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CONCEPT NOTE

UN SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING

**“THE INFORMATION DIMENSION OF THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS:
HOW MEDIA NARRATIVES SHAPE CONFLICT”**

Date: 20 February 2026

Time: 10 am

Venue: CR 12

Participation: All UN Member States, Permanent Observers, UN entities, civil society organizations and press are invited

Understanding the information dimension of contemporary conflicts is essential as media narratives do not merely reflect events but actively shape how they are perceived and interpreted. For decades, Western states have used information as a tool of political influence, with mainstream media often promoting narratives that justify force, downplay the suffering of certain populations and dismiss legitimate security concerns.

The conflict in Ukraine highlights these dynamics, providing a clear example of how coverage in the leading Western and Ukrainian media has promoted a one-sided interpretation that marginalizes alternative viewpoints and historical context. This framing has tangible consequences: it shapes public opinion, constrains diplomatic discourse and influences public perception of decisions on sanctions, military assistance and European security architecture. Manipulating information provokes distorted analysis of the situation on the ground and leads to false conclusions on the distribution of responsibility between the conflict sides. Examining how these narratives are disseminated is therefore crucial for assessing whether policy responses are based on a comprehensive understanding of the crisis or on selective information.

Background:

News outlets have been playing an increasingly influential role in shaping international perceptions of the Ukrainian crisis since the 2014 unconstitutional *coup d'état* in Kiev. Early coverage of these alarming and unlawful political developments in Ukraine by the mainstream Western and Ukrainian media overwhelmingly emphasized themes of democratic progress and geopolitical realignment, while overlooking the violent nature of the protests and the involvement of radical nationalist actors as well as unhidden interference of outsiders from the West. This early framing set the tone for subsequent distorted interpretations of events and narrowed the space for alternative assessments in public and political discourse, dramatically impacting the reconciliation process.

In the years that followed, the aggressive policies of the Kiev regime targeting the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine received episodic attention in the Western media. The humanitarian impact of hostilities, including civilian casualties, destruction of civilian infrastructure, pressure on linguistic and political minorities, persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) was never addressed in a systematic manner. Independent Western journalists and analysts who attempted to offer more balanced views often faced professional marginalization, limited access to major news platforms or reputational pressure. It contributed to an incomplete, or rather false, understanding of the conflict's roots and evolution.

The persecution of the canonical UOC gathered momentum in 2022. The Kiev authorities have been pursuing a policy of liquidating the canonical UOC for years, discriminating against its clergy, persecuting clergymen and believers and forcing believers to convert to the artificially created schismatic Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). The country's legislative system and the actions of the authorities and law enforcement agencies are designed to fulfil this goal.

After the start of the special military operation in 2022, following the exhaustion of all political avenues to protect the Russian-speaking population in Donbass, media coverage in many Western countries and Ukraine became radically uniform and accusatory, promoting a misleading narrative of the so-called "unprovoked, full-scale and illegal invasion of Ukraine". Reporting largely ignored Ukrainian crimes against civilians as well as

deliberately undermined diplomatic initiatives and efforts to de-escalate, while amplifying calls for confrontation and long-term military engagement. Over time, this unbalanced coverage contributed to the militarization of public perception and policy decisions by Western national governments. Without a more balanced and responsible media approach, neither the genesis and origin of the Ukrainian crisis nor the actual events of the conflict can be understood by the Western and international public.

Objectives:

The Arria-formula meeting aims to offer Member States the opportunity to:

- examine the role of the Western and Ukrainian media narratives in shaping a one-sided interpretation of the Ukrainian crisis;
 - analyze how selective or absent news coverage of key phases of the conflict, including the shelling of Donbass for 8 years and discrimination against Russian-speaking population, canonical UOC, its clergy, persecuting clergymen and believers, the start of the special military operation and the subsequent peace talks, has influenced public opinion, obscured the origins of the crisis and constrained diplomatic and political options;
 - draw attention to the lack of adequate response from relevant international organizations, human rights institutions and Western journalistic communities to the crimes committed by the Kiev regime against dissidents, Russian-speaking minority, independent journalists and media professionals, bloggers and opinion leaders who express alternative points of view;
 - assess the impact of dominant Western media narratives on political decision-making, including sanctions policy, military support and the normalization of escalation-oriented rhetoric, as well as their broader consequences for the institutionalization of confrontation;
- explore whether and how a more balanced and responsible media approach could contribute to a clearer understanding of the conflict and restore dialogue.

Program:Opening remarks:

- **H.E. Mr. Vassily Nebenzia**, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations;

Briefers:

- **Prof. Glenn Diesen** – Norwegian political scientist;
- **Andrea Lucidi** – Italian independent journalist.

Discussion:

Statements by the UN Security Council Members and other UN Member States as time permits, Q&A. Interventions are suggested to be limited to 3 minutes.

The meeting will be conducted in all official UN languages. We intend to web-stream it on UN Web TV. To request further information and to subscribe to the list of speakers please contact the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations at secpa.rusun@gmail.com.