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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1319th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 June 2021

**On the deteriorating situation in Ukraine and the continued non-implementation by the  
Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

The latest meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) and its working groups on 8 and 9 June via videoconference did not yield any practical results. Ukraine's negotiators once again refused to engage in constructive dialogue with the representatives of certain areas of Donbas. As a consequence, work on a political settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis remains blocked, and there is no direct engagement with a view to ensuring implementation of the ceasefire-strengthening measures of 22 July 2020, which would radically reduce the number of violations of the "silence regime". According to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), the number of such violations since these measures came into effect currently totals more than 33,800. Owing to the position taken by the Ukrainian Government, there has been no progress on any of the other TCG decisions or on the implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 in general.

The Joint Forces Operation in eastern Ukraine is resulting in more casualties and the destruction of civilian objects. Once again, all these incidents have occurred in the territory of certain areas of Donbas. Over the past week, the SMM reported damage to four residential buildings in Zolote-5/Mykhailivka near Luhansk. A functioning school there was subjected to shelling for the third time since the start of the year. A retired couple from Horlivka (Donetsk region) and a fisherman from the settlement of Zhovte (Luhansk region) were seriously injured due the detonations of explosive objects.

The Mission continues to record the transport of Ukrainian weapons by rail. On 4 June, 12 units – that is two batteries – of Grad BM-21 multiple-launch rocket systems were spotted on flatbed wagons at Sloviansk railway station in the Donetsk region. A battery of 2S1 Gvozdika self-propelled howitzers was discovered at Rubizhne railway station in the Luhansk region the next day. On 7 June, a further 12 2S3 Akatsiya howitzers and 12 T-64 tanks were spotted. Where were these large-calibre weapons and tanks heading? We urge the SMM not to reduce the intensity of its monitoring of the delivery of Ukrainian weapons and to watch for sites where they might be concentrated in Donbas.

The Mission also reported on other violations of the ceasefire-strengthening measures. Trenches have been extended, bringing the forward positions of the opposing sides closer together at the line of

contact. In recent weeks, the Ukrainian military has set a record in this regard in the settlements of Novoluhanske, Taramchuk, Katerynivka and Marinka. The advance of the Ukrainian armed forces in Marinka has reduced the distance between their forward positions and those of the militia to around 210 metres. In addition, the Ukrainian military continues to deploy equipment and weapons in residential areas. Only last week, the SMM spotted one howitzer and eight armoured vehicles belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces in settlements near the line of contact. There were a further two T-64 tanks at the line of contact.

Also noteworthy is the leaked material from the Joint Forces Operation command on the results of a survey published in the media of senior, mid-level and rank-and-file personnel in Donbas between 1 April and 25 May. It notes that over 80 per cent of Ukrainian military personnel do not feel responsible for the outcome of combat operations, and more than half of them are experiencing problems related to the use of psychostimulants (alcohol and other substances).

Against the backdrop of such irresponsibility on the part of the Ukrainian military, the leaders of the delegation of Ukraine to the TCG continue to demonstrate their true attitude towards the residents of Donbas. Constantly recalling the need for the “return of territories”, they hold forth on the place of Donbas in a notional all-Ukrainian body, repeatedly referring to the region as a “cancerous tumour”. The head of the Ukrainian delegation to the TCG, Leonid Kravchuk, was thinking in such terms, for example, in his recent interview with “5 Kanal”. I recall that his first deputy, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Reintegration Oleksii Reznikov, also made a similar analogy earlier, dubbing Donbas a “mentally sick territory” in November 2020.

On 8 June, Oleksiy Arestovych, information policy adviser to the Ukrainian delegation to the TCG, gave a remarkable interview to the *Telegraf* media outlet. His speculation that the Ukrainian armed forces would be able to defeat the militia forces in a single day clearly does not create a positive basis for negotiations on a political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict. Incidentally, it is worth noting that despite the Ukrainian Government’s propaganda, which is also taken up by some OSCE participating States, Mr. Arestovych himself admitted in the same interview that there are no Russian troops on the territory of Donbas.

