

PC.DEL/595/18

10 May 2018

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1185th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 May 2018

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The “Combined Forces Operation” by the Ukrainian Government and nationalist groups is resulting in new casualties and destruction in Donbas. The Ukrainian Government continues its policy of sabotaging the Minsk Package of Measures, beginning with its very first point.

On 3 May, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) recorded more than 1,200 explosions on the line of contact. Residents of Donetsk told the monitors that the shelling of the city had not stopped for seven days. The ceasefire regime is not being respected in the vicinity of the Donetsk filtration station or in all three disengagement areas.

The SMM’s reports confirm that the Ukrainian security forces are responsible for the majority of ceasefire violations. They spare no one. They fired at a family with a child near the militia checkpoint in Olenivka, and one person was wounded.

As a result of Ukrainian armed forces’ shelling, two civilians – Anatoly Portnenko and Galina Portnenko – were killed in Dokuchaievsk on 26 April. On 25 and 26 April, two houses were burnt down in Zaitseve, five were destroyed by direct artillery strikes and two were partially damaged. A residential building was damaged in Sakhanka on 24 April. A house was burnt down in Trudivske on 23 April. A truck laden with grain was hit by a missile in Dokuchaievsk on 23 April. One civilian – Anatoly Maskalets – was killed in Zaitseve. A civilian was injured in Dokuchaievsk on 22 April. A residential building was partially destroyed and a power line damaged in Kominternove on 18 April.

We remind the SMM that they should not worry about pressure from the host country. Information on all cases of shelling of populated areas on either side of the line of contact should be promptly verified and included in the SMM’s reports. It is unacceptable to ignore the appeals by the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk in such a situation. This runs counter to the requirement of objective and impartial work by the monitors.

The behaviour of the Ukrainian negotiators at the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) meeting in Minsk of 4 May once again showed that the Ukrainian Government has no interest in de-escalating tension. Ukraine rejected the proposal to agree on additional measures to enforce the ceasefire. The demand that written security guarantees be provided to the employees of the Donetsk filtration station was ignored. The Ukrainian armed forces would not issue orders on observing the ceasefire regime in that area. Everything suggests that the Ukrainian Government intends to take the Donetsk filtration station by force. We call on the SMM to monitor the situation closely and identify those guilty of undermining the ceasefire regime. It is time to put an end to the lawlessness of the Ukrainian security forces and bring to account those responsible for firing at the bus carrying Donetsk filtration station employees on 17 April.

The Ukrainian Government is disrupting the implementation of the TCG Framework Decision on the Disengagement of Forces and Hardware of 21 September 2016 – an agreement that could ease tensions. The Ukrainian armed forces have occupied the Zolote and Petrivske disengagement areas and are massing their military hardware there. According to the SMM, there are Ukrainian armed forces' bunkers, trenches, personnel and military hardware in Zolote. The OSCE Mission spotted five military positions equipped with large-calibre machine guns, four entrenchments for mortar detachments and over 100 anti-tank mines belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces in Petrivske. On 8 May, the Ukrainian Government once again sabotaged the disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska. The SMM has reported on numerous occasions that the militia are ready to begin the withdrawal and have observed the seven-day ceasefire needed to start it.

There has been a build-up of Ukrainian armed forces' military hardware at the line of contact. During the week of 30 April to 7 May, 55 units of Ukrainian armed forces' weaponry were observed in violation of point 2 of the Minsk Package of Measures, including multiple-launch rocket systems in Kostiantynivka, Topolyne and Klibodarivka and howitzers in Artemivsk, Kremenivka and Kostiantynivka.

The Ukrainian Government's revanchist rhetoric is being pandered to from outside the country. On 30 April, President Petro Poroshenko confirmed the delivery of a consignment of Javelin anti-tank missile systems from the United States of America. According to the Minister of Defence, Stepan Poltorak, practical training of the crews on their use was to start on 2 May.

The Ukrainian armed forces continue to hamper the operations of the SMM's unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The Mission confirmed that on 30 April Ukrainian military personnel fired at an SMM UAV near Katerynivka. The Mission's UAVs continue to be jammed above territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces – over Bohdanivka on 1 May and in Lomakyne on 3 May.

The political settlement process is deadlocked. The Ukrainian Government's representatives are blocking the work of the TCG Working Group on Political Issues. At the meeting on 4 May in Minsk, Ukraine once again refused to confirm the procedure for enacting the law on special status under the Steinmeier formula, which links this process with local elections.

The law on the reintegration of Donbas has legalized the prosecution of persons in connection with the events in Donbas. At the last meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group, the Ukrainian Government's negotiators once again sidestepped the agreement for the exchange of detained persons according to the principle of "all for all".

