

PC.DEL/897/16
17 June 2016

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1105th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 June 2016

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The Ukrainian armed forces have resumed their tactic of shelling residential areas, which is resulting in victims among the civilian population and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The shelling of Donetsk and Makiivka during the night hours of 8 to 9 June using large-calibre weapons has been confirmed by monitors from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). The shelling then continued on a daily basis, including yesterday. Donetsk, Makiivka, Yasynuvata, Horlivka, Dokuchaievsk and a number of smaller settlements along the entire line of separation have suffered. The absurdity and cynicism of attempts to pass all this off as the Donbas militias shelling their own lines or to present this as “human shield” coverage is already obvious to everyone.

It is important that the SMM monitors respond promptly to all such incidents and carefully record the consequences of the shelling. We note the correct steps that have already been taken in that regard. Objective, impartial and prompt work by the SMM must be visible to the local residents and understood by them.

There are provocative actions by the Ukrainian army, which are dragging out the Minsk process and should be stopped immediately.

In order to avoid any further deterioration in the situation, measures need to be taken to disengage the parties – first and foremost, it is necessary to ensure that the Ukrainian army cannot resume its shelling of residential districts using tanks, heavy artillery and mortars. A decision on this should be adopted in the Trilateral Contact Group as soon as possible and, more importantly, it must be implemented in practice. Unfortunately, there has so far been insufficient progress in the demilitarization of hotspots along the demarcation line in terms of pulling troops out from the “grey zone” and withdrawing heavy weapons.

To that end, we believe that it would be useful to increase the effectiveness of the work of the Ukrainian-Russian Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC). The

JCCC should investigate the recent cases of shelling and help determine parameters for steps towards de-escalation on the ground. As things stand now, its work is not of a truly joint nature and the Ukrainian Government shows little interest in this. A further mechanism that should be employed is emergency meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group in the form of videoconferences. In fact, one such conference has already taken place on 10 June.

The SMM monitors' efforts should be focused on the security zone, where weapons are being used. It is there that a complete ceasefire needs to be ensured. The SMM plays an important restraining role in this. Additional monitors should be deployed there and technical equipment used on both sides of the demarcation line on an equal basis. According to information from the Mission, the SMM's signal repeater has resumed its work in Donetsk. We note in this regard the importance of direct contacts with the local authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk.

We are concerned at the continuing concentration of Ukrainian weapons in the security zone. Military equipment is disappearing from Ukrainian depots on an unprecedented scale. We believe it would be useful to establish round-the-clock patrols by monitors at all depots.

Mr. Chairperson,

We wish to emphasize once more that progress is needed now on the political track of the Minsk process, including safeguards for the rights of the Donbas population and the law on special status. This includes local authorities to maintain law and order, the exemption from punishment, prosecution and discrimination of persons connected with the events that took place in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and modalities for elections in Donbas formulated in Ukrainian legislation and agreed upon with Donetsk and Luhansk. The corresponding provisions should be permanently enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine.

We would remind you that the agreement of key aspects of a political settlement with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk within the Trilateral Contact Group is a cornerstone of the Minsk agreements. We call upon Ukraine to refrain from unilateral steps.

The fact that the Ukrainian Government is delaying the implementation of the Minsk agreements is in no way conducive to restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In conclusion, we should like to point out that some mistakenly associate the release of Yury Soloshenko and Gennady Afanasyev with the implementation of the Minsk agreements. There is no mention of this in the documents. As you are aware, the Ukrainian journalists Elena Glischinskaya and Vitaly Didenko, whom the Russian Federation accepted on humanitarian grounds, were released at the same time. Ukraine could not guarantee their safety. We are surprised in this context at the silence of our Western colleagues and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who as a rule carefully monitor the fate of journalists.

Thank you for your attention.