



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **Statement on the Ongoing Violations of OSCE Commitments by Russia in Ukraine and OSCE Activities in Ukraine**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 30, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States is pleased to welcome Ambassador Bišćević to the Permanent Council today. We thank you for your leadership of the National Dialogue Project and for your report. But before I turn to the issue of your report and recommendations, I would like to address the Russian Federation's continued violations of OSCE principles and commitments in Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, despite the concerted efforts and uniform outrage of the international community, Russia continues to act in defiance of international law and the fundamental norms of international behavior that have underpinned peace and security in Europe for a generation. It has been 61 days – let me repeat that – 61 days, since the Russian Federation began its illegal military actions in Crimea. It has been thirteen days since the Joint Statement by Russia, Ukraine, the United States, and the EU was issued in Geneva. And it has been five days since pro-Russian separatists abducted a team of unarmed Vienna Document observers.

During that time, Russia has deliberately avoided taking any significant steps toward de-escalation. It continues to illegally occupy the sovereign Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Its troops remain massed on the border with Ukraine. Its agents, against a backdrop of unyielding and disgusting propaganda, continue to provoke violence in eastern Ukraine. Yesterday's events in Luhansk and this morning's in Horlivka were described as taking place with military efficiency: that is no coincidence.

Russia has done nothing to implement its Geneva commitments. Though Ambassador Kelin has said that the Vienna Document inspectors should be released, his government has enormous power and influence and has not used it to free these hostages and their Ukrainian escorts. This is part of a larger pattern, of course—Russia lies about its crimes and continues them apace, attempting to distract with specious allegations directed toward others; and at the same time they occasionally promise some small constructive step but take no action to support it. The steady stream of lies and broken commitments continues. As pro-Russia separatists rampage, Russia has done nothing to condemn the appalling anti-Semitic messages and assaults on the Roma community, while continuing to claim absurdly that the government in Kyiv is somehow “fascist.” Russia has not condemned the mounting examples of torture, the vile beatings of peaceful pro-unity demonstrators, the assassination attempt on the mayor of Kharkiv. Colleagues, make no mistake: Russia could pull the plug.

They could at any time begin to exert influence toward de-escalation. So far, instead we get more lies, more Kremlin-supported criminality.

Because of Russia's continued violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and its complete failure to meet its Geneva commitments, the United States announced on Monday new sanctions targeting Russian leaders and businesses. The rationale for this step was laid out in the joint statement by our G7 partners, and followed closely by additional sanctions from the EU, Canada, and Japan, underlining the unity of the international community's view that Russia's actions are unacceptable. These sanctions are part of the price Russia will pay as long as it eschews diplomacy and continues on this destructive path.

In the face of this aggressive assault on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Ukraine has continued to demonstrate remarkable restraint and level-headedness. I am not sure other participating States around this table would be able to match Ukraine's calm and steadiness in the face of similar provocations.

We've also heard from our Ukrainian colleague about additional acts that reflect the Ukrainian government's active implementation of Geneva in the last 48 hours, including the tour of Kyiv City Hall that demonstrated its handover and rehabilitation, as well as the open parliamentary discussion on the constitution yesterday.

The OSCE has done a notable job in standing up the Special Monitoring Mission in a short time. The SMM continues to provide objective, independent information on what's actually happening on the ground in Ukraine. Its reports have made clear that while Ukraine in general is calm and peaceful, violence occurs in specific areas of Ukraine, and stems from Russia's provocations and the actions of groups who say they enjoy Moscow's support. The SMM is poised to support implementation of the Geneva commitments, and can do so when Russia does the same.

Of course, the SMM is only one aspect of the OSCE's broad work in Ukraine. As I said, we thank Ambassador Bišćević for his report on the National Dialogue project. The National Dialogue project represented the OSCE's strengths and skills admirably—it was on the ground quickly, showed flexibility and helped get the SMM up and running, reflected the OSCE's fundamental commitments, and worked to ensure they are fully implemented. We hope that the Government of Ukraine will make good use of the report's recommendations.

The government of Ukraine has committed repeatedly to broad national dialogue as part of an inclusive, transparent, and accountable constitutional process. In this regard, we look to the Government of Ukraine to determine whether and how the OSCE can support its efforts.

We condemn the horrific kidnapping and abuse of journalists and the armed take overs of TV stations in the east. Pro-Russian separatists are working to cut Ukrainians off from the free flow of information and force-feed them Russian propaganda – casting the Vienna Document observers as spies, for example. In this light, the United States also wishes to reiterate its support for the important work being done by the OSCE's Representative on the Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, in calling attention to media freedom issues and particularly the safety of journalists covering the situation in southern and eastern Ukraine. We commend her plans to increase her focus on Ukraine and the opportunity presented by the change of government in Kyiv for an improvement in the country's media freedom environment. We strongly reject the Russian Federation's baseless attempt to politicize her work in its April

23rd statement. The only “reality” that Representative Mijatovic has demonstrated an “unwillingness to see” in Ukraine – and in Russia, for that matter – is the false reality created by the Russian government's own propaganda machine.

ODIHR is playing a critical role in observing the May 25 presidential election. With 100 long-term observers already on the ground and a planned 900 short-term observers arriving in the days before the election, this will be the largest election observation mission in ODIHR’s history. We encourage all participating States to contribute observers to this mission. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is also planning a significant election observation mission. Together, ODIHR and the PA will help the world, and the Ukrainian people, evaluate the legitimacy of these important elections.

We also strongly reject the Russian Foreign Ministry’s baseless attack on ODIHR on 18 April which falsely accused ODIHR of ignoring attacks on two presidential candidates. In reality, ODIHR expressed concerns regarding the attacks in its interim report released on 17 April.

We also commend the High Commissioner for National Minorities Astrid Thors for her ongoing work to both highlight the truth regarding the treatment of national minorities in Ukraine and support the government in Kyiv’s efforts to ensure that it is respecting the rights of persons belonging to all of its national minorities. The HCNM should continue to focus on whether Russia’s outsized interest in ethnic Russians is doing damage to the rights of other national minorities in Ukraine, particularly in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Russia’s actions have the highly negative effect of turning ethnic-Russian Ukrainian citizens into political bargaining chips, thereby using them in its quest to undermine efforts to maintain a cohesive and stable society in Ukraine.

ODIHR and the HCNM also performed admirably in getting their joint Human Rights Assessment Mission (HRAM) on the ground in Ukraine quickly after the crisis erupted. We note that the HRAM was able to observe the situation in Crimea and call on the authorities there to allow OSCE monitors in Ukraine to access Crimea as well. We look forward to reading the HRAM report, and hope it will be available soon.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.