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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1118th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 November 2016

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The internal Ukrainian conflict continues to claim human lives, bringing destruction to previously peaceful and prosperous districts. The number of shelling incidents has increased dramatically over the past few days. The Ukrainian security forces are using heavy weapons, multiple-launch rocket systems and even, as the monitors from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) are suggesting, ammunition containing white phosphorus. On the evening of 26 October, the Mission's camera in Shyrokyne, which was pointing to the north-north-east (in other words towards militia-controlled territory), recorded explosions as a result of strikes by what were presumably phosphorous shells. The SMM monitors have noted between 1,000 and 2,000 violations of the ceasefire regime. This was preceded by the security zone being systematically pumped full of Ukrainian weapons. The SMM has repeatedly drawn attention to the transfer of Ukrainian armed forces' military equipment to Donbas via the railway stations in Kostiantynivka (Donetsk region) and Rubizhne (Luhansk region). Between 24 October and 6 November, the monitors counted around 100 pieces of Ukrainian artillery.

It is clear that pacification of the situation in Donbas is simply not to the Ukrainian Government's advantage. In that case, it would also have to implement the political component of the Minsk agreements, that is, resolve the issue regarding the holding of elections, enact the law on special status and seriously get to grips with constitutional reform. It appears that the current authorities in Ukraine are unwilling to do that.

The latest meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group took place yesterday. Its results were telling – the Ukrainian Government is sabotaging work in all areas. The disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska is not starting, because after that it would be necessary to agree on new areas and engage in dialogue on the political questions. This is not happening either.

The behaviour of the Ukrainian Government's representatives once again confirms their reluctance to implement the Minsk agreements in the form in which they were agreed, even though the fact that there is no alternative to them was confirmed at the Normandy quartet summit in Berlin. We hear from Kyiv that the Minsk agreements need to be "updated". They are apparently not in the interests of Ukraine. It is with this kind of logic that conditions for the holding of elections in Donbas are invented – the need to obtain control of the border, to bring in an armed international mission, and so on.

Dialogue on a political settlement is being blocked under the pretext of continuing clashes. The excuses about the defenders of Donbas shelling their own lines are unconvincing. At least take a look at the SMM reports: in the night of 4 to 5 November, the SMM camera in Shyrokyne recorded an intensive exchange of fire, which began with the shelling of militia positions in Sakhanka by Ukrainian armed forces' multiple-launch rocket systems. You don't have to read the reports but simply consider things logically. The Ukrainian Government needs to maintain the conflict in order to shift the blame to its neighbour for the fact that the promises made on the Maidan have turned out to be lies. The "Russian threat" is a good source of revenue. What is more, this does not just concern the authorities in Kyiv.

Civilians are suffering as a result of the indiscriminate fire by the Ukrainian security forces, and important infrastructure facilities are being destroyed. On 3 November, a civilian was injured in Dokuchaievsk, and houses were damaged in Sakhanka. On 4 November, a house was destroyed in Kominternove. On 7 November, a resident of the Petrovsky district of Donetsk was injured. A factory was shelled in Annivka on 6 November, and an electric power line near Patriotychne on 31 October. In Zaitseve people have been without electricity for over four months. There is much talk about the problems with the water supply in Donbas. We are grateful to those who are helping to repair the water treatment plants. However, the threat remains that such key facilities might again come under Ukrainian fire, which will result in both a humanitarian and environmental disaster. The Ukrainian Government's alleged "concern" about critical industrial facilities in Donbas is demonstrated by its sabotage of the meeting of the Working Group on Economic Issues in Minsk – the Ukrainian Government's representative did not even turn up.

Let me now turn to vital civilian facilities. Since this question has already been touched upon by my Ukrainian colleague, I should like to inform you that members of a terrorist sabotage team of the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, who were planning acts of sabotage against military infrastructure and vital facilities in Crimea, were detained in Sevastopol on 9 November 2016 by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation. Powerful explosives, weapons and ammunition, special communications equipment and other evidence of their criminal activity, including maps and plans of the objects of the proposed sabotage, were confiscated from the detainees.

According to the SMM, there are queues of more than 1,000 people at the Ukrainian armed forces' checkpoints at the line of contact and not at those controlled by the militia. The day before, the crossing point at Olenivka had been shelled while civilians were there. I would remind you that on 27 April 2016 eight persons were injured at that site as a result of the actions of the Ukrainian security forces. The October checkpoint to the south of Donetsk was temporarily closed because of shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces. The opening of additional crossing points would help the local population. However, all this does not solve

the root of the problem – the blockade of the region, which the Ukrainian Government has been deliberately alienating all this time.

Mr. Chairperson,

I had a look at statements by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United States of America for 2014 and discovered that, in his view, one of the main complaints of those gathered on the Maidan about the lawful President of Ukraine, Mr. Viktor Yanukovich, was that he had allegedly completely plundered the country and that his officials were corrupt. Does the current situation in Ukraine seem any better to you? Are the authorities stealing less and has the corruption gone down? Demonstrations are being held in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. The people have had enough of corruption, the National Bank's policy and tariffs. Radicals are exerting overt pressure on the courts. Take a closer look at the new National Corpus party – the political wing of the nationalistic armed formation Azov – and its programme. Is this what you wanted when you invested billions of dollars in the so-called development of democracy in Ukraine?

The fact is Mikheil Saakashvili couldn't stand it here either. Even he, let's be frank, a man with a tainted reputation was so struck by the level of corruption in Ukraine that he decided to say so publicly. The regional capital responded to his announcement that he was resigning as governor of the Odessa region with public festivities with wine and barbecues.

In conclusion, it needs to be said once again that there are no alternatives to the Minsk agreements for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Their implementation – however difficult this is for Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk – is the only chance of preserving Ukraine as a unified State, in which the rights of the different regions and population groups are equally respected.

Thank you for your attention.