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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1313th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

13 May 2021

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The past week has not brought any positive momentum as far as resolution of the crisis in Ukraine is concerned. In Kyiv they are still merely going through the motions of aspiring to peace, avoiding dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk on the conditions for continued coexistence – a fundamental element of the settlement process. This is accompanied by a striving to distort the root causes of the internal Ukrainian conflict, along with the tenor and content of the Minsk agreements, by advancing the notion that it is allegedly necessary to rethink the existing settlement formats. Moreover, the current Ukrainian authorities, supported by a number of foreign patrons, have stepped up their attempts to shift the responsibility for their failure to implement the Minsk agreements on to Russia, despite the fact that there is no reference as such to any obligations on Russia's part in the text of the agreements.

This shirking of work on bringing about a settlement is having a negative impact on the security situation in eastern Ukraine. The continuation of the Ukrainian Government's punitive operation against the population of Donbas is leading to new casualties and destruction. Among other things, critical public facilities are being damaged.

We are concerned about reports of skirmishes that took place last week in the area between the settlements of Krasnohorivka and Staromykhailivka in the Donetsk region. As reported, the north-facing wall of a functioning hospital in Krasnohorivka was damaged and several windows blown out by shelling. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) was unable to establish the type of weapon used or the direction of fire. Moreover, the Mission has so far not managed to assess the damage to a school in the neighbouring settlement of Staromykhailivka, where, as reported, an unexploded shell had been discovered in the schoolyard. We regret that the SMM patrol that set out for that settlement on 5 May turned back and left the militia checkpoint after just 20 minutes, rather than waiting for confirmation of an opportunity to cross the checkpoint safely (report dated 6 May). We note that six days later, the monitors were able to proceed to that settlement despite a longer wait (report dated 12 May). We call on the SMM to continue its efforts to record in a timely manner the consequences of shelling, not least in Staromykhailivka.

On 5 May, the Mission observed a piece of unexploded ordnance, namely a 220 mm rocket from a BM-27 Uragan multiple-launch rocket system, some 150 metres from civilian houses in the settlement of Komuna (Donetsk region). On 6 May, an inhabited apartment in the settlement of Zolote-5/Mykhailivka (Luhansk region) was damaged by shelling from a north-easterly direction. On 7 May, the SMM spotted damage to the main building of the water pumping station and nearby buildings in the Kyivskiy district of the city of Donetsk. As reported, the damage was caused by at least three large-calibre (122 mm) shells fired from a north-westerly direction. The next day, a functioning school (School No. 116) and several residential buildings in the city of Donetsk were damaged by shooting from a south-westerly direction. The established facts point to the involvement of the Ukrainian military in these instances of shelling. We express our grave concern about their use of heavy weapons against critical infrastructure facilities and the civilian sector.

Reports of the death of a pensioner in the Petrovskiy district of the city of Donetsk on 8 May as a result of shelling have yet to be confirmed by the SMM. We count on the Mission to promptly establish the facts and to reflect them in its reports.

We once again draw attention to the need for implementation in good faith of the ceasefire-strengthening measures of 22 July 2020. This refers first and foremost to the involvement of a co-ordination mechanism for responding to ceasefire violations. It is important to ensure not only strict observance of the “silence regime” but also that any violations are investigated and disciplinary action duly taken.

As for the rest of the country, the Ukrainian authorities continue to take steps designed to exacerbate divisions within society. A purge of the political opposition is being carried out, pressure is being exerted on non-State media, and the television channels that the authorities dislike most have been blocked extrajudicially.

The systematic campaign to squeeze the Russian language out of all spheres of public life continues. As already reported, on 16 January this year there entered into force a number of provisions of the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language. These entail a significant narrowing of the scope for using languages other than Ukrainian in public life, including the service sector.

In the education sector, the Ukrainian authorities are depriving Russian-speaking Ukrainians and members of national minorities of opportunities to receive, as in the past, a complete cycle of secondary education in their native languages. At the end of April, Taras Kremen, the State Language Protection Commissioner – an office created pursuant to the aforementioned law – published a report on his activities. According to the data presented there, the number of classes with Russian as the language of instruction has more than halved in recent times: from 11,563 in 2019 to 5,421 in 2020.

We call on the OSCE to pay close attention to the consequences of the Ukrainian authorities’ introduction of discriminatory legislation in the fields of language and education, among others. In accordance with its mandate, the SMM is tasked with supporting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Ukraine. There is a need for more active and effective co-operation between the Mission and the relevant OSCE institutions: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

The Ukrainian Government is balking at inclusive social dialogue within the country, notably with regard to certain areas of Donbas. Moreover, it is seeking to shift the responsibility on to others. We regret that the goodwill demonstrated by the Russian Federation with a view to facilitating a settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis and creating favourable conditions for dialogue between the parties to the conflict – the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk – is not eliciting an adequate

response. It would seem that instead of working on the settlement process, the Ukrainian authorities and their backers are determined to continue pushing destructive narratives larded with empty accusations of “aggression” and “occupation”. To be sure, appropriate conclusions will be drawn.

In accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202, it is the parties to the conflict that have obligations under the settlement process, that is, the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian armed forces on the one hand, and representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and their armed formations on the other.

No one else will perform on the Ukrainian Government’s behalf the specific part of its “homework” that has to do with implementing the Minsk Package of Measures – in particular, with regard to introducing permanent legislation on a special status for Donbas, holding local elections in the region in consultation and agreement with the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, lifting the inhumane blockade of Donbas, and implementing certain socio-economic and humanitarian aspects.

We call on the foreign “minders” and political sponsors of the current Ukrainian leadership to bring all their influence to bear on the Ukrainian Government in order to induce it to responsibly fulfil its commitments.

Thank you for your attention.