

PC.DEL/416/15
27 March 2015

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1046th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 March 2015

**In response to the briefing by
Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring
Mission to Ukraine, and Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the
OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, on the situation regarding the
implementation of the Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to the Contact Group, Ms. Heidi Tagliavini.

We appreciate the prompt efforts of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to assist in the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements adopted in February. We received confirmation today that the ceasefire regime on the line of contact is not being observed everywhere. Throughout the past month, OSCE monitors have been reporting that insurgent positions at Donetsk airport have come under fire from Ukrainian security force-controlled Pisky and Avdiivka. Residential areas in Donetsk were also hit, specifically on 1, 3, 4, 18 and 22 March. This Monday, two children died as a result of shelling in Donetsk and Horlivka. Shyrokyne, which is controlled by the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), continues to be shelled from security force positions in Berdianske and Sopyne. This was clearly recorded in the SMM reports of 14, 16, 17 and 18 March. According to statistics from the Russian-Ukrainian Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination, between 22 February and 19 March 34 DPR insurgents were killed and 77 wounded.

The reasons for the persisting tension lie primarily in the unwillingness of the Ukrainian side to implement in good faith the February Package of Measures, above all its points concerning the ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons. SMM monitors have reported that tanks and artillery systems of the Ukrainian armed forces still remain in the security zone, particularly near Mariupol, in Berdianske and Sopyne, and also in Starobesheve, Muratove, Myrna, Konstantinovka and Troitske. We hope that the Right Sector volunteer battalions, which are also for the most part provoking the skirmishes, will soon

withdraw from the buffer zone in line with the orders they have received. Two days ago, Right Sector militants attempted to intimidate the SMM team working with Schiebel unmanned aerial vehicles in Manhush. You can read about this in the Mission's report.

We urge the SMM to report all heavy weapons recorded in the security zone and pay careful attention to the verification of military equipment withdrawn to storage sites on both sides of the line of contact. SMM information regarding the absence of some Ukrainian armed forces military equipment from depots is alarming. For example, on 10 March the monitors recorded that four 152mm howitzers were missing from one of the Ukrainian weapons storage sites, while on 12 March six 122mm howitzers and the same number of armoured personnel carriers, which had been withdrawn earlier, were found missing from another Ukrainian armed forces depot. On 14 March Ukrainian military personnel refused to allow SMM staff access to a weapons storage site in the village of Pervomayskoe, referring to orders received from the command and adding that "there were no longer any weapons there". On 22 March two large-calibre grenade launchers were found to be missing from a Ukrainian armed forces depot. On 23 March the SMM planned to check two further Ukrainian armed forces storage sites, but there were no longer any weapons there. There has been an increase in the number of cases where the monitors are simply turned back at the Ukrainian armed forces checkpoints at the entrance to Ukrainian depots.

We insist that the freedom of movement of the SMM should be ensured, taking into account the security situation. The obstructions faced by the monitors and the threats to their security are inadmissible in our view. If we study the Mission's reports we can see that in most cases the SMM's freedom of movement is restricted by the Ukrainian security forces. A matter of serious concern is the practice of stopping monitors to establish their nationality and searching OSCE vehicles, which has been mentioned in nearly every report during the past week. Furthermore, it is clear that this is not "independent action" by the rank and file Ukrainian armed forces and National Guard members, who cite orders from the command as their justification. An egregious incident occurred on 22 March at a checkpoint near Muratove, where a Ukrainian officer demanded that the monitors show their passports, threatening to "kill any Russian SMM monitor entering that district". The incident of 19 March in Kramatorsk when an OSCE monitor was seized by Ukrainian Security Service personnel upon disembarking from a train is completely unacceptable. He was not only handcuffed but also had a sack placed over his head. Despite showing his SMM identification, he was not released until two hours later. Another horrendous incident occurred on 21 March in Mariupol, when two SMM employees who seemed suspicious – citizens of the United States of America and Kyrgyzstan – were made to "lie face down on the ground".

We firmly insist on the immediate cessation of such an unacceptable and outrageous campaign by the security forces. Ukraine should ensure the unconditional implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the OSCE and guarantee the observance of the privileges and immunities of all international staff working for the SMM.

Needless to say, the overriding priority today is to monitor compliance with the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons. The Mission has increased the quality of its reports considerably and they have become more regular. We expect that they will be received by participating States promptly and without any delays.

We call on the SMM to carefully monitor and report in detail on all instances of human rights violations not only in south-eastern Ukraine but throughout the country. Manifestations of xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, violent extremism and other forms of ethnic and religious intolerance, violations of the right to freedom of speech and freedom of the media should not be overlooked. Monitoring cases of harassment of Ukrainian citizens for political reasons, the fate of political prisoners and the intolerable situation surrounding many Russian Orthodox Church parishes is no less important.

In order to carry out such a wide range of tasks the SMM needs more human and technical resources. We welcome the decision by the Mission's senior officials to begin the process of recruiting up to 1,000 monitors, as provided for in the relevant Permanent Council decision. We support the need for the Mission to be equipped with additional technical resources. We are ready to provide the SMM with all the necessary assistance in this regard. We are recruiting candidates with the necessary experience and qualifications to work for the Mission.

We continue to take the position that in accordance with its mandate the SMM is a strictly civilian mission and cannot include any military personnel.

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend and support the activities of Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini. We agree that it is now essential to step up co-operation between the parties in the Contact Group, as required by the Minsk agreements. We support your proposals regarding the immediate launch of working groups on political issues, security issues and humanitarian and social issues. The establishment of these groups cannot be made conditional on any additional circumstances. The urgency of the task of setting up these groups is also due to the resolutions adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament, which give rise to very serious questions and concerns.

The priority now is to establish direct dialogue between Donbas and Kyiv. It is futile to avoid doing this. Implementation of the Package of Measures through unilateral actions will not work. This will only bring the situation to an impasse.

Thank you for your attention.