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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1104th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 June 2016

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation at the line of contact in Donbas is causing extreme concern. The Ukrainian Government is doing all it can to disrupt implementation of the Minsk agreements and in so doing cynically trying to shift the blame onto the opposing party.

Last night the Ukrainian security forces carried out a blatantly planned provocation, deliberately opening fire on residential areas of Donetsk and Makiivka. According to monitors from the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC), up to 70 shells with a calibre of more than 122 mm were fired.

According to preliminary information, one civilian was killed and 11 were injured, including a three-year-old child. Fifteen residential buildings were damaged. In terms of intensity, this night-time shelling was comparable to the events of August 2015.

We expect the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and the JCCC to investigate and record the consequences of this shelling immediately. Provocative actions of this kind by the Ukrainian Government need to stop immediately. In accordance with the Addendum to the Package of Measures of 29 September 2015, the representatives of Donetsk called for an emergency meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group to be convened in the form of a videoconference. However, the Ukrainian Government refused. We do not believe that this kind of behaviour is conducive to de-escalation.

All of this is no accident, but the result of systematic efforts by the Ukrainian security forces. First of all, there were isolated shots and the seizure of “grey zones” to reduce the distance between the opposing forces, then came large-scale shelling, involving heavy weapons and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to gather intelligence and adjust the line of fire, and finally attempts to break the militias’ defence near Yasynuvata.

We reaffirm the need for truly objective work by the SMM and intensive mirror patrolling in the security zone. In that connection, creating advantages for one of the parties to the conflict with the SMM's assistance is inadmissible. It is apparent even from the example of the UAV flights not only that their routes are agreed upon with the Ukrainian Government, but also that they keep careful track of them. The patrols by the SMM monitors are evidently also closely shadowed.

It is important to heighten the effectiveness of the SMM, increase its capacity at the line of contact, deploy additional monitors there and ensure the demilitarization of hotspots. The SMM can play an important restraining role to prevent Ukrainian security forces from returning to previously demilitarized areas, and lessons need to be drawn from the experience at Shyrokyne. In connection with the disappearance on a massive scale of weapons, primarily from Ukrainian storage sites, it would be useful to establish round-the-clock monitoring at all depots.

It is essential to pay greater attention to the information situation in connection with the monitors. Public speculation about the possibility of the SMM being transformed into some kind of armed mission, which would supposedly be called on to "bring order" to the territories not under government control, is completely counter-productive. It is even more dangerous to indulge in wishful thinking and distort the substance of the discussions or agreements reached at the highest level.

Let me now say a few words about the political aspects. Attempts to distort the order set out in the Package of Measures are dangerous. Reinstatement of control of the border is among the last stages of the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which will end after the comprehensive political settlement.

Questions regarding the elections in Donbas, amnesty, the special status of this region, consolidation in the Constitution of Ukraine of its decentralization, including a reference to the specificities of certain areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, are crucial and inextricably interlinked. Attempts to separate them are counter-productive.

All questions concerning the elections in Donbas, including their security, as well as the questions regarding special status and constitutional reform in the sense of the Package of Measures must be agreed upon with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Trilateral Contact Group. We urge the Ukrainian Government to refrain from unilateral steps that have not been agreed upon.

We underscore the key importance of direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and Donetsk and Luhansk, which is absolutely essential if a peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian internal conflict is to be successful. Other formats, such as bilateral contacts and the Normandy quartet, should facilitate the search for constructive solutions, but they cannot and should not replace direct dialogue

Distinguished colleagues,

The publication of the 14th report by the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine nevertheless compelled a number of delegations, in particular Switzerland, to turn its attention to the situation in that country on a broader scale. We feel obliged to mention that the accusations regarding the violation of human rights on a massive

scale in the territory controlled by the Ukrainian Government apply not only to members of nationalist battalions, but also to official bodies, including the Ukrainian Security Service. In particular, these accusations involve enforced disappearances, arbitrary and secret detention, torture and cruel treatment. Many of these cases concern people being held incommunicado in secret prisons, where torture and cruel treatment are regularly used to obtain confessions or information or to intimidate or punish the victims.

We also urge that attention be paid to the particular features of the current Ukrainian system of justice, which, for example, in Odessa, has been forced to cede to pressure exerted by the radicals. One example is the postponement again of a meeting at the Malinovsky court in Odessa until 16 June. I should like to know how the law enforcement authorities in other OSCE participating States would behave in similar situations involving the cruellest brutality against civilians, as happened in May 2014.

Thank you for your attention.