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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1284th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 October 2020

**In response to the reports by the Special Representative of the OSCE  
Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group,  
Ambassador Heidi Grau, and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring  
Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the distinguished Ambassadors Heidi Grau and Yaşar Halit Çevik. The reports they have presented demonstrate that the momentum in the settlement process for the crisis in Ukraine continues to remain discouraging, with the exception of a relative stabilization of the security situation.

There has been a fragile calm in Donbas since 27 July. The significant reduction in the number of instances of shelling was a result of the agreement reached on 22 July by the representatives of the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk during the meeting of the Minsk-based Trilateral Contact Group (TCG). Since this agreement came into effect, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has to this day not recorded any casualties among the civilian population or destruction of civilian objects as a result of shelling. At the same time, a “complete silence regime” has still not been achieved, something that is confirmed by the more than 1,500 firing violations recorded by the SMM during this period. In addition, fortification works have been spotted near the line of contact, along with the deployment of military equipment in residential areas and in violation of the withdrawal lines, and the presence of people, including in the evenings and at night, at former positions inside the areas for the disengagement of forces and hardware in Zolote and Petrivske.

A sustainable ceasefire must be achieved. Balanced monitoring by the SMM on both sides of the line of contact should help to facilitate this. As can be seen from the distinguished Ambassador Çevik’s report, the Mission has stepped up its monitoring significantly to the east of the line of contact, deep inside militia-controlled territory, including border areas. At the same time, there has been no intensification of monitoring, including by technical means, to the west of the line of contact inside territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. The imbalance is plain to see. I am sure that you need no reminding that disparities of this kind may undermine confidence in the objectivity of SMM monitoring data.

Mr. Çevik,

The general improvement in the security situation in Donbas following the entry into force of the measures to strengthen the ceasefire regime creates safer conditions for the monitors' work. At the same time, the threat of the coronavirus spreading continues to pose a serious challenge. We commend the efforts of the Mission, which has taken measures to protect its staff and is continuing its monitoring in the midst of the epidemic. We note that in mid-July the Mission was able to reach a common understanding with the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk regarding compliance with medical recommendations for crossing the line of contact. Faced with the rise in the number of COVID-19 infections in Ukraine, including cases detected among the Mission's staff, co-operation with the local authorities on both sides of the line of contact, in line with paragraph 3 of the SMM's mandate, is becoming vital. We urge the Mission to develop these contacts.

Ms. Grau,

Despite your endeavours, the state of the negotiation process between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk does not inspire optimism, first and foremost because of the unconstructive position taken by the Ukrainian Government's representatives. The changes at the end of July in the Ukrainian negotiation team headed by Leonid Kravchuk in the TCG did not bring any noticeable results. The Ukrainian Government's negotiators continue to insist on a so-called "reformatting", "clarification of content", changes to the sequence and, ultimately, simply a rewriting of the provisions of the Package of Measures of 12 February 2015. I would remind you that this document was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202 and remains the sole internationally recognized framework for resolving the crisis in Ukraine.

In an interview with the publication "Politico Europe", the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, once again recently indicated the Ukrainian Government's unwillingness to follow the letter and the logic of the Package of Measures. He declared that he was "personally dissatisfied" with the Minsk format, its composition, and also the "sequence and wording of some of the items that were signed". Earlier, the Ukrainian President had admitted that he would hold to the Minsk agreements first and foremost because sanctions against Russia were linked to them – so this is the real purpose of keeping the negotiation process afloat and the Ukrainian Government's pretence at a settlement. Also significant is Mr. Zelenskyy's hasty dismissal of Vitold Fokin, who had been appointed first deputy head of the Ukrainian delegation to the TCG by the President and who during his address on 29 September to the Verkhovna Rada recalled the need to genuinely follow the Package of Measures procedure in the dialogue with Donbas.

Against this background, Ukraine's representatives persist in their attempts at painting a distorted picture of the progress of the negotiations and their supposedly constructive participation. In that connection, it is obviously necessary to record and keep minutes of TCG meetings and also to disseminate reliable information about the work of the Minsk-based negotiating platform. It is equally important to strengthen the binding effect of the agreements reached, which, as we know, have been repeatedly undermined by the Ukrainian side. I should be interested to hear from Ms. Grau what is preventing this.

An analysis of the implementation of the Package of Measures and the instructions issued at the "Normandy format" summit in Paris in 2019 offers a truly depressing picture. The Ukrainian Government is stubbornly avoiding the direct dialogue – provided for by the Minsk agreements – with the authorized representatives of certain areas of Donbas, who were recognized as such in the minutes of the TCG meeting on 11 March 2020. Work on the political, socio-economic and humanitarian aspects of a settlement has been effectively blocked by the adoption on 15 July of the Verkhovna Rada resolution (no. 795-IX) on the scheduling of regular local elections in 2020. This resolution rules out the possibility of holding elections in

certain areas of Donbas until the Ukrainian Government has established military control over those territories, and thereby contravenes paragraphs 4, 9, 11 and 12 of the Package of Measures. The question of control of the border is being artificially “wrenched” out of the general context of a settlement, by being made subject to conditions not provided for in the Minsk agreements. We call on you, Ms. Grau, to share with us now your clear-cut assessment of the aforementioned Verkhovna Rada resolution in terms of its conformity with the provisions of the Package of Measures.

