

PC.DEL/1560/18  
18 December 2018

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1209th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 December 2018

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

Mr. Chairperson,

As the presidential election in Ukraine approaches, its leadership is embarking on new political adventures in order to retain power. The martial law imposed following the armed provocation in the Black Sea is a clear sign that the Ukrainian Government is prepared to take further aggressive action to inflate military hysteria on the eve of the election campaign. There is a danger that Ukraine will not stop at this current phase and intends to obtain maximum dividends by escalating the situation at the line of contact.

An analysis of the reports by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) indicates an increase in tension. Last week over 2,000 ceasefire violations were recorded. For the most part, the direction of shelling indicates that the Ukrainian armed forces were responsible. As a result of these actions by the security forces, a civilian was injured in the village of Krasnyi Partizan and a house damaged in Mykhailivka. Ukrainian armed forces shock troops, including Uragan and Grad multiple-launch rocket systems, BUK and S-300 surface-to-air missile systems and large-calibre artillery have been moved forward to the line of contact. Less than a month ago, the Combined Forces Operation headquarters reported on air force exercises practising strikes on ground targets. In the period from 1 to 7 December alone, OSCE monitors detected 190 units of heavy weaponry and equipment prohibited under the Minsk agreements outside the designated storage areas.

At the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) meeting on 4 December, representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions expressed concern about the situation at the line of contact. Ambassador Apakan, Chief Monitor of the SMM and co-ordinator of the Working Group on Security Issues, and Ambassador Sajdik, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, presented a letter with information about the concentration of weapons of the Ukrainian armed forces and offensive actions, possibly already on 14 and 15 December, by Ukrainian security forces in the south of the Donetsk region. Specifically, they were moving in the direction of Mariupol with a view to capturing the territory near the Sea of Azov under the control of Donetsk and the route to the Russian border. There is a

photo from 2 December on the website of the European Pressphoto Agency showing several dozen tanks in the port of Mariupol. We urge the SMM to step up its monitoring of the situation along the line of contact in the territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces with a view to early warning.

We firmly believe that we need to send a powerful signal to the Ukrainian authorities regarding the unacceptability of military escalation. We have taken note of the announcement on the portal LinkedIn regarding the recruitment by Mission Essential of citizens of the United States of America who speak Ukrainian to support undercover US operations in Ukraine. The candidates should be able to make contact with the local population in secret, have training for service in a combat zone and operate as fully fledged members of a professionally led unit responsible for the safety of high-ranking US and foreign officials.

Canada is not far behind: 200 Canadian instructors stationed near Lviv have already trained over 10,000 members of the Ukrainian armed forces. What is that if not a contribution to the militarization of Ukraine?

With a view to de-escalation, we urge the OSCE representatives to seek implementation of the New Year ceasefire on 22 December, which was agreed at the TCG meeting on 4 December, and of the agreement on additional security-building measures. It is of particular importance to complete the disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska and to restore the status quo in the areas occupied by the Ukrainian armed forces in Petrivske and Zolote. Orders should be published as soon as possible on the prohibition of using weapons, the disciplining of violators and the unacceptability of commando and reconnaissance activities.

The internal Ukrainian crisis can be resolved only through strict compliance with the Minsk Package of Measures and parallel political and security measures. At the TCG meeting in Minsk on 4 December, Ukraine once again blocked the resolution of political aspects of the settlement, including the setting out on paper of the Steinmeier formula. Agreement on the exchange of prisoners and detained persons is an issue in urgent need of discussion by the representatives of the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk. This process is being stalled at the moment because of the unconstructive attitude of the Ukrainian negotiators, who have shown themselves in the TCG to be incapable of complying with agreements reached previously.

The perfidious manner in which the Ukrainian authorities are ignoring the legal foundations of bilateral Russian-Ukrainian relations based on the long-standing historical traditions of the peoples of our neighbouring countries is a cause for indignation. The Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Partnership signed on 31 May 1997 will cease to be effective on 1 April 2019. According to a survey conducted by the Ukrainian television station NewsOne, 93 per cent of the 10,000 respondents considered the termination of this fundamental document to be disadvantageous for Ukraine.

Since 2014, Ukraine has already “killed” 48 agreements with Russia, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin put it. The same fate awaits a further 40 documents.

The legislative decisions of 6 December by the Verkhovna Rada regarding the Ukrainian coastal regions raise serious questions in terms of the potential for provocation.

The Ukrainian border guards can now open fire without warning, and the area adjacent to Ukrainian territorial waters in which they can operate has been doubled.

The rights of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine and of the national minorities living there continue to be violated in the country. Following on from the Lviv, Ternopil and Zhytomyr regions, the authorities of Ivano-Frankivsk have introduced a moratorium on the use in public of Russian cultural products.

In Poltava on 7 December, members of the Ukrainian Security Service searched the apartment of Sergey Provatorov, chairman of the Russian Commonwealth association. The fact that he was called in for questioning on 10 December – on Human Rights Day, celebrated throughout the world – is particularly cynical. Is this some kind of revenge for the recent award to him of the Alexander Pushkin Medal by the Russian President Vladimir Putin? We call on the OSCE's human dimension bodies to give close attention to this case.

The ideology of radical nationalism and neo-Nazism continues to be condoned. The President of Ukraine published a photo on his Facebook page with Ukrainian paratroopers, one of whom has SS insignia on his combat jacket. Deputies of the Lviv region declared 2019 the Year of Stepan Bandera and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. Against this background, the persecution of dissidents continues and the number of crimes motivated by nationalist and religious hatred is growing. The blacklists on the extremist Mirotvorets website include members of the clergy of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, who are described as separatists. The Ukrainian Security Service has called in 14 Orthodox priests from the Rivne and Sarny diocese for questioning. On 10 December, St. Elias Church in the town of Slavutych in the Kyiv region was ransacked. On the same day, the Church of the Holy Trinity in Rzhyshev in the Kyiv region was set on fire.

The situation with freedom of speech is worsening. A few days ago, Ricardo Gutiérrez, General Secretary of the European Federation of Journalists, expressed serious concern at the lengthy pre-trial detention of Kirill Vyshinsky, editor-in-chief of RIA Novosti Ukraine, which he described as a blatant violation of freedom of the media. The journalist's lawyer Andrei Domanski said that he had been pressurized.

The attempts by the Ukrainian Government to resolve domestic problems by force and coercion under the pretext of supposed Russian aggression will not bring about national unity in the country. This can be achieved only by direct dialogue and due consideration of the interests of all inhabitants of the country. The Minsk Package of Measures agreed by the leaders of the Normandy Quartet and endorsed by the United Nations Security Council remains the only instrument for a settlement. Given the escalation of tension caused by the dangerous attitude of the Ukrainian authorities on the eve of the election, a powerful collective signal by the OSCE in support of the peace process is essential.

Thank you for your attention.