

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
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AT THE 1107th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 July 2016

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The swift implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures, which is the only option for a settlement, is the way to ensure peace and harmony in Ukraine; this is not capitulation, as some are trying to portray it. The implementation of the specific aspects of local self-government in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions will ensure that the rights of their inhabitants are reliably vouchsafed and will simultaneously help to normalize the situation in the country as a whole. The only ones who stand to lose are the radical nationalists and the so-called war party, which profits from people's suffering.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainian Government shows no signs of being willing to implement the Package of Measures and is dragging things out. To that end, there are also regular provocations at the line of contact. The intensified shelling of residential areas is of particular concern. Over the past two weeks, there have been signs of a dangerous build-up of military activity by the Ukrainian armed forces at different segments of the line of contact in Donbas. There is information about mopping-up operations carried out by the security forces in towns and villages near the line of contact – in Marinka and Shchastia. We have taken note of the information on deliveries of foreign military equipment to Ukraine, including unmanned aerial vehicles, intended to adjust the line of artillery fire. Statements regarding the “unfeasibility” of the Minsk Package of Measures and the “inevitability” of Donbas being returned to Ukraine by force have begun to be heard more frequently.

If the intention behind these actions is to conduct a military operation, this will have tragic consequences.

I shall limit myself to one specific example. On 29 June, security forces were recorded heading from Svitlodarsk towards Debaltseve with tanks and heavy artillery. This was clearly an attempt to seize additional territory and test the militia's line of defence. With the best will in the world, this episode cannot be put down to the militia “shelling its own lines”.

The day before, Zaitseve, Yasynuvata and the Kuybyshevskiy district of Donetsk came under renewed shelling. Of all the towns and villages that have been subjected to shelling and mentioned in the reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), around 80 per cent are controlled by the militias. A total of 804 units of weaponry out of 1,258 declared units, in other words 64 per cent, have gone missing from Ukrainian army storage sites. Ukrainian artillery systems of various calibres are present in the security zone, including multiple-launch rocket systems. Here are just a few figures. Between 24 June and 5 July, the SMM reported 18 howitzers in Zelene Pole, 12 howitzers in Bohoyavlenka, 6 howitzers and 3 anti-tank guns in Vodiane, 9 anti-tank guns in Avdiivka, 5 howitzers in Tarasivka, 3 howitzers in Bakhmut, 1 howitzer in Novozhelanne, 1 Grad multiple-launch rocket system in Zatyshne, 2 anti-tank guns in Vrubivka, 2 howitzers in Smolianynove and 4 howitzers in Anadol. This is just the equipment covered by the Package of Measures.

Under these circumstances, the Ukrainian Government continues to obstruct the negotiations on the political aspects of a settlement, hinders the creation of normal working conditions for the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) and tries to sabotage the work in the Trilateral Contact Group.

Ukraine is endeavouring to drag out as much as possible even the agreement on the first steps and parameters for de-escalating tension, which is under way in the Trilateral Contact Group's working group on security issues and in the Normandy format. The fact that the parties have been able to reach an agreement on the first segments for the disengagement of forces and demilitarization is an important achievement. We trust that it will not be cancelled out by the actions of the Ukrainian forces, as happened earlier in Shyrokyne.

It is clear that a systematic and gradual approach should be taken in implementing the measures to strengthen security in Donbas. This involves a ceasefire, the disengagement of the parties' forces, the withdrawal of weapons and their storage. The SMM patrols in the security zone need to be considerably stepped up. There need to be guarantees that the demilitarized zones will not be occupied again following the withdrawal of the parties' forces.

These steps should be synchronized with progress in the negotiations on the political aspects of a settlement, which include a range of issues connected with the entry into force of Ukrainian laws on the special status of certain areas of Donbas, amnesty, elections and amendments to the Constitution. All these questions are interlinked and cannot be separated.

We would remind you that the Package of Measures provides for the agreement of a host of questions in the Trilateral Contact Group with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. This requires direct dialogue between the parties, which cannot be replaced by other formats. The task of the Normandy quartet is to ensure the functions of the monitoring mechanism and to assist in the search for realistic solutions that could be used by the Trilateral Contact Group. We are grateful to our European partners in that format for their efforts. However, it is clear that more needs to be done to make substantive movement towards implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We are grateful to the SMM for its work. It would be useful to develop co-operation with the JCCC and establish closer contacts with the representatives of the Donetsk and Luhansk administrations. Such steps would enable greater freedom of movement to be

ensured in practice for the monitors and would avoid miscommunications and misunderstandings.

The SMM can play a very important role in monitoring and facilitating de-escalation in Donbas, first and foremost through the closest possible monitoring of the security zone and the segments of it that will be demilitarized.

Nonetheless, the relative freedom of movement of the SMM patrols in Government-controlled territory cannot completely stop provocative actions by the Ukrainian army and nationalist battalions. Moreover, many obstacles are being placed in their way. We have taken note that on 23 June the Ukrainian security forces refused SMM monitors access to a Ukrainian border service checkpoint on the Russian-Ukrainian border in the Kherson region.

In conclusion, we would remind our colleagues that the price of the Ukrainian Government's efforts to avoid implementing the Package of Measures is measured in the first instance in human lives – Donbas residents, Ukrainian soldiers and militia fighters. With each day that passes, the task of reintegrating certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions into the politico-legal space of Ukraine becomes increasingly difficult.

Thank you for your attention.