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**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AT THE 1511th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 March 2025

On International Women's Day

Mr. Chairperson,

The whole world will celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March. This spring holiday is of special significance for our country. Back in the USSR, equality of the sexes became a priority. Women were granted full suffrage in 1917. This happened much later in Western countries.

The Soviet State was concerned about equality between men and women in the social and labour spheres and in family relations. During the years of the USSR's existence, many steps were taken to ensure equal opportunities: from the establishment of a system of universal free education to guaranteed paid leave for pregnant women. The realization of women's equality gradually became an integral part of Soviet and then Russian reality.

More than half of the citizens with higher education in our country are women (55 per cent). In the field of science, they make up about 40 per cent of the total number of academics. Women account for 48 per cent of postgraduate students and over 60 per cent of those completing a medical residency training programme. Russian universities employ 128,000 women lecturers, a significant proportion of whom are candidates or doctors of science.

Women scientists conduct research in a wide range of fields – technical sciences, natural sciences, humanities, engineering and cutting-edge technologies. A great deal of attention is devoted at the State level to supporting these women. This topic is constantly discussed on major specialized platforms, such as the First All-Russian Women's Forum in March 2024 and the Fourth Eurasian Women's Forum in September of the same year.

Mr. Chairperson,

Representatives of the Kyiv regime and its Western patrons traditionally excel at speculating about so-called violence on the part of Russian military personnel, their use of torture and other "atrocities". We have repeatedly exposed, not least in this room, the inadequacy of the methodology used to collect such false evidence. Obviously, these false testimonies cannot serve as a serious body of evidence.

Today, the topic of so-called Russian aggression has taken on a different hue – in honour of 8 March (International Women’s Day), we are being painstakingly painted a rosy picture of the ideological followers of Bandera and Shukhevych as heroines who are allegedly fighting for the freedom of their country. However, the reality is bleaker than the fantasies of the Kyiv propagandists.

Let us consider the facts and figures. According to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, about 70,000 women are serving in the Ukrainian armed forces, and approximately 5,000 of them in combat positions. Their motivations are most diverse. The majority of them are women who have fallen victim to unbridled propaganda and have abandoned their civilian occupations. For example, a certain sniper with the call sign “Witch”, who used to work in a school as a history teacher, but over the past few years has been diligently learning to shoot in order to then be able to hit live targets. These female members of the Ukrainian armed forces are characterized by particular cruelty, including towards prisoners and the civilian population. For example, residents of liberated Mariupol testified that it was Ukrainian female fighters who had shot their peaceful neighbours and relatives.

Many facts about the atrocities committed by Ukrainian female soldiers were also made public during trials where they were held accountable for their war crimes. As part of the terrorist nationalist battalions Azov, Aidar, Dnipro and many others, these ingenious female sadists, on an equal footing with the men, have been annihilating the civilian population of Donbass since 2014. Over the years, these women have become brutalized, and when captured they pretend to be cooks and medics who have never taken up arms.

But they are the ones holding civilians at gunpoint and beating up defenceless elderly persons, people with disabilities, women and children. At the same time, they perpetrate evil of their own free will, no one forces them to. According to one such female neo-Nazi: “All must die, even little children. They simply should not exist.”

Others, who have succumbed to “patriotic brainwashing”, but who have felt what the proximity of death means, leave their military units without authorization. For example, according to the law enforcement authorities of the Lugansk People’s Republic, there has been an increase in the number of roadblocks and military patrols in and around Kharkiv, which are carrying out comprehensive document checks, including among women, in an attempt to find deserters of both sexes.

There are increasing reports of violence against women directly among the ranks of the Ukrainian armed forces. What is more, the first data of this kind was made public back in 2019–2021. Many servicewomen claim that their commanders force them into intimate relationships, rape and abuse them. The level of harassment is so high that civil society organizations in the country filed a petition a year ago to develop a mechanism to combat sexual violence against women in the armed forces of Ukraine. According to the authors of the document, such cases were not being punished because of a lack of effective mechanisms for responding to them. At the same time, the authors drew attention to the fact that the armies of other countries around the world have similar mechanisms in place.

Domestic violence has also increased to unprecedented levels. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, in 2023 the police registered more than 291,000 offences, which is 20 per cent more than in the previous year. In the first two months of 2024 alone, the number of domestic violence complaints recorded as criminal offences rose by 56 per cent compared to the figures for 2023. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg as women often avoid reporting these crimes to the police. As noted by the relevant Ukrainian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), violence against women is considered normal in society, and blaming the victims themselves is very common. There are many reasons for not reporting violence, including not wanting friends and family to know about it, as well as negative attitudes on the part

of the Prosecutor's Office or the police. In addition, wives and mothers who are beaten up by men prefer to keep silent because these crimes are committed by military personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces. We would note that such a "pandemic of violence" can hardly be chalked up to supposed "Russian aggression", since even biased Western NGOs were pointing to it as early as 2020.

