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**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1090th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

9 October 2024

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the fact that a plenary meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) has been convened on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. We consider it extremely important for this topic to be incorporated into the agenda in view of that document's 30th anniversary, which unfortunately could not be celebrated as part of an Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on account of that event having been blocked by Western delegations.

At the same time, we are obliged to note that the Danish Chairmanship did not see fit to ensure a balanced geographical representation among the panellists, as a result of which some of them offered biased assessments that are convenient and congenial exclusively to the Kyiv regime and its foreign handlers. Moreover, the concept note that was circulated for the Security Dialogue contains inappropriate, one-sided language about a "Russian war of aggression against Ukraine". We would recommend that our Danish colleagues reflect on how such actions can be reconciled with their self-proclaimed "striving for dialogue".

Mr. Chairperson,

Adopted at the CSCE/OSCE Summit in Budapest in 1994, the OSCE Code of Conduct was conceived as a set of universal rules governing the activities of States in the politico-military sphere. Since the Danish Chairmanship has proposed that delegations concentrate today on Chapter VII of the Code, which is devoted to the observance of international humanitarian law by armed forces personnel during armed conflict, we should like to share our national best practices in this field.

The special military operation is being conducted in full and strict compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law, including the provisions of the Inhumane Weapons Convention and its Protocols. In the course of this operation, the armed forces of the Russian Federation are being guided by the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and also by the norms and principles of international humanitarian law reflected in Russian legislation. In our country it is taken for granted that knowledge of,

and compliance with, international humanitarian law during combat operations are an integral part of the legal understanding of members of the armed forces. The following specific measures are taken to achieve that noble goal.

Firstly, in accordance with Order No. 95 of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation from 2019, we pay priority attention to educating military personnel in the best Russian traditions of humane treatment of the victims of armed conflicts and civilians. A historical approach is used during the educational process: instances are cited of members of the Russian armed forces fulfilling their duty in an exemplary manner. With a view to expanding servicemen's knowledge of the law of armed conflict, arrangements have been made for the annual training of military lawyers at the study centre of the Combined Forces Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the town of Naro-Fominsk. An army-wide law test is regularly conducted in order to obtain objective information about the level of legal literacy among military personnel.

As part of their politico-military training, our officers study thoroughly the Internal Service Regulations of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the "Manual on International Humanitarian Law for the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation" and several other documents governing the preparation and conduct of combat operations. These impose on servicemen the obligation to "be aware of and strictly comply with international rules for the conduct of hostilities and treatment of the wounded, the sick, civilians in a combat zone and prisoners of war". Furthermore, the aforementioned Manual contains, in Appendix 4, a "Code of Conduct for the Serviceman from the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Taking Part in Hostilities", which is aimed at preventing unwarranted suffering for the participants in armed conflict and the civilian population, reducing the number of casualties, and avoiding the loss of cultural heritage and damage to the environment.

Secondly, in Russian military legal tradition and practice, military command bodies and commanders at all levels are entrusted with a substantial part of the obligations relating to compliance with agreements dealing with international humanitarian law. They are in this case direct executors of the stipulations of international humanitarian law. Their obligations include:

- Preventing violations of the norms of international humanitarian law by their subordinates in the course of hostilities;
- Dealing with violations, should they be committed;
- Informing higher military authorities of violations of the norms of international humanitarian law;
- Taking preventive measures to forestall violations of the norms of international humanitarian law;
- Holding those who have committed violations accountable under disciplinary or criminal liability.

It is important to emphasize that, in accordance with the Military Regulations of the Ground Forces of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, a decision by the commander of a battalion (or company) is the basis for exercising command over units. The commander provides subordinates with instructions and clarifications on such matters as how to behave towards the enemy's wounded and towards those captured or killed; how to make contact with the civilian population; and how they should behave if they themselves are captured. In addition, preserving civilian lives is a priority for Russian commanders, which means that, in strict conformity with the norms of international humanitarian law, exclusively military objectives belonging to the enemy, as well as combatants, may be engaged as legitimate targets.

Thirdly, the Russian Federation's legislation fully takes into account the provisions of international humanitarian law as regards accountability for serious violations of this law. Unlawful acts include wilful killing; inhuman treatment, including biological experiments; perfidious use of international or national emblems; intentionally launching an attack against particularly dangerous objects in the knowledge that such attack will cause excessive loss of life. Moreover, in accordance with the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, crimes involving "the use of prohibited means and methods of warfare", "genocide" and "ecocide" have no statute of limitations.

Mr. Chairperson,

In view of the aforesaid, it is most bizarre for us to hear the vile insinuations that are being bandied about by the delegation of Ukraine and a number of Western OSCE participating States as to atrocities allegedly being committed by Russian troops. They are stubbornly operating in line with the "Goebbels method", according to which the more monstrous a lie, the more readily it is believed. But when the true state of affairs is revealed, it is very hard for the liars to restore their international reputation.

