



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Reply to the Russian Federation on Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 23, 2015

I hadn't intended to take the floor a second time but since the distinguished representative of the Russian delegation has reiterated a point that runs counter to a fact that was in our statement, I felt the need to respond.

It has become a refrain of the Russian Federation to insist that the government of Ukraine must "engage in direct dialogue" with "representatives" of Donetsk and Luhansk.

It is important that everybody around this table here recognizes that there is no such thing right now as "representatives" of Donetsk and Luhansk. There are only representatives of the Russian Federation who are perpetrating a reign of terror in Donetsk and Luhansk.

The reason why special local elections were first foreseen last September, before they were disrupted by Russia and their proxies, was to have legitimate representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. And the Ukrainian government has made clear on multiple occasions, that at such time as there are free and fair local elections in specific areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, there will be engagement with those who emerge from those local elections. But I would like to repeat: there is no such thing as "representatives" of Donetsk and Luhansk today. There are only representatives of the Russian Federation who act violently and illegally in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Second point, without reference to any specific incidents, I would just make the point that all of us have seen over the last few months how the Russian Federation treats its own citizens – including its soldiers, whom the Kremlin shames, by denying them the burials they are due, denying them the honor they are due as soldiers, after they have been killed in the battles that Russia has sent them to fight in. So it doesn't take so much of a stretch of imagination to suspect that Russia would be equally careless with the lives of those living in the neighboring countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.