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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 99th JOINT MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION AND THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2026

**Deliberate attacks on civilians in blatant violation of  
international humanitarian law**

Mr. Chairperson,

As I have already stated, we had requested that a joint special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council and the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation be convened today in connection with the premeditated strikes conducted by the Ukrainian armed forces on 22 May 2026 against a teacher training college in Starobelsk, which resulted in numerous civilian casualties. We deeply regret that, in violation of OSCE procedures, our request was rejected by the Chairmanship-in-Office. I wish to emphasize once again that, in light of this and also taking into account the wording with which the request was dismissed, we shall speak on the topic that we had formulated, namely on “deliberate attacks on civilians in blatant violation of international humanitarian law”.

Let us start by considering the facts. In the early hours of 22 May this year, the Ukrainian armed forces carried out a deliberate, cold-blooded and utterly cynical attack on an educational institution in Starobelsk. The target of the attack was neither a military facility nor an ammunition depot. It was the college building and the dormitory of the Starobelsk branch of the Lugansk State Pedagogical University. At the time of the attack, there were 86 students aged between 14 and 18 years inside the dormitory along with one member of staff. There can be no doubt that these two buildings were targeted intentionally and in cold blood.

The attack was carried out in three waves, with 16 heavy unmanned aerial vehicles successively striking the same location. It was based on the classic method of a “double-tap” strike, designed not merely to destroy the buildings, but to kill the survivors of the first explosion and the rescue workers coming to their aid. Consequently, the rescue operation had to be interrupted 15 times as the Ukrainian Nazis again and again kept hindering people from rescuing others and clearing the rubble. The dormitory building collapsed down to the second floor. As a result of this barbaric terrorist attack, 21 people lost their lives (funerals were held today for most of them) and a further 42 were injured. Rescue work is ongoing and the numbers of dead and injured may yet increase as the area is cleared.

This is a clear case of Ukraine trampling underfoot the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Protocols Additional thereto, which regulate the protection of civilians during conflicts, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, and several other landmark international instruments.

In these circumstances, the OSCE's failure to condemn this barbaric attack comes across as disgraceful and cowardly. The Swiss Chairmanship and the relevant structures of the Organization pretended not to see how the bodies of children killed by the Zelenskyy regime were recovered from beneath the concrete rubble, even though these images went around the world. In keeping with the selective blindness that has come over all our Western colleagues, you, Mr. Chairperson, hid behind the ludicrous excuse of not being familiar with the circumstances of the massacre in Starobelsk, even though in other situations you immediately accept at face value any claims made by the Kyiv junta and do not call for any investigations. This is the height of cynicism, and I think that you know that very well.

The same blindness suddenly afflicted leading Western media outlets, which did not dispatch anyone from their staff to Starobelsk, despite the invitations extended and the security guarantees provided by the Russian side. Then again, why would these people need access to documents and the opportunity to put questions to the investigators and to survivors? They have long ceased to be journalists and have become propagandists. The truth has long ceased to be of any use to them – it does not fit into the deceitful anti-Russian narratives they promote. Nor is the truth of any use to all those colleagues who spoke earlier this evening and could not even find a few words today with which to comment on the cold-blooded slaughter of children in Lugansk perpetrated by the Kyiv regime. Your spiritual callousness and your willingness to condone any crimes committed against Russian people merely strengthen our conviction that the goals of the special military operation must be accomplished fully, even if this requires leveraging all the capabilities of our armed forces.

It was only when Russia used precision weapons, including the Oreshnik missile system, to strike military facilities belonging to the Kyiv regime that the Swiss Chairmanship suddenly found its voice. You immediately put out a social media post indicating that Switzerland is deeply concerned solely about Russia's use of ballistic missiles, while you did not even mention Zelenskyy's deliberate slaughtering of teenagers in Starobelsk. That is how Swiss diplomacy works today – what hypocrisy!

And now you and your Western colleagues in this room are shedding crocodile tears over Russian strikes on allegedly civilian infrastructure in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, claiming that such facilities are indeed our targets. I hate to disappoint you, but these fabrications would not stand up to even the most basic fact-checking. Judge for yourselves: 16 heavy drones were launched towards the Starobelsk college in several waves, all heading for virtually the same spot. The result: 21 people killed. This is what deliberate strikes on civilian infrastructure look like. Meanwhile, by the Kyiv regime's own reckoning, we launched 600 drones and over 90 missiles of various kinds against military and administrative facilities belonging to that regime. And do you know how many civilian deaths caused by these strikes have been reported by Ukraine? Five. Moreover, as Ukrainians themselves have been writing on social media, the Kyiv regime bears full responsibility for these casualties, since Ukrainian air defence systems, stationed in residential areas contrary to the norms of international humanitarian law, once again operated chaotically: it was fragments from the interceptor missiles launched by these that caused the loss of life. There you have it, ladies and gentlemen: this is what high-precision strikes on military targets, transformer substations, bridges, barracks, ammunition depots and decision-making centres look like.

Russia's ramping up of strikes against the military capabilities of the Kyiv regime is a legitimate response to the massacre in Starobelsk orchestrated by Zelenskyy. Going forward, we will continue to strike at targets involved in sustaining the Kyiv regime's war machine. We had been giving diplomacy a chance; we had been giving all of you, too, the opportunity to arrive at a long-term and sustainable resolution of the

Ukrainian crisis and the crisis in European security as a whole. But in the end, we have merely become further convinced that this is not what you are after. You and Zelenskyy could not care less about Ukraine and its inhabitants; Russophobia is clouding any other instincts and common sense that you might have.

In the current circumstances, as emphasized in a statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry, the armed forces of the Russian Federation are methodically setting about launching systematic strikes against enterprises belonging to the Ukrainian military-industrial complex in Kyiv, including specific sites where unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are designed, manufactured, programmed and prepared for operational use – UAVs that the Kyiv regime is using with the assistance of NATO specialists, who are responsible for supplying components and providing reconnaissance and target acquisition data. Strikes will also be conducted against decision-making centres and command posts.

Given that the aforementioned facilities are scattered across Kyiv, we are notifying foreign nationals, including diplomatic personnel and the staff at offices of international organizations, of the need to leave the city as soon as possible. We urge residents of the Ukrainian capital not to approach facilities that are part of the military and administrative infrastructure of the Zelenskyy regime. Otherwise, you may end up being hit by Ukrainian air defence. Whether you heed this advice or not is up to you. But when you come to this room to accuse us of what has happened to your compatriots on account of your arrogance and hubris, do not forget to mention that you had the chance to avert it.

Thank you for your attention.