

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1162<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 November 2017

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation regarding the implementation of the Minsk agreements unfortunately remains unsatisfactory. The Ukrainian Government is taking no serious steps towards a peaceful settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict. As a result, the Minsk Package of Measures exists on paper only.

On the contrary, the authorities are pandering to the radicals, who are against a politico-diplomatic solution to the conflict. A crude policy of forced Ukrainianization is under way. On 14 October, a monument was inaugurated in Vinnytsia to Symon Petliura, who organized pogroms in the early twentieth century resulting in the death of up to 200,000 Jews.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has repeatedly reported on attempts by radicals to exert pressure on the authorities. On 24 October, a group of Ukrainian nationalists barricaded themselves in a court building, disrupting the hearing of a case against one of the Ukrainian nationalist leaders. This is the rule of law Ukrainian style.

The nationalists are ensuring in Ukraine not only support for the punitive operation in the east of the country, but also a steady rise in criminal lawlessness. Even the radicals themselves – former members of the volunteer battalions and their supporters in the Verkhovna Rada – become victims of the infighting. Any problems in Ukraine are simply put down to the “external enemy” now.

In that connection, the protests by the country’s non-Ukrainian-speaking residents against the new Law on Education remain unheeded. We urge the SMM and the relevant OSCE executive structures not just to grudgingly report on the demonstrations against this discriminatory law, but also to respond within the framework of their mandates to the appeals by members of civil society, who are outraged by this attack on the Russian language and the languages of national minorities. The SMM mandate provides for monitoring of the human

rights situation, especially the rights of national minorities. The Mission is by no means carrying out this task in full measure.

At the line of contact, the Ukrainian security forces continue to maintain the tension and disregard any attempts at de-escalation. On the night of 24 to 25 October, the SMM recorded over 90 artillery rounds from Ukrainian armed forces-controlled Svitlodarsk, after which the situation in this area deteriorated dramatically. According to the monitors, as a result of shelling from directions where the Ukrainian armed forces are deployed, one civilian was killed and two injured in Trudivski, one civilian was injured in the Kuibyshevskiy district of Donetsk, houses were damaged in Dokuchaievsk, Kominternove and Sakhanka, the windows were blown out of a school in Oleksandrivka, and shells were reported to have fallen on Kruta Hora.

The Ukrainian armed forces are moving heavy weapons up to the line of contact. According to the SMM, over the past two weeks, 12 multiple-launch rocket systems, 20 artillery systems, 96 tanks and 40 armoured vehicles have been observed on railway platforms in Artemivsk; the monitors recorded 37 artillery guns in Sievierodonetsk, Zhelanne, Illinka, Tsukuryne, Kostiantynivka, Luhansk and Khibodarivka; and eight tanks in Nyzhnoteply and Shchastia. The security forces are using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) at the line of contact. On 20 October, in the area between Zolote and Pervomaisk, SMM monitors observed a UAV enter militia-controlled territory, fly over Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) positions and then fly back.

An indication of the Ukrainian Government's unwillingness to engage in de-escalation is the systematic refusal by the Ukrainian armed forces to disengage forces in Stanytsia Luhanska. On 21 October, the SMM recorded shooting within this area and its consequences – LPR positions came under fire from territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. We hope that the Ukrainian Government will not once again frustrate the disengagement of forces, which is scheduled for 4 November.

The Ukrainian armed forces continue to obstruct the work of the Russian-Ukrainian Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC), which is an important mechanism for reducing tension and promoting dialogue. Recently, a JCCC observer team came under fire once again in the village of Bezimenne. The Ukrainian Government is refusing to allow representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions access to the JCCC headquarters in Soledar.

The Ukrainian Government has no interest in restoring socio-economic ties with Donbas, and the transport blockade has still not been lifted.

We condemn the Ukrainian Government's provocation regarding the checkpoint that was to have been opened for the civilian population in Zolote on 20 October. The Russian members of the JCCC have repeatedly warned against provocations by the Ukrainian State Border Service – allowing civilians through the Zolote checkpoint in one direction until an exact date for its opening in the opposite direction is agreed upon. The Ukrainian members of the JCCC supported the Russian members on this point at one of the briefings. However, on 20 October three such provocative incidents were recorded by the SMM. The Ukrainian security forces were notified that the preparatory work had still not been completed. The Ukrainian armed forces continue to hinder its completion – last week alone, the SMM camera twice recorded shooting from the direction where Ukrainian security forces are deployed, on

the night of 23 to 24 October, and on 28 October. The actions of the government forces appear to be for show, given that the Ukrainian Government does not allow the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska to be repaired and prevents the opening of a checkpoint in the village of Shchastia.

The security forces continue to restrict the SMM monitors under the pretext of a real or purported threat of mines. For a long time now, areas around Stanytsia Luhanska, Bohdanivka, Katerynivka and Shchastia have been completely off limits to the monitors. Last week, the security forces blocked off the approach road to Myronivka for the SMM with mine hazard signs and barbed wire. The Ukrainian armed forces have repeatedly mined areas that had been cleared of the devices. On 16 October, the monitors observed anti-tank mines near Popasna, where demining work had previously been carried out. On 28 October, the SMM noticed that as soon as the monitors had travelled along the demined Svitlodarsk-Debaltseve road, Ukrainian armed force sappers laid anti-tank mines there again. A detailed analysis of the Mission reports shows that the number of restrictions on the monitors' work owing to the mine hazard in territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces is greater than all the obstacles in the militia-controlled territory put together.

We urge the Ukrainian Government to finally begin to implement its commitments under the Minsk Package of Measures, first and foremost the political part, which should be synchronized with the security elements. This will make it possible to get the work of the Trilateral Contact Group moving. The Steinmeier formula, which provides for the holding of elections and the enactment of the law on the special status of Donbas, needs to be finally put down on paper. The half measures adopted in the form of extending the inoperative law on the special status of Donbas for one year are insufficient.

Thank you for your attention.