



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 Chargé d'Affaires Gary Robbins
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
August 14, 2014

The United States joins other delegations in thanking the Swiss Chairmanship for convening this meeting of the Permanent Council in order to discuss important and time-sensitive issues.

The United States continues to condemn strongly Russia's destabilizing actions and ongoing support for armed separatists in eastern Ukraine as well as its continued occupation of Crimea.

The United States understands that talks are ongoing among the Governments of Russia, Ukraine, and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Luhansk – a city in eastern Ukraine currently held by force by Russia-backed separatists. Considering the suffering the citizens of Luhansk have had to endure while separatists have controlled that city, we welcome this news. A convoy of trucks from Russia is currently making its way towards Ukraine, reportedly carrying humanitarian assistance. It is not entirely clear yet what is in the trucks, and this raises concerns. Our position is that no humanitarian assistance – either from Russia or anywhere else – can enter Ukraine without the permission of the Ukrainian Government. It has the final say on the modalities concerning this delivery and any other such delivery. It appears that we have some time before the Russian trucks get to Ukraine's border. This should allow for any remaining details to be worked out before the trucks appear at the border.

If Russia wants to be part of an enduring solution to the crisis in Ukraine's east, it must end its support to the separatist fighters. Russia has no right to intervene in Ukraine unilaterally and without Kyiv's permission under any pretext.

For those countries represented here that want to send humanitarian assistance to needy people in eastern Ukraine, the best way to do that is to work through international organizations that have the expertise, experience, and independence to provide it. These organizations are already on the ground in Ukraine. The ICRC is a multilateral organization voluntarily funded by more than twenty governments. The United States is the largest financial contributor to the ICRC's annual emergency appeal and budget extensions, including its recent budget extension appeal for Ukraine where the U.S. provided \$2.3 million to support assistance needs in eastern Ukraine and throughout the country.

We appreciate President Poroshenko's engagement with international relief organizations to deliver multilateral humanitarian aid to distressed populations in eastern Ukraine. We have called, and will continue to call on the Russia-backed separatists to allow full and unimpeded access for the continued delivery of humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations. And we call on Russia to urge them to cooperate in this way.

We also call on the Russian government to halt its material support for the separatists, and to use its influence with the separatists to push them to lay down their arms and to release all hostages. We also call on Russia to end its occupation of Crimea, which remains an integral part of Ukraine. In taking these steps, Russia can contribute to a restoration of lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, before concluding, allow me to thank again the Special Monitoring Mission monitors for their ongoing, tireless, and dedicated work. The SMM leadership and monitors—despite intimidation, restricted access, and chaotic conditions—have answered the call of duty and performed superb work in the most challenging of circumstances. The SMM spot reports and daily reports have brought important information to light and provided the international community with verified facts and reliable assessments. We strongly support ramping up the Mission to its full strength of 500 monitors as soon as possible in order to provide the necessary reporting throughout the territory of Ukraine. We also welcome the acquisition of additional tools such as unmanned aerial vehicles to support SMM operations.

Mr. Chair, the United States strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and advocates diplomatic efforts toward finding a political resolution to the crisis. This quest for peace and stability, however, cannot succeed when one participating State continues to stymie all reconciliation efforts. We reiterate that Russia's commitment to peace in Ukraine will be judged by its actions, not its words.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.