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Agenda item 9

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Note verbale dated 6 July 2012 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council and has the honour to enclose herewith a joint statement issued by the delegations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the joint statement be published as a document of the twentieth session of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 9, in all official languages of the United Nations.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 30 October 2012.

Annex

[Original: Russian]

Joint statement issued by the delegations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan at the twentieth session of the Human Rights Council in connection with the anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War (Geneva, 3 June 2012)

On 22 June 1941, 71 years ago, the Third Reich launched a perfidious attack on the Soviet Union and the Great Patriotic War began. The War became one of the most tragic events in world history. The atrocities committed by the Nazis caused untold harm to the entire people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and millions of people throughout the world.

It was our peoples who bore the brunt of Nazism, put up a heroic resistance, suffered terrifying ordeals, determined the very outcome of the war, routed the enemy and liberated other peoples. We salute the courage of both those who fought against fascism on the front lines and in Nazi-occupied territories and those who toiled on the home front, and honour the memory of the millions of people of different nationalities and faiths who gave up their lives in the cause of freedom and justice. Their memory will be preserved and passed down to succeeding generations.

The establishment of the United Nations to uphold peace and security on our planet symbolizes this collective victory. It was then that the groundwork was laid for a human rights system designed to resist hatred-based ideologies.

Now, however, we are witnessing unrelenting, cynical attempts by isolated political forces to consign the lessons of this terrible war to oblivion, to make distorted moral and legal assessments of its outcome, to treat victims and executioners, liberators and aggressors on equal terms, and to call into doubt the judgements of the Nuremberg Tribunal. Like many people throughout the world, we are deeply troubled by such obvious attempts to “whitewash”, even glorify, the Nazis and their henchmen.

We believe that these attempts make a public mockery of the memory of the millions who fell on the field of battle against fascism, were brutally tortured by the Nazis or were gassed and cremated in concentration camps. Political demagoguery of this kind creates fertile soil for those seeking to propagate new, hatred-based extremist ideologies. One should not, we deeply believe, turn a blind eye to this sort of thing; rather, it needs to be tackled with resolve.

We call on States not only to make a formal declaration of their commitment to preventing offences of a racial, ethnic or nationalistic nature, but also to take genuine action. We consider there is a need for laws to prosecute those accused of such offences, and stiffer penalties for those offences in countries that already have such laws.

It would, we consider, be worthwhile designing and establishing an organizational and legal framework for preventing acts that seek to rehabilitate Nazism or glorify Nazi criminals and their accomplices.

On 17 May 2012, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States adopted model legislation banning acts that seek to rehabilitate Nazism or glorify Nazi criminals and their accomplices. This sets out an organizational and legal framework to be respected and elaborated in other laws and regulations.

We believe that the international community, and the Human Rights Council in particular, should pay the closest attention to these problems. It is our common duty to prevent the penetration of Nazi ideology into the minds of individuals and society, sowing hatred between countries and peoples.
