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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1034th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 January 2015

On the need for urgent steps to implement the Minsk agreements

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to thank Ambassadors Ertuğrul Apakan and Heidi Tagliavini for reporting on the current efforts to resolve the Ukrainian crisis.

The dramatic escalation of the situation in south-eastern Ukraine is extremely alarming and jeopardizes the peace process. The Ukrainian security forces have resumed the large-scale bombardment of Donetsk, Horlivka and other Donbas cities. Yesterday, 30 people, including children, were killed in Horlivka as a result of Ukrainian air strikes. Today, an artillery shell hit a bus stop in central Donetsk, killing 2 people and seriously injuring 11. We draw attention to the fact that regular units of the Ukrainian army are firing on residential areas in the centre of Donetsk and shelling infrastructure facilities.

Russia is striving for rigorous implementation by Ukraine of the provisions of the Minsk agreements. This is the main purpose of our contacts with the Ukrainian leadership, the leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and representatives of the countries concerned, including those in the Normandy format. We came close to holding a fruitful meeting of the Contact Group in Minsk on 16 January, but the Ukrainian representatives failed to show up in the Belarusian capital, and the meeting was cancelled. Nevertheless, we are doing everything we can to ensure that the Contact Group meets as soon as possible.

Let us now try to find out what is really happening near Donetsk. In accordance with the Minsk agreements and the line of separation, control of the city airport should be transferred to the insurgents. It has been impossible to resolve this issue for a long time due to disputes about other segments of this line. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian security forces continued shelling Donetsk and other communities from the airport. Civilians have been killed, and civilian infrastructure destroyed. Insurgents took control of the airport by force in order to put a stop to these criminal actions. However, Ukrainian troops are now trying to recapture this strategic facility so that they can continue to shell districts of Donetsk.

Several days ago, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, sent a message to the Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, proposing that the Ukrainian security forces and the Donbas insurgents begin withdrawing their heavy weapons immediately from the line of contact in accordance with the Minsk agreements and the co-ordinates being insisted upon by Ukraine. I emphasize once again – in accordance precisely with the co-ordinates being insisted upon by Ukraine. A table listing both sides' actions as regards specific deadlines for the withdrawal of each type of cannon and rocket artillery was also submitted.

The parameters proposed in the table are similar to the time-frame for the withdrawal of heavy weapons contained in the working document of 13 November 2014, the implementation of which was called for by the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its statement of 18 January 2015.

If Kyiv is indeed truly willing to withdraw its heavy weapons together with the insurgents in line with the parameters for such a withdrawal stipulated in the Minsk Memorandum of 19 September and confirmed in the working document of 13 November 2014, practical work on the ground needs to be commenced immediately, all the more so since the leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics have already signed the schedule that has been agreed upon. The Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination and the OSCE Mission are called upon to monitor the withdrawal of heavy weapons by the Ukrainian security forces and the insurgent forces and, if necessary, to help reach agreement on the technical details. The Ukrainian representative to the Joint Centre should receive the necessary authority from Kyiv to do this.

This approach, which provides for concrete steps, will make it possible to eliminate the risks of resumed armed confrontation. We urge the parties to take advantage of the real opportunity that presents itself to withdraw deadly weapons from the conflict zone and in this way prevent the risk of further civilian casualties. Implementation of this absolute priority will make it possible to strengthen trust and create favourable conditions for the fulfilment of other provisions of the Minsk agreements. The joint declaration being adopted by us today aims to achieve precisely this goal.

Mr. Chairperson,

We fully support the work of Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini. We believe that the Minsk format is unique and irreplaceable, because it is the only one in which all the parties to the conflict are represented and Russia and the OSCE participate. The format allows the central authorities and representatives of south-eastern Ukraine to conduct direct dialogue and reach agreement on the most important issues. We trust that the Contact Group will adopt the necessary decisions in the near future, particularly to reactivate the truce.

We highly appreciate the work of the Special Monitoring Mission and agree that the safety and security of the monitors is an important priority.

We once again draw attention to the need to send a clear signal that there is no alternative to a peaceful settlement of the crisis. Unfortunately, Ukraine continues to expand its military presence in the south-east of the country. This can be seen, in particular, in the new wave of mobilization by Ukraine that began today, in the growing militarization and in the calls from Kyiv for a retaliation against the situation on the ground. Any attempts to

encourage the forces seeking to return to a scenario involving the use of force are unacceptable and could be disastrous.

A sustainable settlement of the crisis, which would be in the interests of Ukraine's entire population, is possible only through direct national dialogue on constitutional reform, with the participation of all the regions and political forces of Ukraine, so as to achieve national reconciliation and national accord regarding the kind of State where all Ukrainians will feel comfortable and safe.

Thank you for your attention.