

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine at
the 22nd Meeting of
the Ministerial Council of the OSCE**

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to our Serbian hosts for their hospitality that all of us are enjoying today and tomorrow in Belgrade.

I would also like to commend Minister Dačić and his team for their work throughout this year and wish the best of luck to our German colleagues and Minister Steinmeier for the upcoming presidency.

2015 was a year of remarkable anniversaries and horrifying terrorist attacks in the OSCE space.

Ukrainians, who suffered from terrorist attacks in Volnovakha, Mariupol, Donetsk, Kramatorsk, Kharkiv are also in this sad list.

The 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act was supposed to be a big celebration.

But how much do we really have to celebrate?

How will we deal with the threats of today and tomorrow if the threats of yesterday still hang over Europe?

How can we intensify our engagement on issues high on the OSCE agenda if Organisation is not able to ensure compliance with its own fundamental principles and commitments?

The way and scope of how the Helsinki principles were breached have a disastrous effect on the entire system of the European security they underpin.

The problem of terrorism and the problem of Russian aggression have one thing in common: they represent an attempt to roll back the time.

Continued Russian aggression against my country attempts to turn the global development back to the times of national and religious intolerance, antagonistic alliances, dividing lines and rule of force and spheres of interests as the basis for international relations.

Both an ISIS terrorist, and a Russian proxy are on a crusade against our fundamental values – peace, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Both are parts of the “back to the past” pattern.

Or “straight into the future” of the hybrid warfare – if international community will not be willing, united and able to prevent and stop this new type of raging instability.

Combating terrorism cannot be done at the expense of core principles and democratic values.

Ukraine, as a country continuously suffering from Russian aggression, is ready to contribute to the united international anti-terrorist efforts, in particular those aimed at preventing growing cross-border flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine remains at the forefront of countering this backsliding trend, paying an ultimate price. Russia’s repressive policy in the illegally occupied Crimea and Sevastopol is spinning up. Donbas has been plunged into violence with more than 8000 killed and 17000 wounded, almost a million and a half of displaced persons and regional infrastructure

destroyed. We are confronting a “hybrid war” Russia is waging against Ukraine and our democratic choice.

The latest Normandy Summit in Paris and Ministerial meeting in Berlin have generated positive expectations that full implementation of the security block of the Minsk agreements would make it possible to conduct local elections in the occupied regions of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Indispensable elements of the sustainable de-escalation include ceasefire, verified heavy weapons withdrawal, withdrawal of all foreign troops and mercenaries from Donbas, disarmament of all illegal armed formations and establishment of the security zone along the Ukrainian-Russian border with effective 24/7 monitoring by OSCE.

Minsk agreements must be implemented fully and in good faith, including by Russia as an ultimate stakeholder of the peace in Ukraine. It must stop attacks and shellings, withdraw its troops, mercenaries and weaponry from Donbas and return to Ukraine control over its state border.

We reiterate as well that the Minsk agreements envisage the release of all hostages and illegally detained persons on the basis of “all-for-all” principle. This provision applies to the Ukrainian citizens, who now continue to be illegally detained in Russia, including Nadiya Savchenko, Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko and others. Russia must fulfil its commitments and release those Ukrainian citizens immediately and unconditionally.

Ukraine is fully committed to peaceful settlement. We will remain an active and constructive participant of the Normandy talks and within the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE as a mediator.

Mr. Chairman,

We positively assess the OSCE activities on the ground, in particular those conducted by the ODIHR, HCNM and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We note very intensive co-operation between the SMM and the Ukrainian authorities on various aspects of the Mission’s activities, in particular those related to implementation of the Minsk agreements.

While appreciating the OSCE efforts towards resolving the crisis in and around Ukraine, we consider it inappropriate to attempt to re-focus the core of the conflict resolution only to the OSCE operational response.

Any attempt to build a “new positive agenda” will fail if not underpinned by halting violations of the Helsinki Decalogue as a basis for rebuilding trust and cooperation across the entire OSCE mandate.

Fundamental principles and values must not be sacrificed or compromised as it will generate only more uncertainty and instability for the future.

Amid the critical lack of mutual trust and confidence, all parties should be interested in substantive modernization of the Vienna Document. We reiterate that such process should reflect the experience and lessons learned from the crisis around Ukraine.

Strengthening OSCE engagement with border security, in particular to prevent flows of foreign terrorist fighters, and eradication of phenomena of political prisoners in the OSCE region should be placed on the top of our agenda.

We regret that the relevant Ukrainian proposals for the Belgrade MC Documents did not mature to the point of consensus.

Ukraine underlines also the importance of seeking full implementation by all participating States of their human dimension commitments.

In particular – with respect to exercise of the human rights and fundamental freedoms in occupied territories. It is of great concern that those who oppose the illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea, mostly representatives of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar

communities on the peninsula, continue to suffer from repressions by the Russian occupying authorities and many of them remain behind bars under fabricated charges.

We must all stay united in seeking access of international institutions to the occupied Crimea.

Mr. Chairman,

Efficiency of the Organization cannot be measured by number of ministerial decisions. The future of the European security directly depends on our ability to make a violator responsible for committed violations.

Tireless efforts towards restoring respect to the OSCE principles and commitments are the only efficient antidote to the recurrence of their flagrant violations in the OSCE region and in the whole world. Otherwise, we are doomed to a failure of the common cooperative security. And I sincerely hope that this is not in the interests of the OSCE community, including Russia.

We look forward to keeping the issues of ensuring strict adherence to the OSCE principles and commitments at the top of the OSCE agenda for 2016 under the German Chairmanship and wish our German friends every success at the helm of the OSCE.

We are ready to closely cooperate with the Chairmanship across the OSCE mandate, in particular on restoring respect for the Helsinki principles and commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.