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**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY  
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1560th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 April 2026

**On Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

I shall speak in exercise of my right of reply.

Today we are holding the first meeting following the Easter break in our Organization's work and, for the first time, we are doing so in the new room, though this has not led to any change in the arguments put forward by our Western colleagues. There has been no let-up in the false allegations regarding the Russian military's actions, nor in the attempts to present wishful thinking as reality when it comes to military developments and the resilience of the Kyiv regime. Given that references have been made in this room to the blatant provocation in Bucha, about which we spoke in detail at one of the previous meetings, I should like to cite just one example. French journalist Adrien Bocquet, a former member of the French military who was in Bucha as a volunteer, stated: "I saw how Ukrainian soldiers unloaded bodies from refrigerated trucks and laid them out along the roads to make it look like a massacre committed by the Russians." This merely confirms that you have no need for facts; they only get in your way. As usual, virtually no one in this room dares to speak the truth about what is happening in and around Ukraine. I shall endeavour to fill this gap.

Over the past three weeks, the authorities in Kyiv have stuck to the same tactics – hypocritically calling for peace while simultaneously launching strikes against civilian objects in our country and Russian civilians.

The targets of these attacks, carried out mainly using drones, have continued to be residential buildings and surrounding areas, medical and social institutions, non-military production facilities, electricity transmission systems, retail outlets, petrol filling stations, mobile phone masts, civilian vehicles and seagoing vessels.

During Holy Week alone, which is sacred to all Orthodox Christians and leads up to the joyous feast of Easter, 29 Russian civilians were killed as a result of Ukrainian strikes, including three children. In total, around 200 civilians were injured during this period, including 12 minors. Among the criminal attacks carried out by Ukrainian "fighters" against the civilian population, the following stand out: the murder of a

family with a 12-year-old child in the Vladimir region, a strike on a school in the Zaporozhye region and an attack on medical staff in the Belgorod region, in which three members of an ambulance crew were injured.

Against this backdrop, the leader of the Kyiv junta decided to score some political points and proposed an Easter truce. I would remind you that Russia made similar proposals and ceased hostilities on a unilateral basis for Easter in 2025. Back then, there was no response from Zelenskyy, and the Ukrainian armed forces continued their shelling. Nevertheless, this year, guided by humanitarian considerations, we supported the call from the Kyiv leader, who had turned on a dime.

However, this initiative predictably turned out to be just another hollow PR stunt by the Kyiv regime. During the 32 hours of the Easter truce declared from 4 p.m. on Saturday, 11 April, the Ukrainian armed forces violated the temporary ceasefire 6,558 times as they continued to launch strikes both on Russian positions and on civilian objects in Russian regions. In the town of Lgov in the Kursk region, a one-year-old boy and two adults were injured by a drone strike. In the Zaporozhye region, two civilians were killed and six injured as a result of attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles.

At the same time, as if nothing had happened, Zelenskyy himself hypocritically proposed extending the Easter truce, stating that “a ceasefire [at] Easter could also become the beginning of real movement toward peace.” In this regard, two possible explanations come to mind: either the head of the Kyiv junta is deliberately lying and trying to mislead the international community, or no one in the military is listening to him and he is not being informed of the true situation on the ground. Either way, it is clear that there is no point in paying attention to any new “peace” initiatives Zelenskyy might propose. The only reason the Kyiv regime needs a pause in the fighting is to buy time to replenish its losses and regroup its forces.

Zelenskyy and his sponsors have absolutely no interest in a genuine, long-term and sustainable peace, and have therefore expended – and continue to expend – considerable effort to derail the negotiation efforts that have been launched in good faith. No one should have any illusions about this. Therefore, while leaving the door to diplomacy open, we intend to continue the special military operation until all its objectives have been achieved.

Colleagues, I should also like to exercise my right of reply in connection with the absurd accusations made at our previous meeting by my French colleague regarding the “fraudulent” recruitment in Russia of citizens from African countries to take part in the special military operation.

These accusations are absurd because Russia has sufficient professional human resources of its own for conducting military operations. Unlike in Ukraine, where people are seized on the streets and packed off to the front line against their will, contracts with the Ministry of Defence are concluded exclusively on a voluntary basis in the Russian Federation. It is not surprising that we have been unable to find any reliable data to substantiate the claims made by the Permanent Representative of France. However, we did find traces of a propaganda campaign launched in March in a number of European institutions and media outlets close to them, featuring the same unsubstantiated accusations. It seems that this is what our French colleague decided to circulate at our forum.

We see this as an obvious diversionary tactic and an attempt to pin the blame on someone else. After all, it is the Kyiv regime that is actively recruiting mercenaries from around the world into the ranks of the Ukrainian armed forces, utilizing its diplomatic missions for this purpose. The most active and quite open recruitment work is being carried out by Ukrainian embassies in Africa and Latin America. In pursuit of cannon fodder, recruiters use various Internet resources, blatantly deceiving people about the high rates of pay and actual conditions of service, throwing them into the most challenging combat zones. There have

already been hundreds, if not thousands, of such cases. According to our law enforcement and security agencies, around 20,000 mercenaries are currently fighting on the side of the Ukrainian armed forces.

Moreover, we do not consider it to be a coincidence that it was a representative of France who attempted to raise this issue at our forum. It is precisely that country, where mercenarism, incidentally, is prohibited by law, that is supplying Ukraine with hundreds of mercenaries. Furthermore, private military companies operate quite openly in that country, with their specialists training the Ukrainian armed forces on the ground in the conduct of cyberoperations and electronic reconnaissance, the management of combat operations and the use of military equipment supplied by France, and carrying out maintenance of, and repairs to, this equipment.

I should like to emphasize that we regard the presence of representatives of French private military companies in the zone of the special military operation as direct involvement in the conflict, making them legitimate targets for our armed forces. Therefore, their deaths, which have already been recorded on numerous occasions, remain on the conscience of the French authorities.

Thank you for your attention.