



**THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

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**STATEMENT
by the Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation to the OSCE
H.E. Ambassador Alexander LUKASHEVICH
at the Meeting of the Permanent Council
on 20 December 2016**

On military escalation in Eastern Ukraine

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

I sincerely hoped that we could have avoided a regular discussion on Ukraine today, since it is a day of mourning and sorrow for Russian Ambassador Andrey Karlov, assassinated in Turkey. However, it is obvious that business as usual is the most desired matter for our Ukrainian colleagues. That is a pity.

The Russian Federation is alarmed by recent military escalation in Eastern Ukraine. There is enough evidence, including statements of wounded Ukrainian soldiers, that recent tensions were caused by a planned offensive by the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF). On 19 December, the SMM issued the Daily report with the information that on 18 December, positioned in government-controlled Svetlodarsk, the monitors heard 700 explosions assessed as 680 outgoing artillery rounds and 20 outgoing tank rounds. That was the launch of a large-scale offensive operation by the UAF.

We have information, that can be easily proved, inter alia, by video, available in open media resources and social networks, that the UAF under the coverage of artillery preparations attacked the positions of militia's near Debaltsevo on 18 December and shelled with heavy artillery and mortars Logvinovo village during the night of 18-19 December. The next day of 19 December was marked with consecutive attempts of the UAF to gain new ground near Debaltsevo and thus to change unilaterally the Line of Contact.

The SMM reports that since 18 December it has been in constant contact with the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) that undertook efforts to calm the fighting. However, that did not happen. The reason is clear – the escalation near Debaltsevo was a deliberate effort by the UAF to escalate the situation on the eve of the Contact Group meeting in order to find an excuse for Kiev's doing nothing to fulfill its political obligations under the Minsk "Package of Measures".

Mr. Chairperson,

We have drawn your attention to the fact that turmoil in Ukrainian politics – the fight for power between political parties and the nationalization of the major Ukrainian bank (Privat Bank) – would lead to military escalation in the Donbass. We once again have a plea to you to influence on Kiev to fulfill its commitments.

Thank you.