

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1066th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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**On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the
Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

It is encouraging that all parties to the Ukrainian internal conflict have observed the silence regime along the line of contact, which was established in connection with the start of the new school year. We trust that a full and lasting ceasefire will be achieved on its basis in the near future. We view this as an important step towards implementing the relevant provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures.

We expect that an agreement on the verifiable withdrawal of tanks, mortars and artillery under 100 mm in calibre will be formalized within the subgroup for security. We intend to continue making the necessary efforts to reach a peaceful settlement in Ukraine that serves the interests of all its citizens. It is vital that the shelling of towns and villages in Donbas, which cause the suffering of civilians, cease once and for all.

We welcome the stepping up of negotiations within the Contact Group and its working subgroups, including through videoconferences. The communications between leaders and representatives of Normandy format countries play a vital role in assisting the parties.

Today the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) is being granted the long-awaited opportunity to increase its activities in the security zone in Donbas. The more objective and comprehensive the SMM's reports are, the more effective its work will be, which will increase the faith of the parties to the conflict in it. This will, of course, have a positive effect on the security of the monitors.

We call once again for the establishment of 24-hour SMM monitoring posts in problem areas. We consider this to be an important factor in controlling and curbing the situation. Unfortunately, shelling is often resumed after monitors have left populated areas on the line of contact. In order to station SMM patrols more compactly on the line of contact, their numbers must be increased. The Mission's mandate allows for contingents of up to

1,000 people. It is time to take advantage of this. We consider the claims being put forward that this is supposedly now difficult to implement and not necessary to be unsubstantiated.

Unfortunately, in violation of the Minsk Package of Measures, Kyiv continues to purposefully deploy additional weapons and offensive combat units to certain areas on the line of contact. The Russian party to the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination provided the SMM with evidence, which was in the possession of the Donetsk People's Republic's intelligence service, of a build-up by the Ukrainian armed forces of weapons over 100 mm in calibre, including Grad launch vehicles and Tochka-U tactical guided missile systems. We trust the Mission will verify this data without delay. OSCE monitors are able to monitor the movement of military equipment convoys towards the line of contact from deep within the Ukrainian territory outside the security zone.

Unfortunately, we still see no positive developments in terms of lifting the financial and economic blockade of Donbas. On the contrary, it is only intensifying. This policy of Kyiv, which is based on disregarding the legal rights and demands of the population of Donbas and sidestepping direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk, will only lead to further isolation of the region.

In fact, strengthening Kyiv's direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk is a key factor in achieving peace and stability in south-eastern Ukraine. First and foremost, this concerns the key issues that the Minsk Package of Measures directly specifies must be agreed upon with representatives of those regions.

One such issue is engaging in dialogue to reach an agreement on the procedure for conducting local elections. Despite the urgency of the matter and the willingness of Donetsk and Luhansk to co-operate, Kyiv is not reciprocating. There has been no intelligible response to the substantive proposals submitted by representatives of Donbas under the format specially created by the working subgroups of the Contact Group.

I recall the wording of Point 12 of the Package of Measures: "Questions related to local elections shall be discussed and agreed upon with representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions." Moreover, this is "on the basis of the Law of Ukraine on the temporary procedure for local self-governance in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions", which is never applied. For some reason, our Western colleagues stubbornly refuse to take notice of this.

Kyiv's efforts, in violation of the Package of Measures, to impose unilateral decisions force the Donetsk and Luhansk authorities to go their own way in implementing the relevant points of the Package of Measures, including in terms of ensuring that elections are observed by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

It is also worth recalling that despite loudly declaring that it is implementing the Minsk agreements, Kyiv has never enacted the amnesty law.

The amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine, which were voted on in the Verkhovna Rada, also bear no relation to the implementation of the Package of Measures. Point 11 provides for "constitutional reform with a new Constitution entering into force by the end of 2015 providing for decentralization as a key element (taking into account the specificities of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, agreed upon with the

representatives of these areas), as well as adopting permanent legislation on the special status of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in accordance with the measures set out in the Note to the Package of Measures, before the end of 2015". Nothing even close to this has happened. Amendments were introduced without consulting representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. As for recognition of the special status of those regions in the Constitution, apart from a modest reference in the transitional provisions, nothing is said of this.

Therefore, Ukraine's declarations of having supposedly fully implemented their political obligations under the Minsk agreements, in particular in relation to constitutional reform and decentralization, are unfounded. In connection with this, we would like to know on what basis representatives of the United States and the European Union are making their claims that the constitutional amendments submitted to the Verkhovna Rada are helping to implement the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairperson,

The mass unrest that occurred on 31 August 2015 near the Verkhovna Rada clearly showed that the deep internal crisis in Ukraine, which flared up following the anti-constitutional revolution in 2014, was never and is not confined to the territories bordering Donbas. Without decisive action on the disarming and immobilizing of extremists and radicals, the entire country could be destabilized. We trust that the OSCE SMM shall henceforth pay greater attention to the situation not only in Donbas, but also in Kyiv and other regions of Ukraine.

We cannot fail to mention that our Western colleagues' calls on the Ukrainians to express their discontent exclusively through peaceful means are, to say the least, overdue. This point could well have been reasonably raised to a certain Mr. Tyahnybok back in winter 2014, when an impressive assault of politicians from Western countries disembarked in the Ukrainian capital.

We spoke tirelessly of the dangers to Ukrainian society, which is propped up by extremist nationalist forces, even before the tragic events of the Maidan. The incidents in Mukacheve did not set alarm bells ringing either. As far as we can tell from the reports by Ukrainian officials and the media, several people died and more than a hundred people were injured during the explosions and shootings in Kyiv. That said, the number of victims of similar extremists, who are fighting in the ranks of various volunteer battalions, is immeasurably higher in Donbas.

Rather than disarming and immobilizing such groups, the Kyiv authorities are, on the contrary, encouraging them and calling them patriots, even though it is they who are one of the main obstacles to the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

There is still time to rectify the situation. Kyiv lacks the political will and determination, on the one hand, to enter into constructive dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk and, on the other, to overcome the forces that are promoting extremism and nationalism. We are convinced that the Western countries who support the current authorities in Kyiv are capable of helping them find the necessary will and determination to eliminate obstacles to the proper implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures, so as not to make a sham of it.

Thank you for your attention.