

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1052nd MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to begin by noting that the attempts of the “war party” in Ukraine to provoke an escalation of violence during the May festivities failed. The NATO generals’ prophecy of an inevitable attack by units of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) on the eve of or immediately following Victory Day once again proved to be nothing more than fantasy.

Now our common efforts should be focused on strengthening the implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures. This process should be permanent and sustained. An understanding was reached with United States Secretary of State John Kerry in Sochi regarding the need for mutual efforts to intensify and, if possible, accelerate this process. Any attempts to return to a scenario involving the use of force need to be resolutely countered.

The more meaningful Kyiv’s direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk, the less likely the danger of the peace process breaking down or the situation sliding into a military phase. Meetings of the specialist subgroups should be held soon to resolve the pressing issues. We regard as a priority task the reaching of an additional agreement on the withdrawal of weapons with a calibre of up to 100 mm and all types of tanks. We also look forward to the implementation of the initiative to withdraw the forces from Shyrokyne, which requires a real willingness to compromise among the parties. For our part, we are calling on the insurgents to do this. The necessary influence on Kyiv should be exerted by the Western governments as well.

Of key importance is the dialogue on political issues – the agreement of procedures for elections in Donbas, the amnesty, and a substantive discussion of the implementation of the provisions of the Minsk agreements on constitutional reform and the future permanent law on the status of the region. We hope that the work of the specialist subgroups will make it possible to accelerate the exchange of detained persons.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Organization for Migration, along with the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), are drawing attention to the continuing serious humanitarian situation, which has been brought about by the actions of the Ukrainian security forces. In its recent thematic report, the SMM points out that the procedures introduced by Kyiv for movement across the line of contact are not in conformity with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 33 of the Constitution of Ukraine. The SMM underscores that as a result the ability of civilians to leave the region, access to food and medicines, and the delivery of humanitarian aid are all severely limited. The lives of Ukrainian civilians who are forced to travel to obtain permits from security force checkpoints at the risk of being caught in the crossfire are under threat. Together with the suspension of pension payments and benefits, this leads to a further deterioration in the humanitarian situation. In this connection, we wholeheartedly support the recommendations made in the SMM's report. The blockade of Donbas must be lifted immediately.

The central authorities continue to take measures conducive to transforming the DPR and LPR practically into a foreign State. The line of separation is increasingly beginning to resemble a State border. Instead of clearing the territory of mines, members of the Verkhovna Rada propose laying further mines along this line. The governor appointed by Kyiv has been personally involved in intercepting food shipments intended for Luhansk, seeking a complete cessation of road links with Donbas. Against this background, the appeals to us to facilitate the passage of humanitarian aid across the line of contact seem strange. It would be more logical to lift the blockade and introduce order at the Ukrainian checkpoints.

Kyiv's refusal to lift the blockade of Donbas contravenes the Minsk agreements. Kyiv clearly has no intention of restoring the infrastructure destroyed by Ukrainian security force shelling. Furthermore, Petro Poroshenko's recent comments, including those regarding his intention to regain control of Donetsk airport by force, lead us to doubt his readiness to adhere to a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have no intention of getting into an argument with our colleagues about the information on the number of violations by the parties of the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of weapons. The SMM and the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination are already doing a rather good job of this. Everyone has access to the SMM reports, which record all of this in detail. Delegations need only conduct a simple statistical analysis. The conclusions to be drawn from this are perfectly clear. Kyiv has no fewer violations on its conscience than the Donbas insurgents, and in some cases it has even more. This also applies to the unprovoked shelling and the introduction into the buffer zone of heavy weapons, to which Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems were recently added, and the closure of some areas to the monitors and firing on them. To claim that Kyiv is allegedly fulfilling all the agreements in good faith is to bury one's head in the sand. This is just silly.

However, since our colleagues continue to quote one-sided statistics, I will cite some excerpts from the SMM reports. On 8 May, security forces in Pisky village fired on Zhabunki village (in the DPR) using 122 mm mortars. On the same day, the monitors recorded that four Grad multiple-launch rocket systems and six 152 mm Msta-B howitzers were missing from Ukrainian armed forces depots. Moreover, the serial numbers had been removed from the two

howitzers present at the depot. On 10 May, a Ukrainian soldier opened fire on the monitors near the village of Krymske using a machine gun and the bullets landed two metres away from an SMM vehicle. On the same day, an SMM unmanned aerial vehicle recorded firing towards Shyrokyne from Ukrainian armed forces positions in Pionerske using 152 mm cannons, as a result of which two houses burnt down. On 10 May, the SMM discovered that six multiple-launch rocket systems and six 152 mm cannons were missing from a Ukrainian armed forces depot. According to information contained in the SMM reports alone, 52 pieces of heavy weaponry belonging to the Ukrainian armed forces were discovered in the security zone during the week of 6 to 12 May, including 17 weapons prohibited under the Package of Measures. Restrictions on the movement of the monitors were recorded on ten occasions during the same period.

Complaints have been heard here about the holding of parades on 9 May. The SMM observed a commemoration event involving Ukrainian equipment in territory controlled by the Ukrainian security forces in Sievierodonetsk in the security zone. Two Ukrainian Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems, one Grad multiple-launch rocket system, four 133 mm M-46 guns and one OSA-AK anti-aircraft missile system were observed there.

If we accept our Ukrainian colleague's claims that all of the volunteer formations have been placed under the control of the central command of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Internal Affairs, then responsibility for violations on the part of the Ukrainian security forces now lies entirely with Kyiv.

I should like to draw his attention, however, to the SMM report of 12 May, which mentions the fact that the Right Sector illegal armed group (under the terms of point 10 of the Package of Measures) has no intention of being integrated into the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the armed forces. It has also been reported that the authorities intend to legalize foreign mercenaries, by registering them in the armed forces.

We reiterate our support for the important stabilizing activities of the SMM. We call for the recruitment of additional monitors in the framework provided by the mandate to be accelerated. It is also extremely important to step up the work to establish and ensure round-the-clock posting of SMM monitors at the ten tensest points along the line separating the parties.

In the light of the unsubstantiated accusations regarding deterioration in the human rights situation in Crimea, I should like to make the following point.

All of the Russian Federation's obligations under the main international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms apply in full measure to the Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and other ethnic minorities living in Crimea.

Any noteworthy information on alleged violations of human rights and freedoms (and not only with respect to national minorities) is verified by the competent authorities and, if this information is substantiated, measures are taken to rectify the situation and bring the guilty parties to account.

Representatives of the Crimean Tartar population and other national minorities have every opportunity under the existing Russian laws and national legal system, including the judicial system, to defend their rights and interests.

In conclusion, I stress that a Ukrainian settlement is possible only by peaceful means through a genuinely inclusive national dialogue and constitutional reforms, guaranteeing the rights and security of all of Ukraine's inhabitants in each of its regions. We urge our colleagues to use their considerable influence on Kyiv to ensure that this process begins as soon as possible and is conducted in good faith.

Thank you for your attention.