

PC.DEL/70/16  
22 January 2016

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1086th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 January 2016

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation in Ukraine requires persistent and systematic efforts on the part of the international community, in which the OSCE has a key role to play.

The key to reaching a settlement is the implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures in the right order. There is no alternative to this. The key aspects are ensuring de-escalation and launching the political process.

Unfortunately, the distinguished representative of Ukraine, in resorting to anti-Russian rhetoric, merely tries to justify the inability of the Ukrainian authorities to implement the Package of Measures. No one can be deceived by this any longer. It is perfectly clear that the ball is in Ukraine's court. The Ukrainian Government has been unable to carry out the orders regarding the ceasefire, despite the agreements reached in the Trilateral Contact Group on 13 January 2016. Volunteer battalions and individual Ukrainian army units are sabotaging the Ukrainian Government's orders. Even specialists involved in clearing mines from agreed areas and reconstruction work are subjected to shelling.

At the briefing for the participating States on 18 January 2016, the Principal Deputy Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), Alexander Hug, reported increased tension on the line of contact because of how dangerously close the belligerents' positions are to one another. At the end of last year, the SMM called attention to the appearance of Ukrainian forces in the settlements of Pavlopil, Pyshchevyk and Zaitseve, which had previously not been under the control of either side. The Ukrainian armed forces have gradually increased their presence there. Essentially, there has been a unilateral change in the geography of the line of contact in Donbas. The shelling of militia positions has started.

The SMM has attested that serious preparations by Ukraine preceded the build-up of tension in Donbas. The Ukrainian armed forces carried out a massive rotation of their units and subdivisions. Outdated and malfunctioning equipment was replaced with new weapon

models. Between 25 December 2015 and 15 January 2016, 145 pieces of military equipment, multiple-launch rocket systems and other large-calibre gun mounts went missing from Ukrainian depots. At the same time, all the weapons belonging to the militias that had been recorded by the monitors earlier remained in their depots during that period.

With regard to access by the monitors to the Ukrainian-Russian border, according to information from Principal Deputy Chief Monitor Hug, between 23 November 2015 and 17 January 2016, the SMM visited the border 64 times. This means that, despite being prevented from doing so on some occasions, the monitors visited the border more than once a day. Furthermore, the map of patrol routes presented by the SMM shows that the OSCE Mission literally covers all the roads leading from the border.

As for the political process, which remains stalled, we note that the entry into force of a law on the special status of Donbas, the consolidation of that status in the Constitution and the agreement and ratification by the Verkhovna Rada of a law on local elections depend not on Moscow, Donetsk or Luhansk but on the Ukrainian Government. It is alarming that certain politicians in Ukraine from time to time try to modify the essence of the Minsk and Paris agreements, and some propose doing away with them altogether. These are extremely dangerous developments.

In that connection, we are in favour of stepping up work in the Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups, more intensive dialogue in the Normandy format, and other international contacts.

We expect a more constructive approach from Ukraine in the working group on political issues regarding the agreement of the provisions of the draft Ukrainian law on local elections in Donbas. Clarity is needed in granting Donbas permanent special status through the entry into force of the relevant law and the introduction of changes to the Constitution. Constitutional reform that has not been agreed upon with the representatives of Donbas cannot be regarded as implementation of the relevant provisions of the Minsk agreements.

We once again recall that the question of restoring the Ukrainian Government's control of the border is directly contingent on achieving a comprehensive political settlement.

We urge the Ukrainian Government to lift the inhumane economic blockade of Donbas and the restrictions on the movement of people, to take measures to rebuild the banking sector, and to make it easier for the population to access medical and other services.

We welcome the clearance of mines from certain areas along the line of contact and the restoration of critical infrastructure facilities.

We support the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and its strengthening in terms of personnel and equipment, even closer monitoring along the line of contact and the opening of new forward patrol bases. De-escalation requires more direct contacts between the parties on the line of contact. An analysis of the SMM reports shows violations by both sides as regards shelling, the withdrawal of equipment and obstacles to the monitors' work, including interfering with and firing at unmanned aerial vehicles.

There needs to be a review of the activities of extremist paramilitary formations in Ukraine, especially in the conflict zone. It is not sufficient to just have reports about torchlit

neo-Nazi processions. Radical elements are not only provoking escalation in Donbas, but are also inciting hatred and intolerance in Ukraine and preventing a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Firing shots at the monitors is absolutely inadmissible. Claims that the Ukrainian security forces were not involved in the incident at Marinka are unconvincing in our view. Attempts to use the vulnerability of the OSCE monitors as an argument in favour of changing the format of the international presence in Ukraine are unacceptable. The SMM mandate meets the requirements of the situation best.

Thank you for your attention.