

PC.DEL/92/17
27 January 2017

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1129th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 January 2017

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The statement by the representative of Ukraine once again confirms the unwillingness of the Ukrainian Government to implement the Minsk agreements, which remain the only means for a peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. The provisions of the Package of Measures are being openly distorted. On 22 January, President Petro Poroshenko publicly announced that Ukraine would carry out none of the political reforms until complete control of the border with Russia had been restored. We suggest that our colleagues reread the Minsk Package of Measures once more, especially the points concerning the conditions for a comprehensive political settlement and restoring control of the border.

It is also clear that the causes of the conflict are being confused in Kyiv. Ten thousand dead, three times as many injured, hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons, destroyed infrastructure – all of this is the price of the decision by Oleksandr Turchynov, who was then at the helm of the Government in Kyiv, to begin the so-called anti-terrorist operation against those who disagreed with the coup d'état.

We share the assessments of the leadership of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) that the danger of a military escalation is high. The Ukrainian Government is clearly banking on this. The Ukrainian armed forces have once again disrupted the disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska, which was scheduled for 25 January. On 20 January, an SMM camera recorded firing from large-calibre guns from security force positions inside the disengagement area. The next day, the monitors saw Ukrainian soldiers in vehicles near the disengagement area in Zolote. The SMM data shows that it is primarily the Ukrainian armed forces that are violating the provisions of the Package of Measures concerning the withdrawal of equipment. Between 28 September 2016 and 23 January 2017, the monitors discovered 496 units of heavy weaponry belonging to the security forces in the security zone. Only 6 per cent of the withdrawn equipment is to be found in the Ukrainian depots. Indiscriminate shelling of militia-controlled towns and villages continues. The SMM reports over the past week provide data on the destruction of

houses as a result of the shelling of Horlivka, Olenivka, Kalynove, Novooleksandrivka, Raivka, Donetsk, Dovhe and Yasynuvata. We trust that the SMM will publish a consolidated thematic report at the earliest opportunity on the victims and destruction of civilian infrastructure facilities in Donbas throughout the conflict.

We share the SMM's fears regarding the danger of a chemical leak at the phenol factory in Novhorodske located 400 metres from the line of contact.

We note the obstacles to the freedom of movement of civilians and goods across the line of contact. There are queues of thousands of people congregating at the checkpoints in Stanytsia Luhanska, Zaitseve, Maiorsk, Marinka and Olenivka owing to the checkpoint regime introduced by the Ukrainian Government. People are forced to spend hours waiting outside in a dangerous area without access to water or sanitary facilities. A man died of a heart attack while waiting at the Ukrainian armed forces checkpoint in Stanytsia Luhanska on 18 October 2016. Corruption and extortion are flourishing at the Ukrainian checkpoints. Civilians frequently come under fire from the Ukrainian armed forces. On 20 January, a bus was shelled at the Olenivka checkpoint in militia-controlled territory, and one woman was injured. This was not an isolated incident. On 27 April 2016, four people, including a pregnant woman, were killed as a result of shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces at the same checkpoint.

The Ukrainian leadership's latest rousing statements about the seizure of additional territory near Svitlodarsk and Debaltseve once again prove on whose initiative and for what purpose the situation in this area became more critical in December of last year.

The SMM monitors should now pay even more attention to the situation in the security zone, recording violations of the ceasefire regime and the shelling of towns and villages. We welcome the meeting held on Tuesday by the Principal Deputy Chief Monitor of the SMM with the leadership of certain areas of the Donetsk region. The strengthening of contacts on the ground will help to make the monitors' work more effective.

There is a need for broader coverage by the SMM of the situation in other parts of Ukraine in accordance with the Mission's mandate, in particular concerning manifestations of aggressive nationalism, harassment of people for political reasons, freedom of speech and the rights of journalists, and persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. All of these issues deserve to be dealt with in separate thematic reports.

Last week, a draft law on language was registered in the Verkhovna Rada, which proposes penalizing the use of languages other than Ukrainian in the media, government bodies and public life. Such a step would not only be at odds with international standards but also with the Ukrainian Constitution, Article 10 of which states: "Free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine shall be guaranteed in Ukraine." The language question is extremely sensitive in Ukraine – attacks on the Russian language along with the rehabilitation and even glorification of Nazis have become a serious factor in the exacerbation of the divisions in society and the escalation of the conflict. We are still seeing the same dangerous trends today. We expect a response from the OSCE institutions.

In conclusion, it needs to be stressed that the implementation of the aspects of the Minsk agreements regarding the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of troops and

hardware requires the real termination of the punitive operation, the so-called anti-terrorist operation. Without the political will of the Ukrainian Government it is impossible to do this by peaceful means. We call on all those who have a genuine interest in the full implementation of the Minsk agreements to realize this and take the appropriate measures. This requires direct and substantive dialogue by the Ukrainian Government with Donetsk and Luhansk instead of the lip service that we have been observing in the Trilateral Contact Group for almost two years now. Neither the sovereignty nor the territorial integrity of Ukraine will suffer as a result of the implementation of the Package of Measures. The only thing that will suffer is the war party, whose aim it is to maintain permanent tension in the region.

Thank you for your attention.