

PC.DEL/203/15
19 February 2015

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1040th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 February 2015

On the situation with the implementation of the Minsk agreements

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to the Contact Group, Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, and the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Mr. Michael Georg Link, for their information and observations regarding the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

The documents negotiated in Minsk are a crucial outcome of the collective efforts of all parties interested in a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

We urge all the parties involved in the internal Ukrainian conflict – the representatives of Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk – to rigorously honour the commitments they have undertaken. Russia is prepared to actively facilitate this process.

The implementation of the peace agreements should be comprehensive and well-structured, taking into account the entire set of measures envisaged in Minsk. It is essential to prevent the Minsk Package from being separated into “narrow” issues that some parties like more than others. The parties should concentrate on the issues that are of key importance for resolving the internal Ukrainian conflict: constitutional reform, national dialogue and the socio-economic reconstruction of Donbas.

However, the primary task is the comprehensive ceasefire that entered into force on 15 February. As the SMM Chief Monitor confirmed today, the ceasefire is generally being observed along most segments of the demarcation line. There is no sound of shelling in Donetsk for the first time in many months. The people have been given the silence for which they have waited so long.

According to the information available, the insurgents near Luhansk have already begun withdrawing their heavy weapons. Representatives of the insurgents in Donetsk have

confirmed their willingness to withdraw their weapons, if the Ukrainian armed forces do so simultaneously.

We are concerned at the continuing attempts of some Ukrainian units taking part in the so-called anti-terrorist operation to engage in combat operations involving the use of heavy equipment and artillery despite the order from Kyiv. Unfortunately, armed clashes continue around Debaltseve, and there are reports of sporadic shelling by Ukrainian security forces of populated areas, in particular Horlivka and Zorinsk (yesterday they came under fire from Uran and Grad multiple-launch rocket systems).

We are of course also alarmed at what is happening in Debaltseve. No one is happy with this, but it is unlikely we will find a way out of this situation, especially by trying to shift the blame onto one another. Talks are necessary to resolve this issue.

All parties should fully observe the ceasefire and immediately begin to implement the subsequent points of the Package of Measures in the prescribed order.

We welcome the prompt response by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, which immediately began monitoring the ceasefire regime in Donbas. We appreciate the efforts of the Mission, which has to operate under very difficult conditions. Its impartial verification activities should apply equally to the entire area of the ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons on both sides of the line of separation in accordance with the Minsk agreements. We expect the Mission to continue providing prompt and full information about the situation in this entire area in its reports, which are carefully studied by all the parties to the conflict.

We note the concept paper prepared by the SMM on facilitating the implementation of the agreements reached in Minsk. Close co-ordination of the SMM's activities with all responsible officials and structures in Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk will play an important role in this respect. This is of crucial importance in ensuring the safety and security of the monitors.

We agree that under the new conditions the SMM will have greater requirements in terms of technical and human resources. We are recruiting specialists with the necessary experience for the new stage of the Mission's work. Having said that, the SMM is a strictly civilian mission according to its mandate, and this needs to be taken into account when recruiting personnel.

We draw attention to the fact that the SMM's efforts to facilitate the implementation of the Minsk agreements in south-eastern Ukraine should not result in a slackening of the attention paid to other regions of Ukraine that are covered by its mandate. We are referring to human rights violations, manifestations of xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, violent extremism and other forms of ethnic and religious intolerance, and violations of the right to freedom of speech and freedom of the media. Despite the agreements reached in Minsk, Ukrainian citizens continue to be harassed for political reasons.

Mr. Chairperson,

We look forward to constructive work with the representatives of the regions in the Contact Group, including within the working groups. We support Ms. Tagliavini's efforts to develop constructive co-operation in this format.

We note the readiness of the ODIHR to observe elections in Donbas as soon as all aspects connected with their organization and conduct have been resolved and agreed upon. The ODIHR has a particular responsibility in this respect. The success of the entire political settlement process will largely depend on the competence and impartiality of the organization of the observers' work. It is also essential to take into account the special circumstances, notably, the fact that many people have been forced to flee the conflict zone and many of them are in other parts of Ukraine or abroad. We should like to remind our colleagues that the number of people who have left Ukraine for Russia and have remained there during the past year is approaching 1 million (913,000). Of these people, 630,000 have applied for official refugee status.

It is necessary to take practical steps to improve the situation of the civilian population in the regions affected by the conflict. The relevant agreements on the restoration of socio-economic ties were reflected in our quadripartite declaration and in the Package of Measures. People in Donbas continue to experience severe shortages of food, medicines and other essential goods.

Russia is taking the necessary measures to alleviate their situation. Since August 2014, 14 humanitarian convoys have delivered more than 20,000 tonnes of cargo, including 12,000 tonnes of food, 1,800 tonnes of electrical equipment and spare parts for fixing destroyed facilities, 3,300 tonnes of building materials for restoring damaged housing and important social facilities, 350 tonnes of medicines and medical equipment, along with baby food, gifts and donations from charitable organizations, water-purification systems and field kitchens.

The Russian Ministry for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Disaster Relief is working in close contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross. OSCE observers along with Ukrainian border guards and customs officials have every opportunity to inspect these supplies. We trust that the establishment of the international mechanism mentioned in point 7 of the Package of Measures will not be delayed under some far-fetched pretext.

During this crucial period, we urge the parties to refrain from hasty and confrontational statements and attempts to devalue the importance or distort the content of the measures agreed upon in Minsk.

In this connection, we are seriously concerned at the statements made by some members of the Verkhovna Rada and representatives of the Ukrainian Government. In particular, we are not sure how to interpret the assertions by the Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, that "Ukraine has not assumed any commitments to introduce specific amendments on Donbas to its constitution" or "Any steps under the so-called amnesty will be carried out in line with the law reviewed by the Verkhovna Rada". We remind delegates that this law envisaged a highly restrictive application.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Minsk agreements have at last created the necessary basis for turning inclusive national dialogue in Ukraine into specific action. A resolution of the internal Ukrainian conflict is impossible without this. The Ukrainians need to work out a formula for the

constitutional order of the State in which all citizens would live in safety and comfort and human rights would be fully observed.

Thank you for your attention.