Mr. Chairperson,

The search for an external enemy and its demonization has become a habitual way of existence for the countries of the Western camp, allowing them to "write off all problems" on the need to combat the threat they have invented. This is very convenient. And the result, you might say, speaks for itself.

For example, in Germany. According to the German police, the number of incidents of violence and criminal offences against women and girls has been exclusively on the rise in recent years. A relevant report by the Federal Criminal Police Office cites alarming figures. A woman is murdered in Germany almost every day. In 2023, there were 938 instances of femicide and attempted femicide, of which 360 cases were fatal. Incidents involving sexual violence against women and girls increased by 6.2 per cent, while the number of crimes based on misogynistic ideas rose by 56.3 per cent.

Things are extremely dire in the United Kingdom. Following a visit to the country in 2024, the United Nations Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, Reem Alsalem, said that "entrenched patriarchy at almost every level of society, combined with a rise in misogyny ... is denying thousands of women and girls across the UK the right to live in safety, free from fear and violence." "A woman is killed by a man every three days in the UK, and one in four women ... will experience ... domestic violence in her lifetime," the expert added.

The Special Rapporteur's opinion is supported by the assessments of the country's relevant agencies, which have noted an upsurge in violence against women and girls. According to the National Audit Office, police reports of rape and sexual assault have risen from 34,000 to 123,000 in the past two years. British NGOs are also sounding the alarm about violence against women in the United Kingdom's armed forces and about an increase in suicides among them. As the NGO openDemocracy points out, "among the disturbing findings we have made ... was the fact that a quarter of cases heard in the military courts since 2018 related to sexual offences."

The problem of violence in Latvia is a pressing one. In 2024, 818 offences against morality and sexual inviolability were recorded, with 84 per cent of the victims being children, predominantly girls. According to the country's police, this type of crime has a high latency rate, so it can be assumed that in reality there are far more instances of rape and sexual molestation of girls in Latvia.

The situation regarding "gender" equality is far from satisfactory.

In Lithuania, for example, researchers at Vilnius University estimate that women will earn as much as men in 100 years' time. The wage gap between men and women in 2024 was 13 per cent. The most problematic area is the information technology sector, where the pay gap is as high as 38 per cent. Disparity is also seen in the areas of finance, insurance and healthcare, where men earn about 600 to 700 euros more per month.

Authoritative international bodies have many complaints about Estonia. In the concluding observations on the country's latest periodic report, the experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women note with concern "the overall decrease in the representation of women in

decision-making positions, the persistent gender pay gap, and the absence of targeted measures ... to accelerate the achievement of parity in political and public life.”

Separate attention is drawn to “reports of online violence, hate speech and harassment on social media against women in political and public life, [and] of intimidation and harassment of women journalists and women human rights defenders in the State party.”

A growing imbalance in the status of men and women has been documented by the Committee in Canada as well. It notes “the significant barriers to participation in public life that disadvantaged groups of women, including Indigenous women, women with disabilities, women of African descent ... continue to experience”.

The experts also regret the lack of concrete information from the State party regarding the implementation of recommendations from the 2020 report entitled “Broken dreams, broken lives: The devastating effects of sexual harassment on women in the RCMP”, which revealed a pervasive culture of misogyny and racism in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the absence of information on investigations initiated in response to these findings and subsequent outcomes.

The Committee is also concerned about the increase in the number of police-reported cases of “gender-based violence, including femicide and hate crimes, in particular affecting Indigenous women, women of African descent, women belonging to religious minorities, women with disabilities”.

The situation as regards equality in France is hardly favourable. According to a report by the government’s High Council for Equality, men and women in the Fifth Republic are more polarized than ever. Women are increasingly aware of “gender” inequalities, while men are joining “masculinist” movements with greater frequency. It is noted that 86 per cent of French women face sexism all the time – at work, in politics and in public places. The local branch of the organization Oxfam also points out that women still earn 23.5 per cent less than their male counterparts in the private sector. Oxfam is also calling for more concrete action to tackle sexual violence. A survey published in November 2024 showed that sexual violence was on the increase – 484,000 women said they had been victims of violence by a partner or former partner in 2023. According to official figures for the same year, 93 women were killed.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we can see, the majority of OSCE participating States have nothing to boast about when it comes to achieving equality between men and women. On the contrary, the situation is tending to deteriorate. With the Western alliance countries obsessed with defeating Russia by any means, they seem to have no resources left to solve the problems of their own population, including the female population. The struggle for genuine equality is becoming all the more urgent. And International Women’s Day remains an important symbol of this struggle.

Thank you for your attention.