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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1111th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 July 2016

**In response to the statements by
Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of the OSCE
Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and Ambassador Martin Sajdik,
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine
and in the Trilateral Contact Group**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome the distinguished Ambassadors Martin Sajdik and Ertuğrul Apakan to the OSCE Permanent Council once again. We greatly appreciate your efforts within the Trilateral Contact Group and at the helm of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), which are aimed at a peaceful settlement. We note your personal contribution in helping the parties to the internal Ukrainian conflict to find mutually acceptable solutions within the Trilateral Contact Group and its specialist subgroups.

We firmly believe that national reconciliation in Ukraine is achievable. However, this can only be done through genuine direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Due account of the interests of all regions and all inhabitants of the country is the key to a stable and democratic State structure in Ukraine.

There is no alternative to the Minsk Package of Measures as the only basis for a settlement of the conflict in south-eastern Ukraine. I would remind you that such an understanding was reached and confirmed repeatedly by the leaders of the Normandy quartet countries, and the Package of Measures itself was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202, which calls on all parties to fully implement (I emphasize the word fully) the Package of Measures.

Attempts to distort or one-sidedly interpret the agreements contained in the Package of Measures are destructive and extremely dangerous. Its military provisions should not be overemphasized, while the political aspects are subordinated. Such a selective approach is unlikely to ensure a sustainable settlement. We have repeatedly witnessed how the truces have been broken literally a few days after their announcement. Measures to ensure military

security will work only when they are backed by concrete political solutions. It is essential, without violating the sequence of actions set out in the Package of Measures, to work towards an agreement on documents for a political settlement so as to ensure the implementation of these agreements as soon as a sustainable ceasefire regime has been established. Otherwise, the parties will be unable to move forward towards a settlement.

We are convinced that an agreement as quickly as possible in the Trilateral Contact Group on the parameters for the disengagement of the parties' forces and the creation of demilitarized zones at the line of contact should be the first step towards de-escalation. Political guarantees for the safety of the inhabitants of south-eastern Ukraine need to be ensured in parallel. This involves the Ukrainian Government reaching an agreement with the representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions on permanent legislation on the special status of these regions and amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine on decentralization.

The development of military and political confidence- and security-building measures should be the next step on the path towards normalization. From a military point of view, such measures might include the deployment of SMM monitors in the demilitarized zones, the withdrawal of equipment and weapons to storage sites and the establishment of round-the-clock SMM monitoring posts at these depots, and the development and commissioning of a mechanism to examine incidents of a military nature by either party with the perpetrators automatically being brought to justice. From a political point of view, it is important in accordance with the Package of Measures to ensure pardon and amnesty by enacting the law prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that took place earlier in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and also the release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons, based on the principle "all for all".

Once these urgent measures to stabilize the situation have been taken, it will be possible to proceed with further steps regarding the political and socio-economic reintegration of Donbas through the holding of local elections, the lifting of the discriminatory checkpoint regime introduced by the Ukrainian Government at the line of contact, the re-establishment of the Ukrainian social, economic and financial institutions that have been suspended, the resumption of welfare payments and the restoration of destroyed infrastructure facilities.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are obliged to note that for now the work on the majority of issues in the Trilateral Contact Group has become stuck. The Ukrainian Government is not taking any real steps in the political field, alluding to the tension along the line of contact, which it is provoking itself. It seems that the war in Donbas is a convenient pretext on which various domestic policy setbacks can be blamed and which can be used as a smokescreen to conceal the Ukrainian leadership's inability to fulfil its commitments undertaken in Minsk. Meanwhile, the situation at the line of contact is deteriorating and there is a growing danger that large-scale hostilities will resume. We trust that the appeal by the United Nations Secretary-General for a truce to be observed in all conflicts during the Olympic Games will be heard in the Ukrainian capital.

According to the SMM, there has been a sharp rise recently in the number of indiscriminate shelling incidents, the number of civilian casualties has increased, and a considerable amount of civilian infrastructure has been destroyed. During the period from April to July, 21 civilians were killed in Donbas, 43 persons were injured, and one in five schools were destroyed. Towns and villages controlled by the militia are fired on from Ukrainian armed forces' positions practically every day.

Under these circumstances, we urge the SMM to step up its monitoring equally on both sides of the line of contact. It is essential to fully realize the Mission's early warning possibilities. The SMM must not "miss" the start of hostilities. Constant monitoring in hotspots should be organized by setting up round-the-clock observation posts there. This would be an important restraining factor and would open up the possibility of providing timely assistance in establishing local truces. We urge the SMM to prepare a separate thematic report on the humanitarian consequences of the artillery fire on towns, villages and infrastructure.

We also suggest that the Mission should step up its co-operation with the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) and those who control the situation on the ground. There will be an even greater need for this when the parties begin to disengage their forces and create demilitarized zones.

The verification regime also needs to be improved. The fact that according to the SMM more than 800 units of weaponry have gone missing from Ukrainian depots is inadmissible. The parties need to return to the storage sites all the withdrawn equipment that has gone missing and decommission it. Weapons should not be stored in a state of combat readiness and be guarded by the very same soldiers who used to fire them. The SMM should establish round-the-clock monitoring at storage sites with the aid of technical equipment and promptly report any violations to the Trilateral Contact Group. Equipment should be verified on the basis of parity. This also applies to flights by unmanned aerial vehicles. It is inadmissible to create advantages for one of the parties to the conflict. If the SMM reports about the militias' armaments on the entire territory controlled by the self-proclaimed republics up to the Ukrainian-Russian border, then on the other side of the line of contact it should report about the military equipment belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces at least in the Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia and Kharkiv regions bordering on Donbas.

We welcome the SMM's attention to the difficult humanitarian situation in Donbas and assistance in conducting reconstruction work and demining. As long as the discriminatory checkpoint regime restricting the freedom of movement of the inhabitants of Donbas persists, we urge that a constant monitoring presence be ensured at Ukrainian checkpoints on the line of contact.

We draw attention to the need for closer monitoring of the situation in the rest of Ukraine. We are compelled to note that for the moment this part of the SMM's mandate is not being fulfilled sufficiently. The Mission's information on demonstrations and protests against the worsening socio-economic situation, the influence of nationalist elements on the adoption of political decisions, the murder of journalists, the absence of results in the investigation into the Odessa tragedy and other crimes against humanity, the increase in illicit arms trafficking and in the number of crimes involving these weapons is sketchy. Detailed assessments are needed of political and socio-economic trends in Ukrainian society, since they affect the settlement of the conflict. Thematic reports are required on freedom of speech and the rights

of journalists, the activities of radical and extremist organizations and the observance of the rights and freedoms of citizens. The objectivity of the reports and the balanced submission of information are the key to the reputation of the SMM and the OSCE as a whole.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the distinguished Ambassadors Sajdik and Apakan once again for their difficult and responsible work. I would ask them to pass on our sincere words of gratitude to all the monitors working with the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.