



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ongoing Violations of OSCE Commitments by Russia in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 27, 2014

Mr. Chairman, it has been 27 days since the Russian Federation began its illegal military actions in Crimea; 20 days since Russia called for actions that blatantly violate Russia's own international commitments to support and protect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity; 10 days since the Russian Federation acknowledged the so-called "referendum" that was both illegal and illegitimate; and 6 days since Russia's lawmakers voted to annex Crimea at the behest of President Putin.

Throughout this period, the Russian Federation has continued to destabilize the situation on the Crimean Peninsula, threaten peace and stability in the region, and try to deny Ukrainian citizens their unity, peace and prosperity. Russia's actions constitute a clear violation of international law, threaten the core principles upon which the international system is built, and undermine foundational principles of the OSCE set forth in the Helsinki Final Act.

Russia has lost credibility as an international actor and has wronged each of us through its reckless and inexcusable attack on the rules that underpin the international system and support peace security and commerce among nations and human kind.

Russia's unlawful conduct has directly contributed to serious violations and abuses of human rights and has created an atmosphere in which heinous acts of torture, killings, and abductions have been carried out. The United States condemns the murder of Crimean Tatar Reshat Ametov, whose body, bearing signs of torture, was found nearly two weeks after he had disappeared following his participation in a peaceful anti-Russia protest in Simferopol. The United States also deplores the killing of a Ukrainian military officer last week during a raid on his military base in Simferopol, and the death of a 22-year-old pro-Ukraine government protester who was stabbed and killed in Donetsk by pro-Moscow thugs.

In addition, the United States strongly condemns last week's unprovoked attack by Russian forces against the Belbek airbase and the heavily armed attack against unarmed Ukrainian forces of the Feodosia Marine Battalion. Russia also illegally seized Ukrainian ships and military equipment that belong to the government of Ukraine. Let me be clear: the Russian military is directly responsible for any mistreatment that its forces, whether uniformed or not, inflict on members of the Ukrainian military in Crimea.

Mr. Chairman, despite these egregious actions by the Russian Federation, a diplomatic avenue remains open for Russia to de-escalate the situation: it can engage in discussions with the government of Ukraine, return its forces to their bases, and support the deployment of monitors in all parts of Ukraine, including the Crimea region.

The United States unequivocally supports Ukraine in this period of turmoil. As such, we welcome last week's adoption of a new Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and emphasize that its mandate allows the deployment of monitors throughout all of Ukraine, including Crimea. There should be no mistake that Crimea is Ukraine and that all participating States must cooperate with this mission and take no action to obstruct its access.

Mr. Chairman, the United States recognizes that the Ukrainian government has pledged to honor all of its existing international agreements and placed a priority on working toward internal reconciliation, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, free and fair elections, and political inclusivity. We fully support Ukraine in this endeavor and urge all participating States to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.