



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Ongoing Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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This morning we got news of new costs borne by civilians in connection with the escalation of fighting that we've seen in the last weeks. This underscores what we know: that we must have implementation Minsk, in full, now. The meeting yesterday in Berlin is a welcome step; this effort to jump-start the implementation of Minsk. The meeting underscored again that we need Minsk implementation in full, including monitoring of the international border, so that Russia's heavy weapons and fighters can be verified leaving Ukraine. So that the flow can be reversed. So that the resources that are fueling the violence can be stopped.

Diplomatic efforts like those in Berlin are necessary but not sufficient. No joint statement can replace action on the ground. The Trilateral Contact Group of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE needs full support for its work to speed up full implementation of Minsk. And we must be cautious in welcoming the joint statement of last night because today's news is not good. In addition to the trolley, Russia-backed separatist attacks continue in multiple locations.

Yesterday, on the heels of a special Permanent Council meeting called to address the sharp increase in violence in eastern Ukraine, we received a report from the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine about the January 19 artillery attack on Debaltseve, an attack that this morning's news suggests continues. To quote from the report, "at least 30 Grad rockets impacted in and around the center of Debaltseve killing three civilians and wounding twelve. The SMM observed that rockets had caused significant damage to buildings and covered an area of approximately one square kilometer. A crater analysis performed by the SMM showed that the Grad rockets came from a western direction, the direction of 'DPR'-controlled Horlivka." This SMM report followed a similar report from January 17, in which the SMM informed us that the rockets that destroyed a civilian bus near Volnovakha on January 13 were fired from a north-north-eastern direction. That is, they were fired from separatist-controlled territory.

I have heard calls from some of my colleagues to avoid casting blame on any particular actor for incidents such as these. Their argument appears to be that casting blame raises tensions and undermines efforts to resolve the situation in eastern Ukraine peacefully. I agree that we should not throw about unfounded accusations. Responsibility should not be knowingly falsely assigned. But those who call for avoiding talking about responsibility, risk engaging in irresponsible behavior themselves.

The Russian Federation is attempting to cast doubt where there is none. It is attempting to place the blame on Ukraine for the recent lack of progress in negotiations and the surge in

violence. It is attempting to mute the obvious dissonance between the words the Russian Federation uses here in Vienna and the deeds it carries out on the ground in Ukraine. If Russia and the separatists it supports are serious about reaching a peaceful resolution to the conflict, they should implement the Minsk agreements. If Russia and the Russia-backed separatists are ready to honor the ceasefire, they must stop attacks in blatant violation of the September 5 and 19 agreements. If Russia is committed to a peaceful solution, it must stop sending weapons and personnel into eastern Ukraine – at the end of December over 100 pieces of heavy weapons from Russia were sent into Eastern Ukraine – and it must release all hostages and illegally detained persons, including Nadiya Savchenko and Oleg Sentsov.

Colleagues, the path to peace in Ukraine is clear. It lies in full implementation of the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum. While the latest increase in violence in eastern Ukraine has compelled us all to make urgent calls for Russia to implement the Minsk agreements, let us not forget that the path to peace also requires Russia to end its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. This is a path that all must travel together. Ukraine has shown, time and again, its willingness to travel that path. Russia, and the separatists it backs, must show their willingness to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.