

Statement by the representative of the Russian Federation in the exercise of the right of reply under item 1 of the agenda of the 42nd session of the Executive Board of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (December 12 - 16, 2022, Geneva).

The Russian side strongly denies the false accusations made by delegations of USA, EU, Canada, UK, Norway, Georgia and Ukraine of violating the UN Charter and norms of international law, including international humanitarian law and inflicting indiscriminate strikes.

We would like to remind the participants of this meeting that the special military operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine is carried out in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and is aimed at demilitarizing this country and bringing it to the status of a peaceful neutral state. The Russian side immediately informed the UN Security Council about this and repeatedly explained the reasons for taking such steps.

With regard to accusations of indiscriminate strikes on the territory of Ukraine, we would like to emphasize that the actions of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are not directed against civilian population. Their goal is to stop attempts to carry out terrorist attacks on our territory.

Today we have heard a number of statements about environmental damage. At the same time, we do not recall that anyone in the West expressed any concern when, back in 2015, due to the actions of Ukraine, the inhabitants of Crimea were left without water and electricity, not to mention the Donbas, which for 8 years was subjected to economic and environmental blockade.

We would like to note that, according to the assessment of the experts of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), presented as early as in 2018, “Donbas is on the precipice of an ecological catastrophe fueled by air, soil and water pollution from the combustion of large amounts of ammunition in the fighting and flooding at industrial plants”¹, but all this time the representatives of the Western countries did not want to hear anything about it.

1 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/ukraines-donbas-bears-brunt-toxic-armed-conflict>

The issue of the current situation in Ukraine, which was raised in the statements by the delegations of a number of States, does not fall within the scope of regulation of the Convention. The politicized statements made under false pretenses have nothing to do with the fight against long-range air pollution and threaten to turn our meeting into an arena for settling political scores.

This is absolutely unacceptable. We encourage member countries to return to substantive discussions within the mandate of our meeting.

We would ask you, dear Madam Chair, not to raise this issue again within the framework of our meeting.

Thank you,