The Ukrainian Government’s reluctance to put an end to the military operation in the east of the country is leading to a general deterioration of the security situation throughout the country. The illicit circulation of arms and explosives is on the rise. On 8 June, a former participant in the Ukrainian military operation in Donbas detonated a hand grenade during a street brawl in Kharkiv. Three people were injured, including a teenager. We call on the SMM not to overlook such incidents and to reflect them in its reports.

Weapons are spreading across the country not only from the zone of hostilities. On 24 May, a Ukrainian citizen tried to smuggle into the country around three thousand firearms (2,850 Major Berg 2.5 pistols of 4 mm calibre) at the Isaccea border crossing in Romania, claiming that his cargo was furniture and food. The Minister of Internal Affairs of Romania, Lucian Bode, has already dubbed this the “record seizure” of an illegal arms shipment in the entire history of his country. According to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General’s Office, in recent years the people of Ukraine have had between 3 and 5 million unaccounted-for weapons in their possession.

Against this backdrop, Ukraine continues to ask its international partners for more arms deliveries, opting for a continued punitive operation in Donbas rather than direct talks with representatives of the region on a political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict. We have already mentioned the transfer of weapons to Ukraine from a number of NATO countries, including those planned under the guise of joint military

exercises. Equally alarming are the reports of foreign military personnel from some NATO countries arriving in the areas adjacent to Donbas to provide so-called instruction for the Ukrainian armed forces.

The single-minded policy of the Ukrainian authorities, driven by radical nationalists and Russophobia, can only be condemned. On 7 June, right-wing radicals from the National Corps, with the full complicity of the law enforcement officers standing idly by, disrupted a flower laying ceremony in honour of the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin at a monument to him in the village of Zabolotivtsi (Lviv region). The event was attended by members of the Russian Consulate General in Lviv, who were attacked by the nationalists. There is a demonstrative disregard for the provisions of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations by the Ukrainian authorities to please the nationalists.

It is not only in western Ukraine that aggressive nationalism is rampant. The SMM has repeatedly reported on marches taking place in Kyiv with police protection to honour figures and organizations that brought dishonour on themselves by collaborating with the Nazis during the Second World War.

Members of the French Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed forces Nathalie Goulet, Jean-Pierre Moga and Joël Guerriau, who visited Ukraine at the end of May, also highlighted the alarming trends of the rise of neo-Nazism in Ukraine. In a letter detailing their trip, they noted that Nazi memorabilia and literature were being readily sold in the centre of the Ukrainian capital, while neo-Nazi parties and movements such as Azov felt quite at home in Ukraine. For example, they are recruiting new supporters among young people and running paramilitary training courses.

The Ukrainian leadership is unable or unwilling to rein in the rampaging neo-Nazis. The most heinous crimes committed under the slogans of Ukrainian national exclusivity remain unsolved. At the same time, supporters of movements advocating peace in Donbas on the basis of the implementation of the Minsk agreements and good-neighbourly relations between Ukraine and neighbouring States are being subjected to political repression.

The intention of the authorities to suppress dissent by any available means was demonstrated by the first President of Ukraine and head of its delegation to the TCG, Leonid Kravchuk, who spoke of the need, as he put it, to “burn out of Ukraine” opposition representatives who question the ability of the Ukrainian authorities to resolve the conflict in Donbas peacefully. Incidentally, we all remember perfectly well the events at the Trade Union House in Odessa on 2 May 2014 and how peaceful Ukrainians who did not accept the attempts by Ukrainian nationalists to impose their values were literally burned out.

Once again, we urge the Ukrainian authorities to engage in genuine and meaningful dialogue with the country’s population, including in Donbas, in the interests of Ukraine’s further peaceful development.

Thank you for your attention.