARS multiple-launch rocket systems, for example, without prior agreement with the United States of America. Perhaps the US State Department representatives present in this room could explain why the US Government had previously agreed to strike the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam.

The responsibility of Ukrainian armed formations for sabotaging the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant is very clearly illustrated by the demonstrative and incredibly quick reaction of the Kyiv regime's

foreign sponsors. Only hours after the terrorist attack, the head of the European Council Charles Michel issued a statement saying that the European Union would hold Russia accountable for the war crime. Incidentally, for eight months now, EU representatives have failed to investigate the bombing of Nord Stream gas pipelines in their own territorial waters, but the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, thousands of kilometres from the European Union's borders, was investigated in half a day. Such statements are in the same vein as the accusations that the Russian army "shelled itself" in towns and cities in Donbas and at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

It is clear to us in whose interests this critical infrastructure was destroyed. Under these circumstances we will not therefore try to offer justifications, but rather calculate the damage caused to these Russian territories in order to bring all those responsible – in the broadest sense – to justice.

This latest manifestation of the terrorist methods of the Kyiv regime, which is completely indifferent to the safety of the civilian population and is ready to arrange even large-scale human-made disasters to gain tactical military advantages, does not discomfit its foreign sponsors, who seek to squeeze the maximum possible resources out of Ukraine for the purpose of their own geopolitical confrontation with Russia. The Ukrainians are being relentlessly urged to escalate the situation. This is the only way to interpret statements such as the one made by Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor to the US President, in a recent interview with CNN: "We do believe that this counteroffensive will allow Ukraine to take strategically significant territory back from Russia. [...] We believe that the Ukrainians will meet with success in this counteroffensive."

We can state categorically that terrorist methods will not give Ukraine any military advantage. Nor will they give the West the upper hand in its proxy war with Russia. They will only reinforce our determination to implement all the objectives of the special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and eliminate the large-scale security threats emanating from its territory.

Thank you for your attention.