

31 January 2019
Press conference, Minsk

Working translation

Question (112 Ukraine): Five Ukrainian teenagers are known to be held in prison for “espionage” in Donetsk. Recently Iryna Gerashchenko reported that progress could be reached on their release. What can you say about this issue?

Answer: I must say that this issue is indeed known to us. And it is surely a very sad one. I can tell you we worked on this subject today as well. But, unfortunately, I cannot say that there has been progress.

Question (BelaPAN News Agency): Belarusian media have recently paid attention to your interview to one of the Austrian newspapers where a new ‘Sajdik plan’ was mentioned. Can you enlighten us? Are these just your proposals? Did you introduce it to anyone? Is it a plan or just an idea?

Answer: I think that it is very easy to read online what is written in the *Kleine Zeitung* and I think that there is nothing else I can add here.

Question (Nastoyashcheye Vremya): What delays the exchange of detainees now? It has been over a year since the last exchange took place. This is one of the main tasks, as the citizens of Ukraine see it, that an exchange really takes place. What are the current obstacles for another exchange?

Answer: I would say that many people work here on different aspects of it and that, indeed, last year there was not a single exchange. It is really sad, we know about it and we hope that this year we can do better.

Question (Nastoyashcheye Vremya): Yet what are those barriers that prevent this exchange?

Answer: I think I better not answer your question at this stage.

Question (112 Ukraine): Your peace plan has triggered abundant criticism by all sides. Why do you think they react this way?

Answer: The answer is very simple – I do not comment on comments.

Question (Nastoyashcheye Vremya): Another question, please. Do OSCE representatives consider Russia a party to the conflict after the events in the Azov Sea?

Answer: It is known to you that we do not deal with these issues here in Minsk.

Question (Nastoyashcheye Vremya): Is it because this conflict, or rather this episode, is considered separately from the events in Donbas?

Answer: It is because we deal with the Minsk Agreements. As I have said they concern the restoration and peaceful settlement of the processes in the east of Ukraine.