

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1052nd MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 May 2015

**On the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are seriously alarmed at the outbreak of anti-government demonstrations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The fact that an escalation of violence has been avoided thus far is largely due to appropriate actions on the part of the law enforcement agencies and the country's competent authorities. We are compelled to point out that the choice made by a number of opposition movements and non-governmental organizations, including some inspired by outside forces, to adopt the logic of the street and the notorious scenarios of the "colour revolutions" is fraught with dangerous consequences. It stirs up the situation in the country, which until recently stood out in the Balkans because of its stability. Issuing ultimatums to legally elected authorities is in no way conducive to the constructive resumption of a political dialogue and the restoration of trust, the importance of which colleagues were just now discussing.

We trust that the steps taken by the Cabinet of Ministers will be able to stabilize the situation and be conducive to finding a way out of the domestic political crisis.

We should also bear in mind, moreover, the danger of exacerbating the situation with regard to the inter-ethnic frictions in multinational Macedonia and the adjacent regions of the Balkans, which went through terrible experiences of conflict in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In this context, the armed incident of 9 May 2015 in the Kumanovo district, and a similar event, although on a smaller scale, that occurred in Gošince in April, are matters of the utmost concern. We support the efforts of the country's authorities to enforce the law and protect the constitutional system. We join in the condolences expressed to the country's leadership and the relatives of those who lost their lives.

The reports indicating that radical Kosovo Albanians – militants of the so-called "Kosovo Liberation Army", which gained notoriety in the past – played an active role in the armed action in Kumanovo are especially worrying. The consequences to which the

exacerbation of inter-ethnic conflicts in the region can lead are still fresh in our memory. Events once again confirm that the illegal unilateral proclamation of Kosovo's independence continues to create instability in the Balkan region and to destabilize interreligious and inter-ethnic peace there.

We trust that the situation in northern Macedonia will be normalized as soon as possible and that all the circumstances of what took place will be thoroughly investigated, *inter alia*, by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the other international presences in the region, together with the Kosovo authorities, particularly as regards the reports of the involvement of individuals from Kosovo in those incidents.

We welcome the rapid response and the specific practical contribution of the OSCE Mission to Skopje in facilitating a settlement in the northern part of the country. We trust that the field presence will continue to keep a close watch on the development of the situation in Macedonia and will provide the necessary assistance to the country's leadership. We also welcome the Chairmanship's decision today to send the Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force, Ambassador Dejan Šahović, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Western Balkans, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, to Skopje.

Having said that, we must point out that the visit to Skopje under the OSCE flag, a visit organized on the initiative of a small group of colleagues and not agreed upon within the OSCE, was in no way conducive to an improvement in the domestic political dialogue in Macedonia. It never became clear for what purpose this was done.

We call upon all the political forces in Macedonia to engage in a constructive dialogue. We are convinced that such a dialogue must take place strictly within the legal and institutional framework. This would serve the interests of the multinational people of a friendly Macedonia in the highest degree and would be suited to the tasks of supporting and strengthening regional stability and security.

Thank you for your attention.