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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1038th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 February 2015

**In response to the statement by Ambassador Apakan,
Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan. We appreciate the efforts of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), whose monitors are working under extremely difficult conditions. We agree with the Chief Monitor that it is a matter of priority to ensure the security and safety of the monitors' work and their freedom of movement in accordance with the Mission mandate. The restrictions they are encountering, in particular the increasingly frequent cases in recent weeks of SMM patrols being prevented from passing through checkpoints by Ukrainian security forces, cannot but cause concern.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission is an important source of objective information on the situation in Ukraine. Not only diplomats and experts but also ordinary citizens of Ukraine living on both sides of the line of separation in Donbas are following its reports closely. The authority of the OSCE and the attitude towards it on the ground depend on how impartial the SMM monitors are and how objective and balanced their reports are.

The SMM's priority task is to monitor the situation along the line of separation and violations of the ceasefire regime. The monitors' reports on the ever more frequent instances of the indiscriminate use of heavy weapons by the Ukrainian security forces against populated areas in south-eastern Ukraine are cause for serious concern. We emphasize the need for a prompt response by the SMM to the shelling of Donetsk, including hospitals in the city yesterday, Horlivka, Luhansk and other towns, where civilians have been killed. It was a similar story with the shelling of Mariupol and close to Volnovakha. Once again, we express our condolences to the families of those killed. We appreciate the fact that the monitors wasted no time in visiting the scenes of these tragedies and submitting spot reports.

We insist on a careful and objective international expert investigation of these incidents. It would be useful to involve the relevant specialists, in particular from the Russian-Ukrainian Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination. Expert analysis and objective

evidence based on concrete facts without hasty conclusions and statements about those responsible for these incidents are called for here.

We note the SMM's detailed analysis of the use of cluster munitions during the shelling of Luhansk on 27 January and Komsomolsk on 2 February using large-calibre Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems. The conclusion drawn from the Mission's reports is clear: the shelling came from districts controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces.

We might also mention the need for a careful international investigation into other crimes that have been committed in Ukraine: the murder of people in Trade Union House in Odessa and on the Kyiv Maidan almost a year ago, the death of a Red Cross employee as a result of artillery shelling in Donetsk, air strikes against Luhansk and the discovery of mass graves near Donetsk. We note the SMM's assistance in the ongoing investigation at the Malaysia Airlines crash site.

We should like to highlight the proactive efforts of the SMM to facilitate dialogue on the ground between the opposing parties and to establish temporary truces at the local level. These are essential for the delivery of humanitarian aid or vital work to restore critical infrastructure systems that have been destroyed in towns and villages in Donbas.

We note the involvement of SMM representatives in the conference organized by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine in Odessa in December. We hope that the conference helped to make the Ukrainian public aware of the need to launch an inclusive nationwide dialogue. The only way out of the internal Ukrainian crisis is broad discussion of the future State structure of Ukraine with the participation of all the political forces and regions of the country. The outcome of that discussion should be reflected in constitutional reform.

It is telling that the SMM's recent reports contain a lot of data on the insurgents' tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery and military trucks. There is almost nothing in the reports about the military equipment of the Ukrainian armed forces in the conflict zone. Perhaps there is no such equipment in Donbas? The question then is who is fighting there; who is shelling Donetsk and other towns where civilians are being killed? The inhabitants of these towns are waiting for objective information from the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,

The catastrophic humanitarian situation in Donbas, which grows worse with every day, cannot but cause concern. It is important that the SMM does not lose sight of this serious problem. The monitors' evidence regarding the severe humanitarian consequences for ordinary civilians of Kyiv's decision to suspend the payment of pensions and social security benefits to the most vulnerable groups of – let us emphasize this point – Ukrainian citizens and the withdrawal of Ukrainian State institutions from Donbas is significant.

Russia cannot remain indifferent. We are sending humanitarian convoys to Ukraine. In doing so, we are hiding nothing, inviting our Ukrainian colleagues to inspect the cargo and openly showing it to journalists. In that context, we once again refute the speculation heard in this room, in statements made in some capitals and in the media, especially the Ukrainian media, about the humanitarian convoys. These allegations are at the very least contradicted by what the OSCE observers witnessed at the Russian Donetsk border crossing point: Ukrainian border guards inspected the latest humanitarian convoy on 31 January and the

SMM had an opportunity to see the food trucks being unloaded in Luhansk and Makiivka. We know that humanitarian aid from other countries as well as from Ukrainian non-governmental organizations is being sent to eastern Ukraine, including districts that are not controlled by Kyiv. We believe that the SMM monitors could check whether the aid is reaching the people it is supposed to, including in insurgent-controlled territories (we should like to hear this confirmed) and, if necessary, facilitate agreements between the conflicting parties to ensure that aid reaches those in need.

Distinguished Ambassador,

In line with its mandate, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission should not decrease the attention it pays to the situation in other parts of Ukraine, to human rights violations and to the harassment of ethnic minorities. Given the huge number of reports not only in the Russian and Ukrainian but also in the international media regarding human rights violations and the excesses of radicals in the central and western regions of the country, we are surprised that the SMM reports include only information on the most egregious cases that simply cannot be ignored. Manifestations of xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, violent extremism and other forms of ethnic and religious intolerance and violations of freedom of speech and freedom of the media need to be monitored closely across Ukraine. We trust that the OSCE monitors will warn us about these potentially dangerous trends.

In conclusion, we must remember that the geographical area of deployment and activity by the SMM is strictly defined by the parameters of its mandate of 21 March 2014. It reflects the existing political and legal situation and the fact that the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol are an integral part of the Russian Federation. Accordingly, the activities of the Mission, including the information it provides, should not extend to Russian territory.

Thank you for your attention.