The cynical staged killing of civilians in Bucha – a "performance" so beloved of Ukraine and the NATO and EU countries – has already bored everyone sick. We would remind you that, on 31 March 2022, after the Russian units' withdrawal, the mayor of Bucha, Anatolii Fedoruk, posted a video in which he did not say one word about his fellow townsfolk having been "massacred". One would surely think that if our troops had been committing war crimes non-stop in the course of 33 days and had left 1,800 corpses in their wake, he would have at least mentioned it. It is clear why no investigation was ever conducted into this tragedy, why no information has ever been forthcoming on those killed, why no forensic findings have ever been released. This can mean only one thing: the Kyiv regime is afraid of an investigation because in the course of such an inquiry it risks finding itself on the bench of the accused.

And what can one say about the sordid insinuations by the former Ukrainian Commissioner for Human Rights, Liudmyla Denisova, who, incidentally, was sacked for her vile anti-Russian lies about the "rape of children"? I would remind you that Ms. Denisova, together with her daughter, also a Ukrainian public official, systematically misled the international community by spreading disinformation about "young women gang-raped before their mothers' eyes" and "toddlers and infants sexually brutalized with a teaspoon or a candle". Ms. Denisova later stated that she "was telling these terrible stories" because she "wanted victory for Ukraine". It is evident that such "good intentions" lead to nowhere for those who are guided by them.

Another beloved narrative in the Kyiv regime's propaganda is Russia's alleged destruction of Ukraine's towns and cities. However, as a former member of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament), Yegor Firsov, has acknowledged, the razing of population centres is a direct consequence of the tactics chosen by the Ukrainian armed forces. These tactics consist in the Ukrainian army taking people and civilian infrastructure hostage. For example, as part of their defence of Pokrovsk, Ukrainian troops are hiding behind high-rise blocks to protect themselves from the Russian armed forces' shelling. What is more, in military terms this is being made out to be a winning strategy, as opposed to a war crime against their fellow citizens. Even Western human rights organizations have already taken notice of the fact that the Ukrainian military is endangering the civilian population by using civilian objects, such as schools, kindergartens and hospitals, for military purposes in violation of international humanitarian law. So this lie by the Kyiv regime has been exposed as well.

How, then, are the Ukrainian fighters themselves complying with the provisions of international humanitarian law against this backdrop?

With the West's tacit consent, Ukrainian troops (trained by military instructors from NATO and EU member States) continue to engage in killings, acts of sabotage and terrorist attacks against the civilian population. Military equipment is being deployed and firing positions set up in civilian infrastructure facilities; soldiers and military goods are moved around using ambulances, fire engines and other similar vehicles. The number and frequency of violations of the norms and principles of international humanitarian law by the Kyiv regime are inordinate, which runs counter to paragraphs 30, 31 and 34 of the Code of Conduct.

Russian servicemen taken captive by the Ukrainian armed forces are subjected to brutal torture and abuse. Graphic evidence of these crimes is regularly disseminated on Ukrainian sites, showing how Russian soldiers are castrated or kneecapped, how those captured wounded are finished off with a shot to the head. The corpses of those killed are openly desecrated: eyes are gouged out, dead bodies are slashed with knives. Anonymous people use unidentified social media accounts to display to the mothers of captive Russian soldiers how their sons are being abused.

Here are just a few examples of Ukrainian atrocities, the veracity of which has been recognized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In March 2022, a video appeared showing Russian servicemen being abused. Some had their throats cut and were then finished off as they lay on the road. Others were shot in the leg using assault rifles. All this was caught on the camera by the butchers involved. Thugs from the Georgian Legion took part in these monstrous atrocities.

In late March 2022, Ukrainian nationalists from the Slobozhanshchina grouping shot dead three unarmed Russian soldiers.

In November 2022, the Ukrainian death squads committed a wilful killing in Makeevka, dispatching more than ten immobilized Russian soldiers with shots to their heads.

In February 2023, three Russian servicemen lying on the ground were shot dead at point-blank range by Ukrainian neo-Nazis.

In April 2023, French mercenaries shot dead three Russian captives at point-blank range.

In September 2023, footage was posted on the Internet where one can see two unarmed captives wearing Russian army uniforms being driven at gunpoint towards a minefield by Ukrainian militants. After a while, one member of the Ukrainian armed forces opens fire in their direction and then an explosion is heard.

In July of this year, *The New York Times* published a feature containing revelations by foreign mercenaries who had been fighting as part of the Chosen Company, a unit of the Ukrainian armed forces. They spoke about how unarmed, wounded Russian soldiers would be killed. By their own account, they witnessed such executions on more than one occasion. The newspaper also had access to chats exchanged by soldiers from that foreign outfit in which they discussed these wanton killings. No charges whatsoever have been filed against them whether in Ukraine or in the United States of America.

Even though Ukraine is a party to several regional and international human rights treaties, there is abundant evidence of torture being used against Russian soldiers in Ukrainian captivity.

