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**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance****Promotion and protection of human rights****Letter dated 6 August 2020 from the Permanent Representative of
the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on the discrimination against the Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 68 and 70.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia



Annex to the letter dated 6 August 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Statement on the discrimination against the Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation wishes to express its serious concern that, as early as September 2020, the date from which the provisions of Ukraine's new education legislation begin to apply, the medium for teaching in educational institutions (except for preschool and primary levels) in Ukraine, a country in which the native language of millions of people is Russian, will almost exclusively be Ukrainian.

In the statement it issued upon the adoption of the Education Act of Ukraine (Federation Council resolution No. 354-SF of 27 September 2017), the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation observed that this law contradicts the Constitution of Ukraine and the obligations assumed by Ukraine in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1 February 1995 and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 5 November 1992, infringes on the interests of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine, and is aimed at achieving complete Ukrainianization.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in resolution [2189 \(2017\)](#) of 12 October 2017 entitled "The new Ukrainian law on education: a major impediment to the teaching of national minorities' mother tongues", also noted that the law entails a strong reduction in the rights previously conferred on "national minorities". Protests against the new Ukrainian law came not only from the Russian authorities, but from those of Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Poland and Romania.

However, despite the criticism from many States and international organizations, the Ukrainian authorities have continued their policy of wholesale infringement of the rights of the Russian-speaking population by enshrining that policy in the Act on supporting the functioning of Ukrainian as the national language, which entered into force on 16 July 2019, and in the Act on complete general secondary education, adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 16 January 2020. Moreover, the view expressed in opinion 902/2017 of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), of 11 December 2017, that the Education Act of Ukraine provides no solution for languages which are not official languages of the European Union, in particular the Russian language, as the most widely used language apart from the state language, was ignored. The opinion emphasizes that "the less favourable treatment of these languages is difficult to justify and therefore raises issues of discrimination". The fact that the only exceptions provided for apply to the languages of "indigenous peoples", which in Ukraine include a number of nationalities living outside the territory of Ukraine (in Crimea), as well as partly for the official languages of the European Union, only strengthens the inhumane and primarily anti-Russian character of Ukraine's new education legislation.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation notes that the pro-Western direction taken by Ukraine after the 2014 coup d'état has not

brought the country closer to civilized democratic standards. On the contrary: Ukraine has moved further away from them. Ukraine's current leadership has continued the discriminatory course of former president Poroshenko, which sought to restrict the right of the Russian-speaking population to education in their native language. The policy of forced Ukrainianization has become one of the key reasons for the emergence of the intra-Ukrainian conflict in the Donbass, which has claimed thousands of victims. Instead of learning from the mistakes of their predecessors, whose actions were underpinned by nationalist ideas, the Ukrainian authorities are continuing the same policy, thus closing all avenues to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In calling for the reintegration of the regions which opposed the 2014 coup d'état, while simultaneously denying the Russian-speaking population of the Donbass its rights in educational and other humanitarian spheres, Ukraine is effectively doing all it can to undermine the process of national reconciliation and implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation calls on the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and the parliaments of European countries, to protect the rights of the Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine, and will insist on having the current situation considered in international parliamentary organizations – the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation
