

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1152nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 July 2017

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past two weeks, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has recorded new manifestations of radicalism in Ukraine. Extremist elements are trying to influence the adoption of government decisions and stirring things up in the Ukrainian State. From 19 to 24 June, the SMM observed rallies involving former members of the Aidar punitive battalion, organized in response to their former commander and Verkhovna Rada deputy, Serhiy Melnychuk, being called in for questioning on charges of terrorism. On 21 June, the SMM recorded an attempt to prevent journalists from entering a meeting of the city council in Kharkiv. On 24 June, monitors witnessed Right Sector protests in Dnipro against the appointment of the local police chief, who had served as a commander of the Berkut special police force in the past.

The authorities are allowing history to be rewritten and tolerating manifestations of neo-Nazism and its spread among young people. From 30 June to 2 July, the ShukhevychFest festival was held in Lviv in honour of the Nazi collaborator and war criminal, Roman Shukhevych, to mark the 76th anniversary of the Jewish pogroms organized by the Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists. The SMM reports contain only a short line saying that the monitors “continue monitoring” the situation in Kyiv and Lviv. They should not only monitor the situation but also report on it in detail. The SMM budget allows for this.

The situation continues to deteriorate. Quotas have been introduced for the use of Russian and other national minority languages, as a result of which no less than half of the population of Ukraine has restricted access to information. There are constant attacks on journalists and public figures. Where are the results of the investigations into the murders of Oles Buzina and Pavel Sheremet? The journalist Ruslan Kotsaba has been attacked again. The editor-in-chief of the Strana.ua news website Igor Guzhva has been detained. We also remember the murdered journalists – Igor Kornelyuk, Anton Voloshin, Anatoly Klyan, Andrea Rocchelli and others.

Draft laws that permit raids on churches and infringe on the rights of Orthodox believers are being promoted. The detention of dissidents on charges of so-called “domestic separatism”, extrajudicial detention and the use of torture by the Ukrainian Security Service are widespread.

The creativity of the Ukrainian authorities’ Russophobia knows no bounds. A draft law prohibiting the performance of Russian artists in Ukraine and of Ukrainian artists in Russia is under consideration. Meanwhile, as Ukrainian officials admit, doctors save the lives of ordinary citizens suffering from diseases such as botulism using Russian drugs, which are, however, officially banned.

Despite these attempts, society rejects the Ukrainian Government’s version of the story about the “aggressor country”, which is imposed by all means of propaganda.

The Ukrainian Government is not only unable to adopt decisive measures to end the violence at the line of contact, but is itself actually provoking an escalation. The “bread” truce did not result in a complete ceasefire. On 26 June, the SMM monitors reported damage to houses in Vesela Hora and Kominternove as a result of shelling from the direction where the Ukrainian armed forces are stationed. On 29 June, there was a large-scale exchange of fire near Yasynuvata, and on 30 June in the Popasna-Pervomaisk area. According to SMM data alone, over the past two weeks, from 19 June to 3 July, three civilians have been killed in Staromykhailivka, Kominternove and Yasynuvata, four people injured in the Kuibyshevskiy district of Donetsk, Dokuchaievsk and Stakhanov, and houses damaged in Vesela Hora, Zaichenko, Kominternove, Kirovske, Leninske and Sakhanka as a result of 18 instances of shelling from directions where the Ukrainian armed forces are stationed.

Despite this, the overall number of ceasefire violations has gone down. Efforts to strengthen the “bread” truce must continue.

The Ukrainian armed forces are refusing to withdraw their troops from Stanytsia Luhanska. On 26 and 30 June, the monitors observed that the security forces failed to respond to signals from the militia to start the withdrawal, although the SMM had unequivocally confirmed the absence of shelling over a period of seven days.

Evidently, the Ukrainian Government is terrified not only of starting the practical discussion of the political aspects of a settlement but even of entering into a direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk. At a meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk, the opportunity to move forward in agreeing on a procedure for the enactment of the law on special status and modalities for holding local elections was once again wasted.

It is clear that the implementation of the Minsk agreements is painful for the current authorities in Kyiv, but it is the only way to calm the situation in the country and preserve its territorial integrity within its current borders.

We condemn any intimidation and threats against the SMM monitors. Those responsible from both sides should be punished. The monitors’ freedom of movement is restricted on both sides of the line of contact to virtually the same extent. Territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces is completely closed off to the monitors near Stanytsia Luhanska, Shchastia, Popasna, Bohdanivka and Katerynivka under the pretext that there is a threat of mines. This was confirmed by the Principal Deputy Chief Monitor of the SMM,

Alexander Hug, on 12 June. Over the past two weeks, the Ukrainian security forces have fired at SMM unmanned aerial vehicles on two occasions – in Pidhorodne on 16 June and in Zatyshne on 26 June. On 28 June, the monitors were unable to launch an unmanned aerial vehicle in territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces as a result of its signal being jammed. These incidents were not covered in separate spot reports by the SMM, and recently the Mission has been failing to keep statistics on patrols on both sides of the line of contact. The SMM must adhere to the main principles governing its work – impartiality, objectivity and transparency.

Thank you for your attention.