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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
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AT THE 1019th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 October 2014

**On dangerous trends in Ukraine and continuing violations of the norms of
international humanitarian law**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Minsk agreements of 5 and 19 September between the parties to the internal Ukrainian conflict, which were concluded with the support of the Russian Federation and the assistance of the OSCE, are the most important steps towards getting the situation in Ukraine back on to a peaceful track. Our common task is to secure the full, comprehensive and honest implementation of these agreements by all parties to the conflict. This applies to the ceasefire, the disengagement of forces, the withdrawal of heavy armaments and, most importantly, the initiation of a comprehensive political dialogue with the participation of all the regions and political constituencies of Ukraine, which was promised by the Ukrainian authorities as long as ago as April of this year in Geneva.

The Russian leadership is making all the necessary efforts to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of the Minsk agreements. Within the framework of the Joint Co-ordination Centre for Ceasefire Monitoring established under the agreements with the Ukrainian authorities, Russian military experts are providing assistance in their practical implementation.

Dialogue is continuing at the highest level. We expect results from tomorrow's meeting between Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko in Milan.

We believe the continuation of hostilities in violation of the ceasefire and the proposed "silence regime", which should be followed by the withdrawal of weapons, is extremely dangerous. Information regarding ceasefire violations is coming in from both sides. Unfortunately, the shelling of civilians in towns and villages controlled by the militias has not stopped.

Regrettably, violations of humanitarian law by the Ukrainian security forces are also continuing. Huge numbers of civilians, including children, are suffering. Vital infrastructure, electricity and water supplies, government buildings and houses have been destroyed.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, around 2.2 million people remain in the conflict zone. Some of them have been forced to live in cellars, without electricity and with limited access to water and provisions. A vast number of people are attempting to seek refuge abroad or in other parts of the country, although it needs to be said that internally displaced persons receive minimal assistance from the Ukrainian Government.

We call on Kyiv to ensure that the ceasefire regime is strictly observed by the Ukrainian armed forces and other paramilitary units formally or actually under their control.

Support on the part of those forces that advocate a peaceful settlement of the situation in eastern Ukraine is of fundamental importance now. We cannot allow radical militant groups who are prepared to do anything to achieve their goals to prevail. Unfortunately, slogans in support of resolving the conflict by force are actively employed in the election campaign in Ukraine. What is more, radical groups are moving from words to deeds, extending the already impressive list of manifestations of aggressive nationalism and criminal lawlessness in Ukraine.

Unpunished excesses by radical groups are characteristic not only of the conflict zone. They also occurred prior to, during and after the events on the Maidan. The situation as regards the observance of human rights and the rule of law in Ukraine is deteriorating rapidly. Fundamental human rights, namely the right to life and personal inviolability, are being violated. People are being subjected to torture, public humiliation, discrimination and arbitrary sentences. Manifestations of extremist, ultranationalist and neo-Nazi sentiments and aggressive xenophobia are increasing. Intimidation of political opponents, including the use of physical force, and the “cleansing” and arrests of opponents have become widespread.

All the crimes committed during the Ukrainian crisis need to be carefully investigated, beginning with the incident involving the snipers on the Maidan and including the tragedies in Odessa and Mariupol, the mass graves, the murder of journalists and finally the Malaysia Airlines disaster. I might add that there are no obstacles preventing experts and observers from accessing the crash site – this village is now behind the front line. Specialists from the Netherlands were there recently. We do not understand why our colleagues are demanding that access be ensured, when it already is.

International organizations, first and foremost the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the United Nations human rights agencies, must take the initiative and assume greater responsibility in pursuing these investigations to the end. According to the information available, the Ukrainian authorities have begun to investigate some crimes committed by volunteer battalions, but this is clearly insufficient.

Unfortunately, we have witnessed double standards as regards the assessment of what is happening in Ukraine, and many international human rights organizations hypocritically look away.

The rise in neo-Nazi sentiments in Ukraine is extremely dangerous. The “vaccinations” against Nazism introduced after the Second World War are losing their effect. The torchlit processions by neo-Nazis and extremists this week in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa and other Ukrainian towns are a repulsive manifestation of this problem. The open glorification of

Nazi collaborators, slogans inciting inter-ethnic enmity and calls for violent action against people belonging to other ethnic groups – all this conjures up sad images of the past.

According to information from the Ukrainian sources, 17 police officers were injured, two of them seriously, as a result of the actions by radicals near the Verkhovna Rada on 14 October. Thirty-seven persons were detained. The actions by the extremists were very reminiscent of the events on the Maidan – the only thing missing was the police being pelted with Molotov cocktails.

We wish to draw our colleagues' attention to the fact that the conflict within Ukraine is increasingly encroaching on matters of religion. There are overt calls for attacks on canonical Orthodoxy. Violence is commonly used to suppress the exercise of freedom of conscience and religion by Ukrainian citizens. Eighteen Orthodox churches have already been seized. Documents are forged, locks broken and people beaten up and thrown out of churches. All this time, the police calmly observe what is happening, turning a blind eye to obvious crimes.

The possibility that the new Ukrainian parliament may be dominated by the radical nationalistic political parties and movements whose representatives are now marching all over Ukraine, except in the territories controlled by the Donbas militias, gives rise to legitimate concern. If these are the people who will determine the direction the country is to take, the chances of a real and inclusive political dialogue will be nil, and the prospect of bloody chaos across the country will become a reality.

The events in Ukraine have clearly shown which are the forces that pose the main threat to civil peace and harmony in the country. If aggressive radical groups professing neo-Nazi ideals continue to be tolerated, there may be even more tragic consequences.

The actions of the radicals must be strictly assessed and categorically rejected by the international community, including in this forum.

Thank you for your attention.