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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1459th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 February 2024

On International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Madam Chairperson,

On 27 January 1945 – 79 years ago – Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi concentration camp, where millions of people were killed. In 2005, a United Nations General Assembly resolution proclaimed this day as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Holocaust claimed the lives of six million Jews, 40 per cent of whom were citizens of the Soviet Union. In total, the Soviet people lost more than 26 million of their fellow citizens in the war with Nazi Germany. We remember the sacrifices and heroic deeds of the soldiers of the Red Army.

Throughout the world, commemorative events are held under the auspices of Jewish organizations to mark the day. They help to preserve the historical truth about the terrible events of the Second World War and commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army and the heroism of all the peoples of the former USSR and their contribution to the rescue of the Jews of Europe. They are also a symbol of the importance of combating the glorification of Nazism, xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance.

Diverse events were held in 80 regions across Russia from 18 to 31 January this year as part of the tenth annual Holocaust Remembrance Week. The events were organized by the Russian Jewish Congress with the support of the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs, the Moscow City Government, the Holocaust Centre and the Embassy of the State of Israel in Moscow. The Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia held an official ceremony at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center on 26 January this year.

On 27 January this year, another significant date was also commemorated – the 80th anniversary of the complete liberation of Leningrad from the Nazi siege by Soviet troops. The 872 days of inhumane ordeals endured by the city's inhabitants will forever be etched in the memory of our country and of all humankind. These crimes were not committed on the battlefield. The mass murders of unarmed and defenceless women, children and elderly people were deliberate and systematic punitive actions. It is our duty today as descendants to preserve the historical memory of the Siege of Leningrad.

Madam Chairperson,

In the OSCE area, the trend of publicly justifying Nazism and supporting neo-Nazism, which increased dramatically in 2022, is continuing in a number of States. On 7 January this year in Rome, during the annual procession to commemorate the members of the Italian Social Movement who died in 1978, more than a hundred representatives of far-right movements, who made no secret of their commitment to the “legacy” of the Mussolini era, openly demonstrated the “Roman salute”. This event and the participants’ actions were carefully planned and organized, as can be clearly seen in the published video footage. The attempts by some of the country’s officials to cover up this despicable stunt are deeply disturbing. In this case, we are talking about attempts to revive fascism and the *de facto* encouragement of such actions by the authorities.

The latest Nazi-related news coming out of Canada serves as further evidence that the country’s authorities have for years been harbouring Nazis and their Ukrainian collaborators who served Hitler. By tainting itself though its complicity with Nazism, Canada has essentially trampled on its own history.

There have also been very alarming trends of increasing anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial both by national authorities and by their external handlers. The earlier campaigns to distort history and falsify the role of the USSR in securing victory over Nazism have gained a powerful impetus. Historical revisionism and revanchism are aimed at interchanging the authors of the racial purity ideologies who unleashed the war with the States that opposed them. The same is true for the attempts to obfuscate the essence of the verdicts of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

The active measures taken by some OSCE participating States to create mono-ethnic societies have significantly exacerbated the problem of protecting the rights of national minorities. Such persons are subject to multiple forms of discrimination. Persecution of the Russian-speaking population has been particularly extensive. The most alarming situation in this regard is in the Baltic States and Ukraine, where the authorities are making every possible effort to destroy the Russian language and Russian culture. There is no doubt that these efforts have gained additional impetus and motives for justification after the Russian Federation launched in February 2022 a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilian population of Donbas. The ferociousness of the total discrimination against Russians and Russian-speaking inhabitants is shocking.

In addition, radical nationalists and right-wing extremists, who are often the main perpetrators in the shameless “war” against monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers, are expanding their activities with the assistance of the political elites. The most threatening situation in this area has developed in the Baltic States, Poland and Czechia. Not to mention in Ukraine. There, the Kyiv regime glorifies the collaborators and leadership of the Third Reich and members of the SS and openly uses terror against those it deems to be undesirable. The barbaric shelling of peaceful towns and cities and the murder of elderly people, women and children continue.

The authorities of an overwhelming majority of European and North American States are cynically applying a policy of double standards. Following the guidelines that they agreed upon in private, they are still trying with all their might to conceal from the international community the Nazi essence of the Kyiv authorities’ policies. The situation has even reached the point where adherents of neo-Nazism – fighters from the radical nationalist Azov battalion and other similar Ukrainian extremist formations – are openly whitewashed. Any mention of the numerous brutal crimes committed by the members of these formations in Donbas is being carefully excluded from the information space.

Madam Chairperson,

Attempts to deny the Holocaust and promote and justify racism, the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and racial intolerance pose a threat to peace and security in our Organization's area of responsibility. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the many incidents in this regard. In that context, we reaffirm the importance of taking neo-Nazism into account when deciding on the agenda of OSCE human dimension events.

Thank you for your attention.