

PC.DEL/39/18
19 January 2018

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1172nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 January 2018

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Yet again, the Ukrainian security forces have failed to fulfil their commitments and are violating the “New Year ceasefire”. A number of localities have been shelled and there are casualties and destruction.

As a result of this shelling, over the last three weeks a civilian in Donetsk was injured, houses were damaged in Kominternove, Dokuchaievsk, Donetsk and Trudivski, and a hospital in Kalynove was hit by an artillery strike.

The Ukrainian armed forces’ orders not to open fire were not published, unlike the case in Donetsk and Luhansk. Fighters from the nationalist armed groups are present on the line of contact. The Ukrainian armed forces are concentrating military equipment in Popasna. In Stanytsia Luhanska a seven-day regime of complete quiet has been respected 18 times now and over the three weeks of the “New Year ceasefire” the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) registered no violations within this zone. The Ukrainian Government is sabotaging the disengagement of forces.

Live-fire exercises continue on the line of contact in the village of Kleban-Byk. There are signs that the Ukrainian armed forces are stepping up their military activity. Three eastward-facing military positions were detected near Petrivske. The Ukrainian armed forces’ tactic of a “creeping offensive” has already provoked repeated escalations in tension. This was the case at the end of last year when the Ukrainian security forces took the villages of Travneve and Hladosove. The Ukrainian armed forces have deployed hardware within the “security zone” in violation of the Minsk agreements. Even during the “New Year ceasefire” the SMM detected more than 30 pieces of Ukrainian weaponry in violation of the withdrawal lines and also a fire control vehicle in Oleksandropil, anti-aircraft systems and canisters for Strela rockets in Popasna, and so on.

The civil war in Ukraine is also receiving external support from the sponsors of the Maidan coup d'état. This takes the form of political statements and provision of military-technical assistance and intelligence data.

At the end of last year, the United States of America licensed one of its arms producers to supply Barrett M107A1 large-calibre sniper rifles to the Ukrainian Government. US media reports state that President Donald Trump plans to approve supplies to the Ukrainian armed forces of 35 Javelin anti-tank missile system launchers and 210 missiles worth a total 47 million US dollars, and will also send instructors to Ukraine. Heavy US Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles have been sighted at least three times since the start of the year on the borders of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, and a Boeing P-8A reconnaissance aircraft was sighted once. According to the non-governmental organization the Atlantic Council, among the Azov radical volunteer battalion's arms are weapons purchased from US arms manufacturers, including TOW anti-tank systems. US company AirTronic has been delivering portable grenade launchers to the Ukrainian Government since April last year. By arming the Ukrainian armed forces, the United States and other countries are encouraging the Ukrainian Government to resume large-scale bloodshed in Donbas and are becoming accomplices to the Ukrainian regime's war crimes.

The withdrawal of Russian officers from the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) was dictated by the lack of adequate conditions for them to be able to perform their duties. Their status on Ukrainian territory must be given a legal basis that would *inter alia* ensure their freedom of movement and their safety. Our repeated proposals to agree on rules for the JCCC's work have gone unheeded.

This notwithstanding, the SMM does have the possibility of working together with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk, who should long since have been allowed to officially return to the JCCC. This would help the SMM to continue the full scope of work under its mandate and facilitate repair and reconstruction work.

We welcome the SMM's assistance in transferring funds to pay for water supply to certain areas of the Luhansk region across the line of contact at the village of Shchastia on 9 January.

It is unacceptable for the SMM to misrepresent data on restrictions on monitors' freedom of movement to the advantage of one party to the conflict, and to divide them into "active" and "passive". Of 104 restrictions of the SMM's freedom of movement over the three weeks of the "New Year ceasefire", 71 cases took place on territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. An SMM unmanned aerial vehicle was shot at from Ukrainian armed forces' positions on 12 January in Pavlopil.

The exchange of detainees that took place on 27 December was a step in the right direction. The Donbas residents who returned from detention spoke of torture and inhuman treatment. The Package of Measures provided for an exchange of detainees under the "all for all" formula – all detainees held by the authorities in Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk.

I once again call attention to the direct link between the Ukrainian radical nationalists' actions and the sabotage of the Minsk agreements. The Ukrainian Government's continued pursuit of the punitive operation is motivated in part by internal political struggles. Ending

the hostilities and implementing the Minsk Package of Measures is perceived as a defeat. Today, the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada passed a draft law on reintegration of Donbas. This draft law annuls the Minsk agreements and effectively gives the Ukrainian President the right to resume large-scale military operations without requiring parliament's sanction. This is in no way a road to peace. We call on the SMM and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to the Trilateral Contact Group Martin Sajdik to give this document a principled assessment.

On 1 January, yet another march honouring Nazi accomplice Stepan Bandera took place in Kyiv. On Orthodox Christmas Eve, radicals poured paint over the Russian Cultural Centre building in Kyiv. On 10 January, leaflets were pasted all over Orthodox churches in Odessa. On 5 January, under pressure from radicals present in the courtroom, the instigator of mass riots in Odessa was acquitted. The extremist site Mirotvorets continues to operate unhindered. The new Ukrainian law on education constitutes the main obstacle for teaching in the native languages of national minorities. New language-related restrictions in TV broadcasting and video production are in preparation. New border crossing rules are further obstructing contacts between people in both countries, who have very broad family, cultural and economic ties.

In encouraging this anti-Russian hysteria the Ukrainian Government is shooting itself in the foot if not the head. Internal tension in Ukrainian society continues to grow and the authorities prefer to "let out steam" through the conflict in Donbas even as demands for peace and restoring what was destroyed by the Maidan are high.

It is not anti-Russian frenzy that will bring peace, but direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk and full implementation of the Minsk agreements. Along with military security measures, the political conditions for settlement must also be ensured. They are set out in the Minsk Package of Measures. The law on so-called "reintegration" currently under discussion directly contradicts these agreements.