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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1067th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 September 2015

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Since 1 September we have been observing a relative stabilization of the situation in Donbas. The shelling has practically stopped. This is an important step in terms of implementing the Minsk Package of Measures. The resumption of the exchange of prisoners, albeit in a limited format so far, is encouraging. We trust that an exchange on an “all for all” basis is not far off.

The experience of monitoring the situation in the region makes us careful not to be overly optimistic. Nevertheless, there is a chance of consolidating this positive trend. We all need to send a clear signal to the parties to the conflict to establish a durable ceasefire along the entire length of the line of contact. For our part, we are exerting the necessary influence on the Donbas insurgents. We expect no less energetic efforts from those countries whose voice Kyiv heeds.

We welcome the intensified consultations within the Trilateral Contact Group and its working subgroups. Discussions on some issues are becoming constructive and substantive.

It is important for the parties to finally endorse the extremely important agreement on the withdrawal from the line of contact of tanks, mortars and artillery under 100 mm in calibre, which would supplement the existing provisions of the Package of Measures. Its verifiable implementation should become an additional element of de-escalation and confidence. Unfortunately, at the last Contact Group meeting on 8 September, this agreement was not signed after all. We hope that the agreements reached yesterday during the telephone conversation between the leaders of the Normandy format countries to hold ministerial and summit meetings in the near future will give energetic impetus to the efforts to solve a whole range of issues concerning a political settlement and implementation of the Minsk agreements.

It goes without saying that the withdrawal of all heavy equipment, provided for directly by the Package of Measures, is also necessary to rule out the possibility of resumed shelling of populated areas in Donbas and attempts to solve the issue of status of certain regions by force.

We note the active position taken by the co-ordinators of the working groups from the OSCE and their intention to offer the parties constructive, compromise solutions.

We urge the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) to step up its patrols in the security zone and report on all ceasefire violations and movements of heavy equipment. It is essential to pay equal attention to monitoring on both sides of the line of contact and to see to it that the information obtained is reflected in its reports. This is the natural condition for the objectivity and impartiality of the Mission's work.

It is essential that we take advantage of the opportunities for setting up 24-hour SMM observation posts in the most problematic areas. We could already begin to equip these posts now and make arrangements for the long-term presence of monitors there, which could then quickly be switched to a 24-hour regime.

In this regard, it is important to take into account the SMM's experiences in Shyrokyne. The fact that Mission staff have been driven out of their observation post on the line of contact cannot be tolerated any longer. It does not matter who then occupies the post – regular units or nationalist battalions. To that end, close co-operation needs to be established by the SMM with all units of the parties in the security zone. This will contribute to effective work on the part of the monitors, increasing their awareness and leading to greater accuracy in their reports. It is also important in this regard to co-operate closely with representatives of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination.

The SMM mandate provides for possible expansion of staffing levels in order to increase the number of patrols in the security zone, enhance the exchange of information obtained by the monitors personally and, accordingly, improve the accuracy and reliability of their reports.

As for the calls to the SMM and the OSCE executive structures to issue new thematic reports, we should like to emphasize that it is especially relevant now to provide an objective picture of the consequences of the military operation launched by the Ukrainian security forces in April 2014. An objective and consolidated picture is also needed of the consequences of using heavy weapons. It is important to show what specific targets were being fired at on Kyiv-controlled territory and on territory under the control of the Donbas insurgents.

It is still necessary to monitor respect for human rights throughout Ukraine in accordance with the Mission mandate. Information on numerous crimes committed by so-called volunteer battalions is forthcoming from the media and reports by various non-governmental organizations, while the reports by the SMM frequently ignore this topic.

Monitoring the humanitarian situation and establishing contacts on the ground to facilitate the movement of people and carrying out of repairs and reconstruction work is no less important. It would be useful to monitor the delivery, unloading and distribution of humanitarian goods.

Mr. Chairperson,

Strengthening Kyiv's direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk is of key importance in achieving peace and stability. We see no progress in the political aspects of implementing the Minsk Package of Measures.

Kyiv is stubbornly avoiding agreement with Donetsk and Luhansk on modalities for local elections. Colleagues say that the elections must be held in accordance with Ukrainian law, but the most important element of that legislation is still not being applied. I am referring to the law on the temporary procedure for local self-governance in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, on the basis of which questions related to local elections should be discussed and agreed upon in accordance with Point 12 of the Package of Measures.

Donetsk and Luhansk have already put forward concrete proposals on numerous occasions, including at the last meeting of the Contact Group. They are also willing to receive international observers, including under the auspices of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

What is Kyiv seeking to achieve in replacing agreement and dialogue with the language of ultimatums and demanding that the elections provided for in the Package of Measures not be held? For now, the Ukrainian authorities themselves have cancelled the holding of elections in certain areas of Donbas on 25 October. Does this mean that Kyiv intends to reach agreement with Donbas on the holding of the elections provided for in the Package of Measures at some other time?

The law prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that took place in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, provided for by Point 5 of the Package of Measures, has not been enacted either.

The amendments to the Constitution do not take into account the specificities of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, agreed upon with the representatives of these areas, as required by the Package of Measures. No agreement has been reached with them.

All this makes it impossible to agree with the claims about Kyiv's allegedly good-faith implementation of its commitments under the Minsk agreements. This is just a sham. We firmly believe that the Western countries that support the current authorities in Kyiv will be able to help it find the necessary will and determination to overcome the obstacles on the path to real implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures.

Thank you for your attention.