



**FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEY LAVROV'S REMARKS AT THE MEETING
OF THE UNITED RUSSIA PARTY GENERAL COUNCIL COMMISSION ON
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SUPPORT FOR COMPATRIOTS LIVING
ABROAD, MOSCOW**

MARCH 28, 2022

Colleagues.

This is a regular meeting of the United Russia Party General Council Commission on International Cooperation and Support for Compatriots Living Abroad. You have the agenda in front of you. I think we can adopt it.

I would like to begin this meeting by reviewing the situation in the world. We are meeting in challenging times. Russia was forced to launch a special military operation in Ukraine to protect people from the military threat they have been living with for eight long years, as well as to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine. This has been posing and still poses a direct threat to Russia's security.

In response, the collective West has brought unprecedented pressure on us, coming from the United States and its satellites – this is how we can now refer to it. They declared a total hybrid war against us and did so expressly without trying to conceal their goal. What they want is to destroy the Russian economy and undermine political stability inside Russia, aiming to weaken Russia to an extent that would sideline us in international affairs, as they have been saying straight out. Long controlled from outside, the Kiev government is destined to serve as a tool in anti-Russia geopolitical games.

This largely explains the efforts to feed weapons and money to the Kiev regime as well as other kinds of assistance over the years.

Not only has the West violated all possible norms of international relations in their Russophobic frenzy, but they have also scorned freedom of speech and the rule of law. It went as far as to engage in state mobster-



like activity, seize private property and forgo financial and economic obligations.

But who is doing all this? Those who for more than 20 years now have been perpetrating one aggression after another – against Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, those who destroyed cities and carpet bombed them, killing hundreds of thousands of people. These facts are well known. The same people preferred to ignore the suffering inflicted on the people of Donbass by the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the neo-Nazi “volunteer battalions.” We saw our Western colleagues as they watched in silence or maybe even encouraged the brazen attacks against the Russian language and culture and efforts to ban Russian-language media outlets, including in Ukrainian ones, those owned by the Ukrainian opposition. Ukraine suppressed freedom of speech, which the Western world cherishes so much.

We can see that routine Russophobia has become unprecedented and common almost everywhere in the West. No more political correctness that the Western world is so proud of (or at least used to be proud of).

Simple civilised behaviour has been completely discarded. Cultural workers, artists, athletes, scientists, business people and ordinary citizens are subject to regular and harsh persecution.

Simply by having a Russian passport or speaking Russian, one can find themselves facing threats of physical violence.

In these circumstances, legal protection for Russian nationals living abroad is becoming an absolute priority. Russian missions abroad expose and record violations, complaints from Russian nationals and compatriots on the specially established Relocation channel on Telegram. We respond immediately, including by reporting incidents to local authorities. The information we are collecting requires further systematisation and will be



processed in order to provide the affected Russian nationals with assistance and to collect testimonials and evidence for potential action under international law. The Foreign Ministry will establish an interdepartmental working group on rapid response to such reports for this purpose. We will coordinate our efforts with the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights.

We intend to cooperate further with the Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad. In the past two years, sponsored by the foundation, human rights experts have developed a series of fundamental analytical reports exposing a mass violation of rights of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine, including neo-Nazism and xenophobia encouraged by Ukrainian officials, and targeted persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church.

These reports are submitted to Russian law enforcement agencies, the Investigative Committee, multilateral human rights bodies, including UN institutions. These reports are widely available in the information space and on social media. These materials can and must be extensively used to corroborate possible measures under international law.

We continue to provide legal assistance to representatives of the Diaspora. Legal aid centres, interactive legal aid publication sections and websites acting under the aegis of the Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad are also carrying out these tasks. In addition, we need to familiarise Russian communities with legal materials and lines of arguments under the law in the countries they live in that are related to the rights of national minorities and that prevent their discrimination. We are involving the structures of the Diaspora itself in these efforts.



We believe that united and well-organised Russian-speaking communities can effectively uphold their rights and interests with our support.

I would like to make special mention of Russia's Human Rights Commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova and her team. We are consistently cooperating with the Association of Lawyers of Russia and the International Association of Russian-Speaking Lawyers. We are focusing on drafting a package of measures (including their legal support) in response to the unfriendly actions of the United States and its satellites, primarily the illegal sanctions and the other decisions encroaching on the rights of Russian citizens and legal entities.

Amendments to the Federal Law on measures to influence persons involved in violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation came in force on March 15, 2022. Prepared by the Foreign Ministry, these measures provide for the possibility of imposing restrictions on any foreigners or stateless persons. Previously, these measures could only be applied to American citizens.

This step will make it possible to broaden the range of tools to influence several categories of foreign citizens. These are those that are involved in crimes as regards Russian citizens abroad; persons who are engaged in unjustified legal prosecution of our citizens; and finally those who make ungrounded decisions that infringe on the rights and legal interests of Russian citizens and organisations.

In addition, work is underway on drafting a presidential executive order on visa measures in response to the unfriendly actions by a number of foreign states. It imposes numerous restrictions on the entry of their



citizens into Russia. At the same time, to prevent the threat to the lives and health of citizens of third countries and stateless persons who found themselves in Ukraine, we have simplified the procedures for entry into and stay in Russia for their safe return to the countries of their citizenship.

I would like to spend a moment discussing ways to improve the state mechanisms for encouraging relocation to the Russian Federation. The revised version of the Federal Law on Citizenship of the Russian Federation opens up broad opportunities for accomplishing this as it establishes over 20 categories of individuals entitled to obtaining Russian citizenship under a simplified procedure.

Work is underway to legalise favoured treatment for several categories of our compatriots in the migration regulations that determine the simplified procedure for obtaining the right to reside in the Russian Federation.

As part of the efforts to simplify the procedure for entering the Russian Federation, amendments to the legislation came into force on September 1, 2021 which provide for issuing multiple private visas for close relatives of Russian citizens for up to 12 months allowing them to stay in the Russian Federation during the entire period of validity and without the need to pre-register invitations with the Interior Ministry's territorial bodies.

Colleagues,

We realise the nature of the times our country, Europe and the world at large are living in. This is a point of inflection in the historical evolution of civilisations. Despite the challenges, Russian diplomacy will continue to consistently and firmly uphold our national interests in the international



arena and do everything necessary to protect the lives, honour, and security of Russian citizens and our compatriots abroad. No amount of threats, blackmail, or ultimatums will coerce us into renouncing our sovereignty and independence, our centuries-old history, or our vast spiritual heritage, bequeathed to us by our ancestors.

Our commission was created on President Putin's initiative. We saw a positive response to it not only from the United Russia party, but all sound political forces in our country as well. Our numerous friends and like-minded partners constitute the majority of the international community and expect us to promote our independence, uphold our truth and our rightful place in the international arena. The support of our steps in the international arena by Russia's key political forces clearly demonstrates the unity of Russian society in this, without exaggeration, pivotal point in world history. We will make sure that our commission makes an important contribution to this support and guarantees its consolidation.

