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Commentary by MFA Spokesperson Maria Zakharova on the OSCE/ODIHR Report

We drew attention to the recently published interim report of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) “On Alleged Violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law in Ukraine”.

No surprises found. The ODIHR and its director M. Mecacci once again confirmed not only their unwillingness to take an objective approach to assessing the existing realities, but also their misunderstanding of the essence of their powers.

This document is largely a compilation of excerpts from the reports of various UN structures, the content of which we have already commented on in various formats. And the interviews given in the report with almost fifty unnamed "witnesses of the events" do not stand up to criticism, given that some of them bear traces of "word of mouth" with retellings of certain stories on behalf of second and even third parties.

Such information, if respected by an international audience, must be obtained first hand. And the ODIHR seems to have a real problem with this. And not for the first time. This is confirmed by numerous references to the news reports of such news agencies and media as CNN, BBC, Associated Press and the Guardian, whose politicized and one-sided editorial policy has been repeatedly pointed out even in the Western press. And why is it worth citing the “investigations” of the NGO Human Rights Watch, which, among others, was noted in its time on the topic of the “atrocities” of the Russian military in Bucha, almost immediately everywhere debunked as fakes. And such insinuations in the presented "document" are more than enough.

At the same time, the Bureau frankly plays along with the Ukrainian nationalists and neo-Nazis, calling the UPA, recognized by the Nuremberg Tribunal as a criminal, "Ukrainian patriotic army." Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the concern expressed in the report is that the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation may recognize the Azov Battalion as a terrorist organization, which will deprive its members of the status of combatants.

In the same row are the attempts of the ODIHR, which does not have the authority to collect "witness testimony" on violations of international humanitarian law, to lay responsibility for the events in Bucha, the attack on the Drama Theater and the maternity hospital in Mariupol, etc. on Russia. At the same time, only a few remarks are addressed to the Kyiv regime, in particular, in connection with numerous cases of torture of the Russian military. About the ban on the activities of political parties in Ukraine, the arrests and disappearances of pro-Russian activists, the suppression of the property and language rights of their own population - almost not a word.

Against this background, with growing disappointment, we have to state that the leadership of the ODIHR, despite its mandate, is slipping more and more rapidly onto Russophobic tracks, discrediting not only the OSCE executive structure itself, but the Organization as a whole.



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