The agreement of measures to resolve humanitarian problems in Donbas has stalled. The Ukrainian Government is hampering efforts to agree on a procedure for repairing the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska and avoiding a comprehensive settlement with regard to the opening of new checkpoints along the line of contact. The security forces are massing equipment near Zolote, and this is hampering the opening of that crossing point, in spite of the appeals that have been voiced here.

We are grateful to the SMM for helping to restore the Vodafone network signal in certain areas of the Donetsk region. We trust that the monitors will continue to ensure local ceasefire regimes so that repairs can be carried out in other segments of the line of contact.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Ukrainian Government's sabotage of the Minsk Package of Measures is directly linked to the further deterioration of the situation in post-Maidan Ukraine. The influence of radical nationalists is growing, along with their confidence that they will not be punished for their actions. Four years after people were burned alive at Trade Union House in Odessa, the guilty parties are still free. Nikolai Kokhanovsky, leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, noted the need to replace the public holidays of 1 and 9 May with 2 May, when, in his words, the Ukrainians of Odessa put an end to the Russian Spring. In other words, he proposed celebrating the mass burning of people inside Trade Union House. Nationalists are burning Orthodox churches and cultural centres and intimidating ethnic minorities. They are bragging about their crimes. Knowing that they would go unpunished, radicals from the C14 organization posted a photo on social media of an arson attack on a Roma camp in Lysa Hora on 19 April. Yesterday, nationalists attacked the head of the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) in Kyiv. Will the perpetrators be brought to justice?

So far, Ukrainian authorities have failed to uphold the law. Judges are not protected by the law, and police officers prefer not to deal with the radicals and in some cases even co-operate with them. Journalists have been intimidated. The population is being divided into ideologically sound patriots and supposed separatists, which is what anyone who disagrees with the authorities' policy is called.

The extent of the wave of nationalism in Ukraine is becoming embarrassing, even for the Ukrainian Government's main sponsor. Recently, a bipartisan group of 57 members of the US House of Representatives sharply criticized the US Department of State for its failure to react to the glorification of Nazism by the Ukrainian Government and the accompanying rise in anti-Semitism. They urged the US administration to "use all available diplomatic channels" to work with the Ukrainian Government to combat "this hateful ideology". Has the State Department responded to this in any way?

Ukrainian nationalism is being encouraged at the State level. Contrary to its international commitments, the Ukrainian Government continues its attempts to deprive the

country's ethnic minorities of the right to receive education in their native language. I am referring to the so-called educational reform in Ukraine, which includes the complete rewriting of the relevant laws so that the language of teaching, including for ethnic minorities, is the official State language.

Crimeans are being hunted down in Ukraine. On 23 April, Elena Odnovol, head of the regional branch of the Russian organization Volunteers of Victory, was detained at the Chonhar checkpoint on the Ukrainian-Russian border on absurd charges of organizing subversive activities. Vladimir Gorbenko, captain of the Russian vessel *Nord*, is still being held hostage in Ukraine. The hearing of the trumped-up criminal charges against him continues. This Russian citizen is prohibited from returning home. We demand the immediate release of these Russian citizens.

Many people in Ukraine do not support the nationalist passions of the radicals and neo-Nazis and remain loyal to universal human values. There is a wide gap between the schizophrenic statements made by the Ukrainian leaders and the real sentiments of the people. The events held to mark Victory Day, including the Immortal Regiment march, demonstrated this. We are full of admiration for those courageous Ukrainians who took part in these events, despite the tragedy in Odessa and the atrocities of the neo-Nazis in Mariupol on 9 May 2014, an episode that we shall also not forget. They marched despite the threats to burn down the Inter TV station for broadcasting the Victory Day concert and despite the fact that the Kyiv police sided with the nationalists. One of the organizers of the 9 May commemorative events, Elena Berezhnaya, was subjected to police brutality during her arrest. The latest expulsion from Kyiv of Russian journalists working for Channel One and Rossiya (Valentina Solovieva and Olga Yurieva) is evidence that the Kyiv authorities are afraid of objective coverage of events in the country.

The settlement of the Ukrainian crisis by political means and the preservation of the country's territorial integrity are possible only through the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, including the political provisions of the Package of Measures. This requires direct dialogue between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk. The radicals must be brought to their senses, and the Ukrainian Government must show genuine readiness to solve domestic problems through dialogue, in a civilized manner and with tolerance for different opinions. If the authorities in Kyiv recognize this, there is hope for progress towards the settlement of this internal Ukrainian crisis.

Thank you for your attention.