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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1073rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 October 2015

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk are generally complying with the ceasefire agreement in Donbas. According to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), the situation is generally calm. This gives reason to hope that the remainder of the Minsk agreements will also be implemented. There are no alternatives to this if peace and harmony are to be achieved in Ukraine. We welcome the stepping up of dialogue in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working subgroups and note the efforts of the OSCE representatives in these mechanisms.

It is important to ensure that there is no recurrence of the shelling of residential areas. We await a summary report by the SMM on the targets against which heavy weapons have been directed during the conflict and the consequences for the civilian population.

There is a need for greater efforts, particularly by Kyiv, to prevent incidents on the line of contact.

The reports by the SMM refute the assertions that the ceasefire regime is being violated exclusively by the Donbas militia. On 25 October Ukrainian security forces opened small-arms fire from the village of Pisky. On 27 October Donetsk airport was shelled for several hours, notably with large-calibre mortars. There are cases illustrating that the combatants are not under control. On 19 October a group of drunken Ukrainian soldiers attempted to penetrate the militia defences near Donetsk airport.

Between 23 and 26 October the SMM monitors were unable to account for 3 152 mm MST-A-B towed howitzers and 11 Grad multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) from the Ukrainian armed forces. Ukraine has not explained where this and other equipment were removed to from their places of storage.

In the security zone between 25 and 27 October the SMM located four Grad MLRS in Chabanivka and four Akatsiya stationary howitzers in Popasna next to the line of contact and also noted the movement of three further Akatsiya howitzers.

In the last two weeks the SMM monitors visited the border seven times: the Uspenka checkpoint in the Donetsk region on 14, 16 and 19 October; the Novoazovsk checkpoint under the control of the Donetsk People's Republic on 22 October; the Dovzhanske and Chervonopartyzansk crossing points on 25 October; and the Novoborovytsi pedestrian crossing point on 26 October. Thus, the SMM drove to the border every second day and continued to note the absence of movement of military equipment, the calm situation and the stream of Ukrainian civilians crossing into Russian territory.

The SMM should investigate reports of sightings of the infamous Aidar battalion in the security zone and the concentration of heavy equipment and artillery belonging to the Ukrainian security forces in the direction of Donetsk.

The good faith and timely compliance with the Addendum to the Minsk Package of Measures regarding the withdrawal of tanks, artillery and mortars, which is taking place for now without significant violations, needs to be continued.

A priority for us is the close monitoring of the security zone, also with technical means and reconnaissance drones, equally on both sides of the line of contact. We note the preparations for setting up SMM forward bases in Horlivka and Debaltseve.

The humanitarian situation in Donbas remains difficult. The so-called security measures on the line of contact are not preventing streams of arms and ammunition from Donbas, which are being distributed throughout Ukraine, nor do they prevent looting by soldiers and members of volunteer battalions. On 25 October even the SMM monitors noted the removal by servicemen of personal belongings, furniture and even window frames from ransacked houses.

These measures hinder access by the population to welfare benefits, food supplies, medicines and basic commodities. They are also a source of continued corruption at Ukrainian checkpoints. The blockade must be lifted. Following the opening of the pedestrian crossing point in the Luhansk region, people and goods must be allowed to move more freely.

The question of international humanitarian aid reaching Donbas is being resolved through the work there of United Nations agencies. Talks are being held on demining operations. Small groups of prisoners are being exchanged. This is an important step but there is a need to strive for a full exchange on both sides.

There has been no progress on the question of amnesty but without it, it will be impossible to hold local elections in certain areas of Donbas. Direct dialogue in Minsk to agree on modalities for the electoral process on the basis of proposals by the parties should be stepped up.

We urge the SMM to take account in its analysis of the situation not only in Donbas but also in other parts of Ukraine. Excesses by radicals continue, in particular through attacks on representatives of the Orthodox Church.

Thank you for your attention.