

PC.DEL/1153/14
10 October 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1018th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 October 2014

**On the situation in Ukraine and the continuing violations of the
norms of international humanitarian law during the punitive operation
in eastern Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

The main task now is to use all the means available to help put a stop to the violence in Ukraine. All the parties need to implement the Minsk agreements, which are set out in the Protocol of 5 September and the Memorandum of 19 September. This is the framework for transition to a nationwide and open dialogue with the participation of all regions and political constituencies. Long-term stabilization of the situation in Ukraine will be possible only if national reconciliation is achieved.

Any calls for the resumption of military operations, especially in the run-up to the forthcoming parliamentary elections, and any form of support for the “war party” will be a recipe for disaster. We could not help but notice the meeting in Kyiv with the United States Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland. Previous visits to Ukraine by United States envoys were usually followed by an escalation of violence and an intensification of the punitive operations. We hope that on this occasion Washington’s guidelines are focused on support for the peace process.

The OSCE is making a significant contribution to the efforts to normalize the situation in Ukraine. We commend the activities of the Swiss Chairmanship and the work of the Contact Group, which made it possible to achieve the Minsk agreements. We trust that the negotiation process will continue and lead to new solutions. The Joint Co-ordination Centre for Ceasefire Monitoring, in which Russian and Ukrainian military personnel and OSCE representatives work together, is continuing its operations.

We draw attention to the problems that have arisen in connection with the exchange of detainees. Attempts to sweep under the carpet traces of inhuman treatment of prisoners and make up for the shortfall of persons for the exchange through fresh arbitrary arrests of persons suspected of “sympathizing with the separatists” are inadmissible.

There have been some setbacks in the implementation of the Minsk agreements, but the trend is a positive one. The ceasefire is being observed along most sections of the line of contact. The intensity of the exchanges of fire has diminished, but the Ukrainian security forces continue to shell towns and communities. Civilians are being killed in Donetsk, Luhansk, Horlivka and other towns and villages in eastern Ukraine. This flagrant violation of international humanitarian law has to cease.

Crime is on the rise. This was also mentioned in the latest report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A number of sections in the report give some sense of the alarming situation in the country. First and foremost, there is evidence of widespread violations of international humanitarian law and human rights on the part of the Ukrainian armed forces and numerous mercenary battalions, such as Aidar, Azov, Dnepr, Kyiv-1 and Kyiv-2. These include murder, torture, abductions, arbitrary detentions, sexual violence and other serious crimes. The United Nations observers report a steady rise in the number of casualties among the civilian population, including children, as a result of the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas by the Ukrainian armed forces.

The report points to the lack of results in the investigations into the deaths of people on the Maidan, in Odessa and Mariupol and as a result of the Malaysia Airlines crash. Indeed, contrary to Kyiv's claims, the results of the independent investigation have still not been published. Moreover, the report also contains information about Ukrainian investigators fabricating or destroying evidence, primarily bullets fired during the unrest on the Maidan.

We trust that subsequent reports will reflect the new evidence of crimes committed by the Ukrainian military, including information on the mass graves of civilians found in the Donetsk region.

We have not heard any satisfactory explanations from Kyiv regarding the shelling of residential areas in Donetsk, which resulted in the death of a staff member of the International Committee of the Red Cross. We express our condolences on his death and call for an international investigation of this crime.

It is important that international organizations, including the OSCE, do not simply observe what the Ukrainian authorities are doing or not doing, but that they also take responsibility for ensuring a fair and impartial investigation.

It is time to finally stop blaming the militias for everything while exculpating the Ukrainian security forces. The claims made by the Ukrainian authorities regarding the shelling near Mariupol and Debaltseve were not confirmed by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) monitors (in the report of 6 October). The SMM reports have at last drawn attention to the rise in extremism in the country, acts of violent intimidation of dissidents and propaganda in favour of resolving the conflict by force.

Members of the Azov punitive battalion, who openly express their Nazi views and use Nazi symbols, have been spearheading the "war on monuments". The memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Odessa has been desecrated once again. According to Odessa's Jewish community, extremists have beaten up more than 20 Jews in the past month. The Verkhovna Rada deputy Nestor Shufrych was attacked and badly beaten. Nationalists have been throwing other officials and parliamentary candidates into rubbish bins.

Evidently, this democratic invention of the Ukrainian extremists is, in their view, fully in keeping with high “European standards”. Experts from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights should take note of this: voting by putting the actual candidate in a container rather than the ballot paper.

It is a disturbing fact that some officials (notably Ihor Kolomoyskyi’s deputy Boris Filatov) have already been heard to say that “trash lustration” (the dumping of people in rubbish bins) may be followed by political assassinations. The methods used by the Security Service of Ukraine in co-operation with radical groups in waging war against dissidents (the United Nations report speaks of 1,000 persons being detained on suspicion of “subversive activity”) are extremely worrying. There is a trend towards radical elements, including activists from punitive battalions, gaining power through participation in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Mr. Chairperson,

All these alarming events are taking place against a background of rampant anti-Russian hysteria. Today, we have once again seen for ourselves that this policy is being actively supported and even instigated from the outside. Any facts that are inconvenient for Kyiv are declared “Russian propaganda”.

We reiterate our call for efforts to support the peace process in Ukraine. The cessation of hostilities in the east of the country must become irreversible. This is in fact the main prerequisite for a lasting settlement, the development of a pan-Ukrainian dialogue and the achievement of national reconciliation.

Thank you for your attention.