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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1165th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 November 2017

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

Mr. Chairperson,

On 21 November, hundreds of people once again went out onto the streets of Kyiv to mark the fourth anniversary of the Maidan. But nobody was feeding the demonstrators sandwiches, as they were four years ago, or prevailing upon the current authorities not to use force, and there were no declarations about freedom of assembly and association to be heard. The police quickly tore down the tents erected by the demonstrators, and there were casualties as a result of the brief clashes.

The situation in Ukraine has changed dramatically over the past four years. Murders on a massive scale and crimes committed by Maidan supporters, such as the burning of people in Trade Union House in Odessa and the case of the Maidan snipers, have not been investigated properly. I should like to draw attention to the documentary by a correspondent for the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* entitled "Ukraine: the hidden truths", which contains important information about who was shooting at the protestors on the Maidan and on whose orders. The film can easily be found on the Internet.

The language rights of Russian-speaking citizens and national minorities are being infringed, freedom of speech restricted and journalists persecuted. Radicals are influencing political and economic processes, participating in the criminal redistribution of property, opposing law enforcement authorities, spreading nationalistic and neo-Nazi ideas and stirring up inter-ethnic hatred.

On 18 November, a 1,500-strong rally in Odessa involving the National Corps and Right Sector with the aim of hindering the construction of a shopping centre ended in a brawl with the police. The rioting was recorded by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). Another example was the attack on a police station in Kyiv on 20 October by a group of young people, with the aim of liberating their detained partners in crime. According to Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, two police officers and eight attackers were injured, and the detained criminals were released from the police station.

The most outrageous cases of lawlessness by radicals and soldiers from the regular Ukrainian army following their example occur at the line of contact. The SMM has already reported on cases of looting by the Ukrainian security forces and their detention of civilians at the line of contact. On 17 November, the monitors reported an attack by armed men bearing Ukrainian armed forces insignia on a peaceful resident of Popasna, which is being investigated by the Military Prosecutor of Ukraine.

Propaganda by radicals spreading nationalistic and neo-Nazi ideas with the aim of attracting young people to their ranks is confirmed by the authoritative German publication *Der Spiegel*, which has information on the recruitment by members of the Azov volunteer battalion, as it is called, of mercenaries among young Germans.

Most of the information on lawlessness and manifestations of radicalism in Ukraine does not enter the media landscape, which has been purged by the Ukrainian Government. Journalists who disagree with the official point of view, such as Oles Buzina, are killed, persecuted via the Mirotvorets website or expelled from the country. On 21 November, the press secretary of the Ukrainian Security Service announced the decision to expel another Russian journalist, Igor Petrashevich, for allegedly “undermining the authority of the State authorities” and “distorting historical facts”.

But it is the Ukrainian Government itself that is engaged in the distortion of historical memory. Last week, the Verkhovna Rada removed all references to the Great Patriotic War from the law on the status of veterans. On 20 November, for the second time this month, radicals poured cement into the Eternal Flame in Glory Park in Kyiv. Ukrainian nationalist leaders, such as the head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists Bohan Chervak, warn Western partners who disagree with the glorification in Ukraine of those who fought in the ranks of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army or the Galicia Division that they “will fail miserably”. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Ukraine voted against the draft United Nations General Assembly resolution “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”. The adoption of that resolution is another clear signal sent by the vast majority of members of the international community to those countries where there is an urgent need for measures to counter the glorification of Nazis, including Waffen SS veterans and various collaborators.

Mr. Chairperson,

Against the backdrop of the domestic political turbulence in Kyiv, the security situation in Donbas is deteriorating. Ukrainian security forces provoke tension at the line of contact. Between 11 and 20 November, the Ukrainian armed forces violated the ceasefire regime around 500 times.

On 22 November, the Ukrainian security forces occupied the village of Hladosove near Horlivka, in spite of protests by local residents. This is a continuation of the “creeping offensive” of the Ukrainian armed forces and nationalist battalions, which has already led to an exacerbation of the situation at the line of contact on numerous occasions.

As a result of shelling on 20 November, nine houses were damaged in Dokuchaievsk. Recently, the OSCE Mission recorded new large-calibre weapons belonging to the Ukrainian

armed forces in violation of the Minsk Package of Measures in Bohoyavlenka, Berestove and Orlivka, and fresh security forces' trenches in Sopyne. These conditions call for closer monitoring by the SMM of what they refer to as "hotspots" and also the areas to the rear of the armed forces, where military equipment is concentrated.

We draw attention to the problem of the laying of new mines by the security forces, which pose a threat to civilians and the SMM monitors. Last week mines blew up civilians in Marinka and Kodema and Ukrainian police officers in Hnutove. The threat of mines has become a convenient pretext for creating areas off limits to the SMM on the outskirts of Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote, Shchastia and other segments of the line of contact. According to information presented by SMM Principal Deputy Chief Monitor Alexander Hug at the briefing on 13 November, most of the restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement over the past three months involved it being unable to patrol territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces because of mines.

Despite the large number of internal Ukrainian problems voiced by us, we are convinced that there is a way out of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. It lies in the full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. This is the task that we should be focusing on.

Thank you for your attention.