On 11 November 2022, the media published interviews with military personnel from the Donetsk People's Republic who had been released from captivity: they spoke of how officers from the Security Service of Ukraine would subject Russian servicemen to electric shock torture for hours on end.

During a briefing on 15 November 2022, the Head of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, Matilda Bogner, acknowledged that, having interviewed 175 Russian prisoners of war, the Mission had received information about how they had suffered ill-treatment and torture at the hands of the Ukrainian armed forces.

Reacting to the shocking photographs and videos of captured Russian military personnel published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, *The Washington Post* wrote that this tactic could be said to violate the Geneva Convention stipulating that the authorities must protect prisoners of war against "insults and public curiosity".

Such crimes are being embarrassedly hushed up by the OSCE leadership, while the photographic and video evidence of the outrages committed by the Ukrainian armed forces that is demonstrated at the FSC by the Russian delegation every week is simply ignored. In their few right-of-reply statements, a certain group of States make reference to "Kremlin propaganda", "distortion of reality" or simply just "photoshopping". They attempt to portray Russia as the fount of all evil and accuse our country of violating the provisions of the OSCE Code of Conduct.

To us it is obvious that this is not a question of isolated instances of mud-slinging, but, rather, of a comprehensive system for the substitution of reality in the information sphere, a system operating on a long-term basis. Someone who has been genuinely deceived can be brought back to a sense of reality, but not so those who lie consciously and deliberately. The only way of countering that is to set down the facts clearly, bringing in witnesses. This is what our country is now systematically doing.

Since 2014, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has been investigating crimes against the civilian population committed by the Kyiv military and political leadership, nationalists and members of the Ukrainian security structures. No fewer than 4,500 criminal cases have already been opened. The crimes in question include genocide, terrorism, ill-treatment of the civilian population, the use of prohibited means and methods in armed conflict, murder, and the deliberate destruction or damaging of property. The accused number some 980 individuals, among whom are the high command of the Ukrainian armed forces and commanders of military units who have given orders to shell the civilian population and civilian infrastructure facilities. More than 200 of them have been put on the wanted list. The investigation of around 250 criminal cases has been completed and more than 280 Ukrainian military personnel have been convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 8 to 29 years or, in some cases, to spending their whole lives behind bars in correctional facilities. All those responsible for crimes against the civilian population of the Russian Federation will face inevitable punishment.

Mr. Chairperson,

We should also like to say a few words about how OSCE participating States that are members of NATO are implementing their commitments under Section VII of the Code of Conduct. They often hold forth on matters related to the settlement of conflicts in various spots around the world, yet these strident statements do not stop them from violating international humanitarian law themselves, from flouting basic ethical principles. What is more, their criminals get off scot-free even when those who have suffered at the hands of NATO and its member States are in possession of every possible proof of the atrocities committed.

Over the past 30 years, the NATO countries have conducted around 30 military operations against other States. The year 1999 was marked by the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia: on the basis of fabricated reports of massacres of Kosovo civilians by Serbian troops and without a United Nations mandate, Serbia was subjected to carpet bombing. The Alliance's aggression resulted in thousands of civilian casualties and inflicted great damage on that country's economy.

After that came Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. The "champions of democratic values" led by the United States have everywhere left in their wake thousands upon thousands of lives lost or maimed, whole towns and cities in ruins, infrastructure blown to pieces and countries bereft of their statehood. Now, have any of the commanders who gave criminal orders to bombard peaceful towns and cities been brought to justice by their national authorities? The cynical term "collateral damage" was specially invented to cover up for them.

One cannot but recall the notorious US prisons at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo, which have come to symbolize lawlessness, violence and torture. The ill-treatment of captives by US soldiers (according to data from the International Committee of the Red Cross, between 70 and 90 per cent of Iraqis detained following the US invasion were arrested by mistake) is one of the darkest legacies of the Middle East wars waged by the United States. Who has been punished for this?

One might also recall the massacre perpetrated by US soldiers in the Vietnamese village of My Lai in 1969, which was accompanied by acts of torture and gang rapes. Only one serviceman was convicted in connection with these war crimes, namely William Calley, who would go on to be pardoned after three years of house arrest! That is how accountability for war crimes is ensured in the United States.

Mr. Chairperson,

The struggle for a just multipolar world – a struggle in which the Russian Federation is involved – has already begun and will continue. And despite the challenging international security situation, we believe it is necessary to carry on with the dialogue on implementation of the Code of Conduct. We should like to close with a quote by the eminent Russian jurist Fyodor Martens that has to do with the issues being discussed today: "When every defender of the fatherland becomes conscious of the law of war, when a violation of its stipulations becomes something quite exceptional, when armies themselves come to realize that honouring the universally recognized customs of war cannot in the least stymie the successful course of a military operation, then the sense of solidarity among peoples will be firmly strengthened and the number of international wars must, perforce, decrease."

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.