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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1473rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 May 2024

On the increasing military involvement of certain NATO and EU member States in further confrontation in and around Ukraine

Madam Chairperson,

The Russian armed forces are conducting effective operations to neutralize the military capabilities of the Kyiv regime's formations in Donbas, the Dnieper Lowland, the historical Sloboda region and also in several other areas temporarily controlled by the Kyiv regime. As a result of advances in the Kharkiv region, more than ten tactically important population centres have been liberated and scores of weapons, including weapons supplied by NATO countries, have been destroyed.

The Russian military's successful actions in the historical Sloboda region have taken place against a backdrop of propagandistic discourse by the Kyiv regime's leadership about that territory boasting the "mightiest fortifications". The Kyiv regime's ringleader, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, spoke in a similar vein himself during a press conference on 19 December 2023 when discussing the readiness of those fortifications. He also told his Western handlers the same thing so as to coax new "packages" of military supplies out of them. The facts indicate that the Kyiv regime was lying and that the funds allocated were simply embezzled.

Powerless as it is to stop the manoeuvring of Russian troops, the Kyiv regime has resumed intensive artillery and missile attacks on the residential areas of Russian towns and cities. Last week, these attacks claimed at least 237 casualties among civilians, of whom 50 lost their lives, including two children, while an additional 187 people were injured, including 13 minors.

A particularly challenging situation pertains in the Belgorod region. On 12 May, the city of Belgorod was subjected to intensive shelling from Tochka-U tactical missile systems, Vilkha multiple rocket launchers and Czech-made Vampire multiple-launch rocket systems. A total of 29 houses and 43 apartment buildings were damaged, as were 63 civilian cars and a food service enterprise. A ten-storey apartment building was struck during one of these shelling attacks, causing one of its entrances to collapse. Seventeen people were killed there, including two children. More than 20 people were rescued from under the rubble, including two minors – they all sustained injuries of varying severity. Three rescue workers were injured as

they went about their work at the scene of the tragedy. Repeated attacks on the same day led to further casualties. A children's playground, a school playing field and other purely civilian objects were hit.

We are outraged that the OSCE leadership has again opted to demonstratively take no notice of Russian civilian casualties. There was no public reaction to the aforementioned criminal acts. This is a glaring demonstration of double standards, seeing how Mr. Zelenskyy's formations are *de facto* being given carte blanche to commit all kinds of atrocities and, what is more, seeing how political and other support is being provided for this. All this is jeopardizing the credibility not only of the current OSCE leadership, but also that of our entire Organization.

While civilians are perishing at the hands of the Ukrainian armed forces, over in Washington they have announced yet another package of military supplies for the Kyiv regime worth around 400 million dollars. Among other items, the package includes missiles and artillery rounds. It is noteworthy that chemical, biological and nuclear protection equipment features in the listing of goods. Any attempts by the Kyiv regime to organize provocations or "stagings" involving the use of chemical weapons must cease. It should be understood that such provocations will not lead to an improvement in the tactical situation of the Zelenskyy regime's formations.

The latest amendments to the law on mobilization of the population are entering into force in Ukraine on 18 May. They provide for further curtailment of the civil, property and other rights of those who have not undergone so-called "data checks" at the military recruitment offices. A so-called "military transport obligation" is also being introduced, whereby civilian vehicles and agricultural machinery may be confiscated from any inhabitant of Ukraine. Speaking in front of students in Kyiv, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who visited Ukraine on 14 May, also called for the mobilization of people into the armed formations' ranks to be intensified.

In this context, ordinary Ukrainians continue to look for ways of avoiding having to die for the interests of the Kyiv regime and its Western sponsors. For example, according to data from the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities, over the past two years more than 11,000 Ukrainian men have fled to Romania alone through poorly monitored stretches of the border. Most of them have requested protected status abroad as they do not wish to fight. At least 19 people have died trying to cross the border – 11 bodies have been found in the River Tisza to date; the others perished while making their way through mountainous terrain. Romanian rescuers have saved 108 people from a certain death.

At the same time, the Kyiv regime's Western handlers continue to hold the regime back from engaging in a political and diplomatic settlement process, and to insist on continuation of the hostilities. This is being done in Washington, London, Brussels and several other capitals. Incidentally, as is becoming clear, the denizens of the Western "empire of lies" do not like to be reminded of what they themselves have been calling for. For example, responding to questions from journalists, European External Action Service spokesperson Peter Stano said that assertions about the European Union's desire to have the Ukrainian conflict decided on the battlefield – as regularly recalled by Russian representatives – were "disinformation" and "distortion of reality". In this way Mr. Stano was pretending not to remember the numerous pronouncements by his immediate boss, Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Not so long ago as 9 April 2022, for example, Mr. Borrell had publicly stated that the Ukrainian conflict (and I am quoting him here) must be "won on the battlefield".

One further point. This is by way of response to today's lamentations, replete with cynicism and lies, by the representatives of the United States of America and its satellites with regard to the suffering of the civilian population in areas controlled by the Kyiv regime: in sending ever new arms shipments to the Kyiv regime, they cannot but be aware that the use of these weapons will lead to civilian deaths.

Let me regale you with a fresh quote, though. During a discussion in Washington on 7 May at the second Ash Carter Exchange, the former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mark Milley, who served in that post from 2019 to 2023, talked about conflicts around the world. In so doing, he sought to justify violence against civilian populations by stating literally the following: “We shouldn’t forget that we, the United States, killed a lot of innocent people in Mosul, in Raqqa; that we, the United States, killed 12,000 innocent French civilians. [...] We destroyed 69 Japanese cities, not including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We slaughtered people in massive numbers, innocent people who had nothing to do with their government – men, women and children. War is a terrible thing. But if it’s going to have meaning, if it’s going to have any sense of morality, there has to be a political purpose, and it must be achieved rapidly with the least cost and that you do by speed.”

We trust that no comments are required here. We would just add that General Milley’s enumeration of US military adventures conducted worldwide to attain the political goals of the United States, including in the Balkans, is by no means complete. At the same time, even with such antecedents, sham moralizing is still, as one can see, considered to be politically par for the course in some quarters.

To conclude, we stress that Russia is striving for a comprehensive, sustainable and just settlement of the conflict in and around Ukraine. Such a settlement is possible solely on the basis of serious and thoughtful approaches and must take into account the need to provide long-term guarantees for the security of our country. The attempts by certain Western countries to put forward, on behalf of the entire international community, ultimatums in the guise of “formulas” supposedly authored by Mr. Zelenskyy are utterly unviable and there is no chance of their ever being realized. They constitute, in effect, a call for continuation of the hostilities and for the conflict to be dragged out; they are not “peace formulas” but “formulas for war”.

There will be no “freezing”, no “Korean scenarios”, which Western experts, frightened by the successes of the Russian armed forces, have become so fond of trotting out lately. The path towards a real, sustainable resolution of the ongoing problems by political and diplomatic means must run through a complete cessation of NATO countries’ arms supplies to the Kyiv regime and through a stop being put to the recruitment on their territory of Ukrainian and foreign citizens into the ranks of the Ukrainian armed forces and neo-Nazi outfits involved in fighting against Russian military personnel. It is important to ensure the withdrawal of all foreign mercenaries, instructors and operators of NATO weapons from Ukrainian territory, to see to it that other activities aimed at maintaining and developing the combat capability of criminal armed formations are wound down, and also to create the conditions for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.