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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 989th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 March 2014

Regarding the situation in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia considers the situation in Ukraine exclusively from the point of view of international law, first and foremost the Charter of the United Nations, which states that one of the main purposes of the United Nations is to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

The origin of the current crisis has been analysed in detail and on several occasions in statements by the Russian leadership, including detailed assessments presented by President Vladimir Putin on 4 March 2014.

We were not the ones who created this crisis. What is more, we have since the very outset warned our Western partners against supporting unlawful protests involving the use of force and terror, which began under the pretext of rejecting the entirely legitimate decision by the democratically elected President of Ukraine not to sign an agreement with the European Union. Not only did the Western countries ignore our warnings but they also, through measures including the participation of officials in anti-constitutional actions, encouraged the “Maidan” to continue the activities that ultimately paved the way for an armed *coup d'état*.

The coalition formed in the Verkhovna Rada and the structures it has created are not autonomous and depend on the support of the Pravy Sektor (Right Sector) and other ultranationalists who control Kyiv and other cities, terrorize anyone who does not agree with what is happening, call for a continuation of the “revolution” and have their sights set on a complete seizure of power. They use blatantly chauvinistic, anti-Russian and anti-Semitic slogans in the process.

This threat could have been averted if the requirements of the agreement of 21 February 2014 had been met in good time. This agreement called for illegal weapons to be surrendered, unlawfully occupied buildings vacated and the streets and squares cleared of barricades. These were the obligations of the signatories to the agreement; however, nothing

has happened. Furthermore, the Verkhovna Rada has already approved a decision regarding an amnesty for all participants in the anti-government riots.

The leaders of the Pravy Sektor and their supporters are taking practical steps to ensure that, following Kyiv and a number of western regions of Ukraine, they also gain control of the south-eastern regions, including Crimea, where millions of Russians live.

The current leaders of the “Kyiv government” have asked the Pravy Sektor to nominate ministers. Now, as we understand it, there are plans to give the Maidan militants the status and functions of an official, legitimate, armed law enforcement structure. The Pravy Sektor is calling for the arsenals of the Ukrainian armed forces to be opened up and for it to be given weapons.

The problem of the uncontrolled spread of weapons and ammunition seized from military depots by militants requires the most serious attention, as do reports about the disappearance of several dozen Igla man-portable air defence systems.

Mass “purges” are under way with a vengeance in the ministries with security functions and in other government agencies. Criminal proceedings are being instituted against political opponents, and people are being kidnapped. In the eastern regions this is widely reported in the media; less is known about what is happening in Kyiv and the west of the country.

I should like to draw attention to the cases involving the arrest of political opponents of the current government in Kyiv. The former governor of Kharkov, Mikhail Dobkin, who had announced that he would take part in the presidential elections, has been arrested, as has the leader of the Russian-speaking opposition in Donetsk, Pavel Gubarev. Finally, Russian-language government websites have been taken offline since Monday, and now Russian-speaking citizens do not have access to government services in that language.

Media professionals are subject to psychological pressure and violence in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. The Russia 24 television correspondent Artem Kol has received death threats and a reward has been offered for his head.

Russian media websites reporting on the situation in Ukraine were subject to hacker attacks in early March. This happened to Russia Today on 2 March and Rossiiskaya Gazeta on 7 March.

The television channels RTR-Planeta, Channel One Worldwide and NTV Mir have disappeared from the cable television network in Ukraine.

Russian media professionals have been denied entry to Ukrainian territory under various pretexts. A film crew from the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company was refused entry into Ukraine at Donetsk airport on 6 March. A TV Tsentr film crew was deported from Donetsk airport on 7 March. A film crew from NTV was refused entry.

The Dnepropetrovsk police detained seven Russian journalists on the grounds that they were interested in only “certain provocative subjects”.

I might also mention that all the Ukrainian channels are working in Russia. There is incidentally a Crimean Tatar channel, which is working without any hindrance. It also works in Crimea.

We have taken note of the statement by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, in this regard. We trust that she will follow the situation closely and objectively and will take appropriate measures within the framework of her mandate.

Given this situation, Russia will consistently support the people's self-defence units established to protect the Russian language, Russian cultural values and the right to preserve one's traditions, customs and way of life. This support is being provided strictly in accordance with the basic principles of international law and the international commitments of the Russian Federation, including the rights and obligations stemming from the agreements on the stationing of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation and other fundamental Russian-Ukrainian treaties in their entirety.

Russia will not interfere in the decision of the lawful authorities of Crimea regarding the holding of a referendum on the future of the inhabitants of Crimea. The holding of such a referendum is not prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations, other norms of international law or international court rulings.

Any appeals to the Russian Federation from the lawful authorities of Crimea regarding the outcome of the referendum will be considered in a manner that ensures complete respect for the free expression of the will of the peninsula's population.

Russia cannot accept the logic misrepresenting what is happening in Ukraine as a conflict between Moscow and Kyiv requiring a settlement mediated by the West and, what is more, based on the recognition of the fait accompli created by the *coup d'état* and under the threat of sanctions and ultimatums.

The heart of the problem lies in the deep internal crisis in Ukraine that has escalated to breaking point because of an attempt to subordinate all of Ukraine, unconstitutionally and violently to the interests of only one part, exploiting the slogans of European integration but in fact relying on forces that profess ideas that are incompatible with the concept of European civilization.

The OSCE could also assist in resolving this crisis. We are grateful to the OSCE Chairmanship, Secretariat and institutions for their efforts.

We will carefully follow the activities of the mission sent by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities to assess human rights in Ukraine. This is a good opportunity to demonstrate impartiality and objectivity. We expect these experts to help ensure a proper investigation of human rights violations in Ukraine, including the issue of snipers. We trust that their work will help to normalize the situation in Kyiv and other parts of the country. It is important to ensure the utmost transparency in the ODIHR's work on this sensitive issue.

We are ready to agree on a mandate for a "large" monitoring mission to Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.