

PC.DEL/579/15

8 May 2015

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1050th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 May 2015

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We are mindful of the need to achieve rigorous compliance with all the provisions of the Package of Measures of 12 February in the sequence that was set out in the Package following many hours of negotiations. Everyone recognizes this, but so far the progress has been clearly insufficient.

It is clear that the effectiveness of the implementation of the agreements depends on the success of Kyiv's direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk. We regard yesterday's meeting in Minsk of the Contact Group and the specialist subgroups as a most important event. The results of the Minsk meetings are encouraging and lead us to hope that events in Ukraine will move firmly towards a peaceful settlement. The general assessment of the participants in the Minsk meetings, including the assessment published in the media, is most positive. Everyone, including us, noted the breakthrough results achieved through direct dialogue between Kyiv and south-eastern Ukraine, which create a sound basis for advancing a settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. We trust that work on all the questions outlined will continue without interruption and lead to practical results.

Now that the work of the subgroups has at last been launched, and even the schedule of these meetings has been worked out, it is necessary to make every effort to support this process and to refrain from dangerous rhetoric and unilateral actions which undermine the Minsk agreements.

We trust that the parties will manage to improve the security situation, ensure full compliance with the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of weapons in practice, and conclude additional agreements on the withdrawal of those types of weapons that are not covered by the Package of Measures.

Launching the political process, including a discussion of the procedures for holding local elections, as stipulated in points 4 and 12 of the Package of Measures, is of paramount

importance. It is essential to begin a dialogue on constitutional reform, which provides for decentralization as a key element.

There also needs to be progress in the implementation of points 5 and 6 – on pardon and amnesty and prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events in the conflict zone, and also on the release and exchange of all hostages and illegally detained persons.

The acute humanitarian problems in Donbas need to be resolved as quickly as possible. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported this. It is also confirmed in the reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). Kyiv continues its blockade of the region. The countless bureaucratic obstacles have made it extremely difficult for residents to move around in the conflict zone. The delivery of essential goods, medicines and food has, to all intents and purposes, ceased. According to officials, the delivery of goods to Donbas is treated practically as “smuggling”, from which, it would appear, the Ukrainian security forces controlling the roads and checkpoints line their pockets. The bribe for trucks loaded with goods to enter Donbas is estimated at between 50,000 and 150,000 hryvnas.

It is clear that the delivery of humanitarian cargo through territory controlled by the various “battalions” is precarious. The development of an international mechanism for the delivery, storage and distribution of humanitarian aid, as provided for in point 7 of the Package of Measures, is one of the most important tasks today. It is essential to restore social payments and banking services, and the Normandy format partners are obliged to help in this.

The situation needs to be rectified immediately, for the fact is that through its efforts to cut Donbas off from the rest of Ukraine financially, economically, culturally and historically, Kyiv is itself, to all intents and purposes, developing the “separatist” sentiments that it publicly condemns with such pathos.

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome and support the work of the SMM, which we trust and regard as an important stabilization instrument and source of objective information on what is happening in Ukraine. We trust that its collaborative work with the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) to de-escalate tension along the demarcation line, in particular around Shyrokyne, will yield results. We welcome the willingness of the parties to establish communication channels to prevent the situation from escalating near the village of Trokhizbenka, as noted in the SMM report of 4 May. Unfortunately, the organization of even a local ceasefire is not always successful. We believe it important to intensify the patrols of SMM monitors in the security zone, primarily in particularly tense areas. Both parties need to ensure the necessary guarantees for the monitors’ safety and security, and this remains an unconditional priority.

There are clearly problems on the ground. Efforts to resolve them should be taken not only by the SMM and the JCCC, but also by the parties themselves. We very much hope that the dialogue within the working group on security will make it possible to achieve this.

Unfortunately, today we are once again hearing from some colleagues that Kyiv is allegedly not violating any agreements and that the other side is guilty of everything. This, as

the representative of the United States of America once said, is “Absurdistan”. While our colleagues attempt to whitewash the actions of the Ukrainian security forces, the SMM continues to record their prohibited equipment, including Grad systems, the active regrouping of forces, and obstacles to the monitors’ work in the security zone.

There has been a dangerous increase in the intensity of the artillery shelling from territory controlled by the Ukrainian central authorities. The shelling of residential districts of Horlivka and Donetsk recorded in the SMM’s reports is especially worrying. The situation regarding the shelling of Horlivka last week is now already being repeated near Donetsk. In spite of the fact that JCCC representatives reached an agreement with the Ukrainian security forces on a ceasefire at midnight on 2 May, the security forces continued shelling residential districts of the city intensively for another 40 minutes. Shelling resumed in the following days. Between 300 and 500 Ukrainian shells of various calibre are now exploding every day. This once again forces us to raise the question whether the Ukrainian security forces in the security zone can be controlled. They either do not receive the relevant orders from the command or they simply ignore them.

Any attempts on Kyiv’s part to resume military action would be a colossal, tragic mistake. It would have the most negative consequences for Ukraine itself and for the European security system as a whole.

Mr. Chairperson,

There are also other obstacles to the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Clarification is required regarding the situation with the so-called “volunteer battalions”. Clarity in this matter would be useful both for our OSCE colleagues and for the other partners in the Normandy format. We have heard statements to the effect that the volunteer battalions have been withdrawn from the conflict zone. However, even in reports by the SMM, we constantly encounter references to Azov and Aidar. These “volunteers” behave in an extremely aggressive manner: on 1 May, they interfered in the work of an OSCE observation point in Shyrokyne and then also fired upon an SMM vehicle.

We asked the Ukrainian representative to clarify the current status of Right Sector, Azov, Aidar and other similar units. They are responsible not only for undermining the ceasefire regime, but also for many crimes against the local population. We were assured that they have already been integrated or are in the process of being integrated into the armed structures of Ukraine. Unfortunately, their continuing “lawlessness” shows that no progress has been made.

A year has elapsed since the arson attack on Trade Union House in Odessa, as a result of which several dozen people who had openly expressed their rejection of the unconstitutional coup d’état died. In the meantime, the Ukrainian justice system has not taken any steps to conduct an objective, independent and impartial investigation into this horrific crime or to bring the guilty parties to account. We believe this situation is inadmissible. Impunity for these crimes and the flagrant human rights violations committed during the internal Ukrainian conflict sets a terrible precedent. We urge the international community, including human rights bodies and non-governmental organizations, to press resolutely and honestly for a thorough, objective and impartial investigation by Ukraine and for the guilty parties to be brought to justice.

In conclusion, we should like to call on our colleagues to give more careful consideration to how the situation in Ukraine is developing. For over a year now Kyiv has been harping on about the realization of the co-called “European choice”. However, what we see – the harassment of dissidents, persecution of the Communist Party, censorship of the media, murder of opposition politicians and independent journalists, a campaign against “domestic separatists” and other incidents – has very little in common with European standards.

Once again, we emphasize that only through broad and inclusive national dialogue and constitutional reform will it be possible to solve the serious problems facing Ukrainian society.

As for the statement by the United States representative, we see it as another attempt to substantiate his well-known position with the aid of fabricated accusations and without bothering to provide any evidence, i.e., there is no progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements, nor will there be or can there be in principle.

It seems that precisely this turn of events would be in the interests of the United States.

Thank you for your attention.