Thus, without a clear understanding of the Verkhovna Rada’s readiness to strictly follow the provisions of that document in their entirety and in a co-ordinated manner, there is no sense in continuing work on the agreement of all the legal aspects of the special status of Donbas, as provided for in the instructions issued at the “Normandy format” summit in Paris on 9 December 2019.

Moreover and above and beyond this, the Ukrainian side has stubbornly refused during the negotiations to submit a draft law on amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine (concerning decentralization taking into account the specificities of certain areas of Donbas), proposals on corresponding amendments to other laws and regulations of Ukraine, and also a list and schedule of legislative acts to be adopted for the purpose of resolving the conflict.

The Ukrainian Government rejects an amnesty for those involved in the events in Donbas, provided for in paragraph 5 of the Package of Measures, proposing instead a vague concept of some kind of “transitional justice” – the latest idea of Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Reznikov. The unwillingness of the Ukrainian Government to offer amnesty is also confirmed by the effective refusal – contrary to its own obligations – to carry out “legal clearance”, that is to drop criminal charges against Donbas residents who were handed over to the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk as part of the reciprocal release of detainees.

In violation of paragraph 8 of the Package of Measures, the Ukrainian authorities are continuing the inhumane socio-economic and transport blockade of Donbas, imposed *de facto* in 2014 and consolidated *de jure* in 2017. The resulting checkpoint regime at the line of contact continues to cause suffering for the civilian population, as the SMM informs us daily in its reports.

Instead of working actively and productively on a settlement in the TCG, the Ukrainian Government is discussing some “alternative plans”, which would be carried out in circumvention of the supposedly “impracticable” Package of Measures. For example, just the other day, one of the Ukrainian Government’s key negotiators in the TCG, Oleksiy Reznikov, travelled to Croatia in order, it is reported, to study their experience of “de-occupation”.

Against this background, Ukraine’s foreign “minders” continue to stir up the militaristic aspirations of those in favour of solving “the Donbas problem” by force. In mid-September, the command and staff military exercises “Rapid Trident 2020”, “Joint Endeavour 2020” and others took place in Ukraine with the involvement of soldiers from the United States of America and a number of other NATO countries. They practised scenarios for military operations in urban areas, including combat in built-up areas, military assault landings and establishing control over settlements.

The holding of such exercises in a State where there is an ongoing armed civil conflict in the east of the country is not conducive to dialogue among the parties to that conflict. Official information on the nature of the manoeuvres has also been rather scant. Given that, according to the organizers, such exercises are intended to have an impact on the security situation in Ukraine, and bearing in mind the SMM’s mandate to “gather information and report on the security situation” (paragraph 3 of its mandate), we urge the Mission to continue to pay close attention to all military exercises taking place on the territory of Ukraine, including those involving foreign troops, and to include the details in its reports.

In accordance with its mandate, various aspects of respect for human rights should also be part of the SMM's focus. The consequences of the Ukrainian Government's application of discriminatory legislation in the sphere of language and education, which contravenes the Constitution of Ukraine and the country's OSCE commitments, need to be monitored. We are counting on a more active role on the part of the SMM, which, in accordance with its mandate, is called upon to monitor and support respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Manifestations of aggressive nationalism and radicalism continue to have an impact on security throughout Ukraine. During the period under review (21 June to 16 September), the Mission reported on the most visible manifestations of intolerance accompanied by violence, namely shots being fired at a bus and opposition activists being beaten up in Liubotyn in the Kharkiv region (report dated 28 August), an attack on a synagogue in Mariupol in the Donetsk region (report dated 1 September) and clashes with members of the Roma community in the settlement of Andriivka in the Kharkiv region (report dated 8 September). We would remind you of the long-overdue need for the SMM to catalogue information on manifestations of aggressive nationalism, neo-Nazism and xenophobia in a dedicated thematic report by the SMM.

It is important not to slacken the monitoring of the situation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. It is becoming especially relevant given the direct threats by Ukrainian officials against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church owing to its public activities. For example, in September, the secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Oleksiy Danilov, threatened to bring charges against the organizers of the "People of Peace" forum involving the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. During this event, possible options for promoting public dialogue in Donbas, among other things, were discussed.

Once again, we emphasize the need for the parties to the internal Ukrainian conflict to quickly find compromises. The main objective of the OSCE is to provide as much assistance as possible and exclude the logic of war and violence. We urge that maximum influence be brought to bear on the current leadership of Ukraine in order to induce it to desist from making empty declarations and embark on the real implementation of all the provisions of the Package of Measures as the sole framework for establishing lasting peace in Donbas and the country as a whole.

Thank you for your attention.