

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1071st 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,

Everyone interested in peace in Ukraine must do their utmost to consolidate the ceasefire regime in Donbas and put an end to the military clashes, not to mention the shelling of residential areas. Unfortunately, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) is still noting certain violations. A repetition of incidents like the shelling of Donetsk and its environs on 10 October, which resulted in casualties and damage to a residential building, is inadmissible. We urge the SMM to step up its patrols of the security zone, in particular to exert a restraining influence and prevent acts of provocation.

It is important to do this before the start of withdrawal of tanks, artillery and mortars in problematic areas. At the same time, it will give the SMM the opportunity to collect information about the targets of the shelling and the consequences on both sides of the line of contact. A special report by the SMM on this subject is long overdue.

Compliance with the additional agreement on the withdrawal of tanks and weapons of less than 100 mm in calibre needs to be maintained without fail and with the necessary verification by SMM monitors. There is also a need for the complete withdrawal of heavy weapons in accordance with Point 2 of the Minsk Package of Measures. The checking of the lists of inventory numbers of tanks and guns and the inspection of the storage sites are inadequate. Considerable reserves are concentrated in the heartland of the Ukrainian territory, in the Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions, for example, capable of being moved up to firing positions in a short time. The President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, has also spoken about this himself. Furthermore, we are constantly hearing talk of requests to supply foreign weapons to Ukraine. The realization of these plans would be a dangerous provocation that could seriously complicate the situation in the conflict zone.

We repeat once again that there is a need for reliable verification of the physical absence of all categories of weapons in the security zone. To do this the area along the line of contact needs to have the maximum number of monitors possible, with round-the-clock

observation posts. The additional deployment of the SMM should be the same on both sides. This also applies to the use of surveillance equipment such as drones. It is unacceptable to give preferential treatment to one side.

Mr. Chairperson,

There are other no less important aspects in connection with the settlement of the situation in south-east Ukraine that are being studied by the relevant Contact Group working subgroups. It is clear that the situation cannot be made stable without the real rather than fictional fulfilment by Kyiv of the political provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures. This was confirmed once again by the Paris summit meeting in the Normandy format, where discussion focused on ways of advancing the political process. There are no alternatives to the Minsk agreements, and it is counter-productive to draw out their implementation. Consultations in the political subgroup should be stepped up and aimed at achieving practical results rather than delaying the process.

There is a need finally to settle the question of laws on the special status of Donbas and on amnesty. These documents actually exist but they are not being put into practice. They need to be enforced, as called for in the Minsk agreements and agreed at the Normandy summit in Paris on 2 October. It is necessary to reach effective agreement with Luhansk and Donetsk without any artificial preconditions or delays on the modalities for local elections. The abandonment by these regions of the idea of holding elections in October or November gives the parties additional time to agree on a law on local elections, although it could take some time for it to be passed by the Verkhovna Rada and for elections to be organized on the basis of this law.

The most important question is the reform of the Constitution, as provided for in the Minsk Package of Measures. Agreement must be reached with Donbas on norms regarding the permanent special status of certain areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions and the incorporation of these norms in the Constitution of Ukraine on a permanent rather than a transitional basis.

Whatever internal political problems the Kyiv authorities have, they can be overcome in the interests of peace and stability in the country, all the more so if Ukraine's partners offer the necessary assistance not just in the form of "cookies" or money but also political support. We cannot comply with the Minsk agreements on Kyiv's behalf, make the changes to the Constitution agreed with Donbas, reach agreement with Donetsk and Luhansk on election modalities, or make the laws on special status and amnesty enter into force. Nothing will be accomplished without direct dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk who signed their names to the Minsk agreements.

The continuing inhumane blockade by Kyiv of former and present-day compatriots is hardly likely to increase the confidence of the population in the present leadership of Ukraine. We welcome everything that will make life easier for the people of Donbas, be it more humanitarian aid or the opening of new logistical centres and crossing points. However, it would be more logical to remove the cause of the problems by calling off the so-called "anti-terrorist operation", which has cost thousands of lives, and lifting the blockade.

Unfortunately, the blockade and the civil war as a whole have been a source of profit for some people in Ukraine. Many Western experts and politicians like to recall how

Viktor Yanukovich “robbed his people”. In that case, what words are there to describe what is going on in Ukraine today? What is happening in the economic and social fields, how are the attempts to curb corruption working out, and where, finally, are the reforms so eagerly awaited by the West and the International Monetary Fund?

The “Maidan snipers” and the people who set fire to the Trade Union House in Odessa have not been found. The problem of the impunity of the radical nationalists sowing terror, persecuting “suspicious” citizens and attacking churches and members of the clergy has not been eliminated. Many of those who came to power in the wake of the “Maidan” close their eyes to this.

Our colleagues, who care so much about human rights in other countries, are for some reason coyly silent about not the tens, not the hundreds but the thousands of people in Ukraine who have suffered merely because their ideas, in the opinion of the extremists or intelligence services, were not “pro-Ukrainian” enough. Many of them are in prison without trial or investigation – in Odessa, Kharkiv, Kyiv and other cities in the country. Are they not political prisoners? Not as many public figures and journalists were killed or disappeared during the “old regime” in Ukraine.

While the situation in Donbas is gradually normalizing, the problems in the rest of Ukraine are getting worse, and it is not possible for that reason to talk of coming closer to democratic values. These problems cannot be overlooked even by the Western media or the experts in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We call on the SMM to pay greater attention to the situation outside Donbas.

Thank you for your attention.