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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1400th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 November 2022

On the Holodomor in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, as in previous years, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine and subsequently also the representatives of other States are seeking, for the sake of political opportunism, to interpret the tragedy of the mass famine in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from a narrowly nationalistic angle, thereby grossly distorting the historical facts. We are also dealing here with persistent attempts to portray the matter as if the suffering of the Ukrainians were somehow unique and distinct from the suffering of the other victims of that shared tragedy.

First and foremost, I should like to point out that the mass famine of the early 1930s in Ukraine was a tragedy not merely of the Ukrainian people. The events of those years do not have a national “identity”; there was no ethnic connotation to them; they were not directed against any particular nation or aimed at the extermination of the members of any specific nationality, as was the case, for example, with the Holocaust. Millions of Russians, Kazakhs, Tatars, Bashkirs and members of other nationalities living in the Middle and Lower Volga, the North Caucasus, the Central Black Soil region, the Southern Urals, Western Siberia and areas of Kazakhstan fell victim to the famine.

The population of Russia suffered no less from the famine of those years than the inhabitants of Ukraine.

In this regard, the assertion that the “artificially organized famine” was supposedly directed exclusively against the Ukrainians does not correspond to historical reality and is not borne out by any facts or statistics. In fact, it is the phraseology of the new Ukrainian history hastily and clumsily being fabricated by the current authorities in Kyiv to advance the false political doctrine that Moscow is to blame for everything.

Moreover, there is simply no way that the mass famine of the early 1930s can be described as “artificially organized”. This is confirmed by archival documents. From these it may be inferred that the mass famine of the early 1930s was the consequence of a severe drought and of forced collectivization and

dekulakization, which took place in the entire Soviet Union and not just in Ukraine. Thus, such a one-sided approach is at odds with the historical realities of that period.

Let us look at the statistics. A comparison of the population censuses of 1926 and 1937 reveals that over those 11 years the population of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic decreased by 1.9 per cent, compared with 2.1 per cent in the Voronezh region of Russia, 4.1 per cent in the North Caucasus, 7.8 per cent in the Kuybyshev region, 14.3 per cent in the Kursk region and 23 per cent in the Saratov region. So who, then, suffered more?

To describe the Holodomor as a genocide against the Ukrainian people, as some are trying to do out of those selfsame opportunistic considerations, is simply legal nonsense in the context of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. First, the events of those years cannot be regarded as a case of “deliberately inflicting” on the corresponding population group, in this case Ukrainians, “conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”. Second, there are no provisions in the Convention that would give this international treaty retroactive force, which makes it inapplicable to the events of the 1930s on the territory of the former USSR or the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

We would also remind you that the international organizations at that time regarded the famine as a problem affecting the entire USSR. In 1933, the question of famine in the Soviet State was submitted to the League of Nations, yet even then the League, the forerunner of the United Nations, did not take it up but referred it, instead, to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Deliberately restricting the events of the 1930s to the territory of Ukraine is therefore historically and factually incorrect. We consider it downright cynical to exploit that tragedy for present-day political designs. It shows extreme disrespect for the memory of the hundreds of thousands of people who died of hunger in the other republics and regions of the former USSR.

Thank you for your attention.