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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1039th MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 February 2015

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Today the leaders of the four Normandy format countries adopted an important declaration in support of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements approved by the Contact Group. We trust that all the parties to the conflict will begin in good faith to implement its provisions in accordance with the deadlines set out in the document.

As we continue to emphasize, the establishment of direct dialogue among the parties is a key condition for a successful settlement. We need to be guided by the realities of life, and direct contacts are essential if everyone wants to reach an agreement that establishes relations for the long term.

We believe that the parties have managed to agree on many issues: a ceasefire from 00.00 hours on 15 February and the withdrawal of heavy weapons. Matters are defined more clearly with respect to a long-term political settlement, the resolution of border issues in agreement with the Donbas insurgents, humanitarian and economic issues and the release of detainees. It is also important to develop a set of measures for verifying and monitoring compliance by both parties with the decisions adopted.

It is necessary to work intensively within the Contact Group so that it can achieve practical results. For our part, we shall work actively to facilitate this process. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine will have to contribute to the implementation of these agreements, primarily by helping to monitor the ceasefire and the withdrawal of weapons.

We trust that all parties will show restraint in the near future pending a complete ceasefire. The number of casualties and displaced persons must not be allowed to grow any further, and conditions must be created that would rule out further shelling.

Mr. Chairperson,

From the very outset, we have opposed the punitive operation launched against the people of south-eastern Ukraine by Oleksandr Turchynov with the support of a group of persons representing the so-called government of the Maidan victors and also from abroad. The decision to seek a solution involving the use of force instead of engaging in dialogue was a catastrophic mistake that has resulted in numerous violations of humanitarian law and grave crimes against the population of the regions who opposed the *coup d'état* in Kyiv.

We roundly condemn the shelling, regardless of where it comes from, of residential districts of towns in south-eastern Ukraine and the civilian deaths it causes. Over the past few days, incidents involving the use of heavy weapons, artillery and even missiles have grown more frequent and become a regular occurrence. But even against this backdrop, the firing of Tochka-U missiles on Donetsk and the shelling of Kramatorsk stand out. Yesterday, a bus station in Donetsk was shelled during rush hour. Six people are known to have died, and one of the shells hit the gatehouse of the Donetsk iron and steelworks. On 9 February, Ukrainian security forces directly targeted a team of Donetsk railway workers with mortar fire, killing three and seriously injuring two. Last night, while negotiations were still under way in Minsk, cluster munitions were used on Luhansk, and a hospital in Donetsk came under fire once again.

Our Ukrainian colleagues claim that the Ukrainian armed forces do not shell Ukrainian towns because it is prohibited by standing orders. In that case, to whom was United States Senator John McCain referring in his well-known quote: "I think that if we had provided them with the weapons they need, they wouldn't have felt they had to use cluster bombs." Obviously, he does not mean the insurgents.

Irregular volunteer formations and battalions established by oligarchs have extremely lethal weapons at their disposal. This is a serious problem that requires decisive action. How can we guarantee that these armed groups that do not take orders from central command in Kyiv will honour anything? Basically, they are the illegal armed formations that are mentioned in the Minsk agreements. It is by no means certain that they too, like all of us, will support a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the situation. They must be disarmed and removed from the conflict zone. Providing additional weapons to these formations, especially from abroad, will have even more disastrous consequences.

Unfortunately, many of our colleagues prefer to ignore the activities of the Right Sector, the Azov battalion that uses Nazi symbols, the Aidar battalion known for looting and violence against local residents, and other similar formations. It is extremely dangerous to view them as "patriots" defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. These groups, along with ultra-nationalists, have done more to damage the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and to exacerbate the division in Ukrainian society than anyone else. It is no secret that they eagerly recruit extremists from across Europe.

Distinguished colleagues,

It is in our common interests to make it clear that the "war party" does not enjoy international support. This is one of the most powerful signals from the Minsk meeting. Fuelling militaristic hysteria is part of the "military path".

Ukraine is undergoing rapid militarization. A new round of large-scale compulsory mobilization has been announced and there have been calls to “seek revenge” for the “military failures” of the summer and to “Ukrainianize Donbas” by force.

Political censorship mechanisms are being introduced. Apparently, establishing a Ministry of Truth wasn't enough. A law has been adopted that sets “general criteria for classifying audiovisual material as damaging to Ukraine's national security”. The law prohibits the screening of Russian films. Likewise, there is a total ban on accrediting Russian journalists in Ukraine. The Ukrainian journalist Ruslan Kotsaba has been arrested for treason because of his comments on the military draft. Now it seems that any journalist or public figure can be accused of treason for statements that contradict the official position of the State authorities. Where is the response from the representatives on freedom of the media?

The latest trick is a draft law that would make it possible to put behind bars anyone who questions “Russia's aggression” in Donbas. Those who deny Russian aggression could be sent to prison for up to three years. This gesture by the “war party” speaks for itself.

It is clear that the crisis will continue as long as the Ukrainians themselves cannot come to an agreement. It will only stop when the country puts an end to the rampant radicalism and nationalism; when society unites around positive values and Ukraine's genuine interests. For that to happen, the authorities in Kyiv need to hear their own people, find a common language and reach an agreement with all the political forces and regions of the country. They should work out a formula for the constitutional order of the State in which all citizens would live in safety and comfort and where human rights would be fully observed.

A very important step in that direction was taken in Minsk.

Thank you for your attention.