

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1195th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 September 2018

**In response to the reports by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special  
Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, and the  
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and  
in the Trilateral Contact Group, Ambassador Martin Sajdik**

We welcome the distinguished Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan to this meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council. We regret that Ambassador Martin Sajdik was unable to attend today's meeting, and we wish him a speedy recovery. We are grateful for the informative reports on the situation in Ukraine and the negotiations in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG).

The internal Ukrainian conflict continues to claim lives. There is no end to the shelling of civilian infrastructure and facilities. The trade and economic blockade that the Ukrainian Government has imposed on certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions continues. Civilians are suffering. The root causes of the conflict, the main one being the Ukrainian Government's unwillingness to engage in dialogue with its own citizens in Donbas, have not been eliminated. Instead of making efforts to implement the Minsk agreements, the policymakers in Kyiv are busy turning the settlement process into a hostage of political games in the run-up to the elections.

We share the concern over the growing tension at the line of contact. The effect of the "back-to-school" ceasefire is gradually waning. Reports by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) show that the Ukrainian security forces have opted for escalation. As a result of shelling from Ukrainian armed forces' positions, 21 houses and infrastructure facilities were damaged in September in Zaitseve (3 September), Dovhe (15 September), Mykhailivka (16 September), Dokuchaievsk (16 September), Kominternove (21 September), Yasynuvata (22 September) and Leninske (22 September). The security forces are strengthening their positions and moving equipment into the disengagement areas in Zolote and Petrivske. They resumed flights by military aircraft and live-fire exercises in the "security zone" in violation of the Minsk agreements (exercises were held on 4 September near Midna Ruda, and there were helicopter flights on 7 September near Viktorivka and 15 September near Pylypchatyne). They have been massing multiple-launch rocket systems

and large-calibre artillery dangerously close to the line of contact (in Kremenivka, Poltavka and Malynivka), and are laying new minefields (over 550 mines near the village of Vodiane).

We urge the SMM to focus on providing early warning of dangerous trends. The Mission needs to step up its monitoring activities at the line of contact and report promptly and comprehensively on the unending provocative shelling of towns and villages by the Ukrainian security forces, advances by Ukrainian armed forces' forward positions, their occupation of new areas, and the massing of equipment in violation of the Minsk Package of Measures. Patrols, including those using long-range unmanned aerial vehicles, should be conducted in a balanced manner on both sides of the line of contact.

The Ukrainian Government continues to sabotage the disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska, openly violating the TCG Framework Decision of 21 September 2016. This was confirmed at the most recent meeting in Minsk on 19 September. We urge Ambassador Apakan to provide the Permanent Council with statistics on the seven-day periods of complete calm in that area that were confirmed by the SMM and also to explain the reasons for the lack of results in implementing the Framework Decision.

The Ukrainians are again refusing to support the Chief Monitor's proposals regarding additional measures to strengthen military security. The status quo needs to be restored in Zolote and Petrivske, where forces had been disengaged, weapons need to be withdrawn from the line of contact, and orders published prohibiting the use of weapons and providing for disciplinary procedures for those who violate them. Donetsk and Luhansk are ready to do this, but the Ukrainian Government is not.

We regard the murder of Alexander Zakharchenko, a signatory to the Minsk Package of Measures, as a terrorist act intended to undermine the entire settlement process. We call for an international investigation with the participation of the OSCE and monitoring provided by the Trilateral Contact Group.

Additional impetus needs to be given to the work of all the TCG working groups, including the group on humanitarian issues, which is being boycotted by the Ukrainians. Military security measures alone are not sufficient to achieve a sustainable ceasefire. Parallel steps are needed in the political sphere, as was stipulated at the Normandy format summit in Berlin on 19 October 2016. We are referring to the incorporation of the "Steinmeier formula" into the law on special status. The Ukrainian Government refuses to discuss this important aspect.

In violation of the Minsk agreements the law on special status is temporary and its expiry date is approaching. The failure to extend this law will send a dangerous signal and can potentially destroy the entire Minsk project and lead to unpredictable consequences. Ukraine's attempts to link the extension of this law with other aspects are blatantly counter-productive.

Another Ukrainian law – the law on education – deprives a large proportion of the population of the opportunity to be taught in their native language. It directly violates Point 11 of the Minsk Package of Measures, discriminating against the Russian-speaking population and national minorities and intensifying the internal differences within Ukraine.

The so-called law on the “reintegration” of Donbas has created the prerequisites for resolving the internal Ukrainian conflict by force. We reiterate our appeal to the OSCE to conduct a comparative analysis of the Package of Measures and the law on the “reintegration” of Donbas.

The Ukrainian Government rejects the proposals by the International Committee of the Red Cross to restore the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska. We expect the OSCE to take a clearer position regarding the repair of this important civilian object.

We welcome the recent visit to Donbas by the co-ordinator of the Working Group on Humanitarian Issues, Toni Frisch (one of the few international representatives to have crossed the line of contact), during which he had an opportunity to meet and talk with people detained there. Ukraine remains unwilling to speak out publicly against the use of torture.

We note the importance of the SMM’s monitoring of the situation in the rest of Ukraine. The domestic political battle is intensifying in the country, and radical nationalism is being used as a tool to that end. The Ukrainian armed forces are adopting the Nazi slogan and greeting of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army “Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the heroes!”. The SMM reports of riots orchestrated by nationalists outside the building of the Office of the Prosecutor General in Kyiv on 17 September, during which there was an attack on a female NewsOne journalist. More dangerous manifestations of extremism are also occurring. The Mirotvorets website remains in operation, and the names of the journalist Oles Buzina and former Verkhovna Rada deputy Oleg Kalashnikov, who were later killed, were published on that website, along with the names of others who disagree with the regime in Kyiv. The names of leaders of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have even appeared there recently. This resource, which violates human rights, must be closed down. We expect the swift publication of a dedicated report by the SMM on manifestations of radical nationalism, neo-Nazism and xenophobia in Ukraine.

The Mission should closely follow and regularly report on the situation surrounding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, freedom of speech, journalists’ rights and people’s free access to information.

In conclusion, we should like to express our words of gratitude to Ambassadors Sajdik and Apakan and pass on our thanks to all the monitors for their work.

Thank you for your attention.