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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1055th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 May 2015

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Yesterday we already had a fairly substantive discussion about the situation in Ukraine and the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict, with the participation of Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. We will limit ourselves merely to reiterating our position that there is no alternative to a political settlement of the crisis in south-eastern Ukraine by way of direct dialogue between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk. The mechanism of the Trilateral Contact Group and its working subgroups was created for this purpose. It must work effectively.

We reiterate our continued support for the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). We believe that it plays an important role in the efforts to facilitate the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The SMM has the ability to exert a restraining influence on the parties to the conflict and must exploit that to the full. The security zone along the line of separation should be provided with as many monitors as possible. Permanent observation posts, which could monitor the situation around the clock, need to be established at the hottest spots in this area. Perhaps arrangements should be made for such observation posts not only in areas of heightened tension, but also in places where the situation is calmer.

The safety and security of the monitors remains a priority. In that connection, we note with regret that on 24 May the SMM was forced to leave its observation post near Shyrokyne because of small-arms fire from Ukrainian forces.

We urge the monitors to continue to collaborate with the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC). We regard the attack on the vehicle of a Russian representative to the JCCC on 23 May as an extremely dangerous incident. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. Attempts to frustrate the work of this important mechanism must be stopped. We expect Ukraine to conduct a swift investigation into this incident and the guilty parties to be punished.

We note that the Ukrainian security forces continue to demand that SMM monitors state their nationality.

As we have already mentioned, the situation along the demarcation line remains tense. We are extremely concerned at the intensification and geographical expansion of the skirmishes.

The Ukrainian security forces – be they armed forces, the national guard, Right Sector illegal armed formations or some other group – continue unprovoked shelling involving the use of heavy artillery. The SMM reports record both the disappearance of heavy equipment from storage depots and its appearance in the security zone.

As a result of shelling on 26 May in Horlivka, three people were killed, including an 11-year-old girl and her father. A further two children, including a newborn baby, were rescued from the rubble of the house which had been destroyed by a Ukrainian shell. The injured children are in hospital. The shelling came from government-controlled territory and from heavy guns, which, in accordance with the Minsk agreements, should be withdrawn. What is more, there are no insurgent units or military equipment in this area. We know that a team of SMM monitors visited Horlivka. We expect principled conclusions regarding this barbaric act.

There are reports of a massing by Ukrainian security forces of heavy weaponry, including artillery, near the line of separation. The number of instances of sabotage and provocation is growing. Insurgent defences are being “probed” and vulnerable spots sought. This runs the risk of an escalation of the conflict. In that context, the information regarding the Verkhovna Rada’s decision to avail itself of the opportunity to go back on its commitments under the European Convention on Human Rights raises concerns. Is this not preparation for further exacerbation of the situation in south-eastern Ukraine? The United States of America and the European Union should exert their considerable influence on Kyiv so as to prevent an escalation of tension in Donbas.

The far-fetched stories related by some of our colleagues about the several thousand-strong group of Russian troops allegedly deployed in Donbas unfortunately serve an extremely unsavoury purpose – begging for money for the war, for deliveries of weapons, military equipment, foreign military specialists and mercenaries from private military companies.

In that connection, the scale of the military aid already provided to Ukraine by the United States and Canada is impressive. We will not be surprised if the weapons and equipment that some Western countries are providing to Kyiv’s security forces are soon used against the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic. There is also no doubt as to what the foreign specialists are training the Ukrainian security forces for.

We have heard justifications and excuses claiming that such aid does not violate the Minsk agreements. They say these documents do not impose any obligations on the United States and Canada. Any international agreements are superseded by a decision of the United States Congress. We have also heard that all of this is the exercise of Ukraine’s sovereign rights.

In April of last year, the exercise of such a “right” led to the start of a punitive operation against those who disagreed with the unconstitutional change of power in Kyiv. It resulted in thousands of casualties, the large-scale destruction of towns and villages in Donbas, and a million people fleeing to Russia alone. Current Ukrainian legislation prohibits, on pain of imprisonment, this tragedy from being explained as anything other than “Russian aggression”. However, ever more Ukrainians, among them Crimean Tatars, are refusing to fight under this banner and are fleeing to Russia, and also to Crimea, to escape the draft.

The already difficult situation of Ukrainian citizens in the east of the country is exacerbated by the continuing blockade of Donbas. It is significant that even the so-called State Agency for the Reconstruction of Donbas established in September of last year still exists only on paper. What is more, this department, which is still not operational, is now switching its focus to assistance for internally displaced persons from eastern Ukraine. This fact illustrates the Ukrainian authorities’ real attitude to their own fellow citizens in Donbas and to the relevant provision of the Minsk Package of Measures.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the key to a lasting settlement of the situation in Ukraine is ensuring constitutional reforms through inclusive dialogue involving all the population groups of the country and all of its regions. It is clear that by no means all the inhabitants of Ukraine share the values and ideals inspired by nationalism that are being imposed on them by the present authorities. Many have already understood that the slogans that lured them to the Maidan over a year ago have in practice turned into something quite different. We remember what our colleagues accused the Ukrainian leadership under Viktor Yanukovich of. For a long time, the laws of 16 January 2014 have seemed almost a model of liberalism amid the current hunt for “domestic” separatists, for opposition politicians, public figures and journalists. The Ukrainians can judge for themselves how much the situation has changed in the fight against corruption, but there is nothing positive to see here. Yesterday, the BBC reported that President Petro Poroshenko’s declared income alone had increased sevenfold over the past year.

A year ago, President Poroshenko won the elections in the first round by promising to establish peace in Ukraine. This promise can still be fulfilled, but this is impossible without establishing national dialogue and restoring trust within the country.

Thank you for your attention.