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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1026th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 November 2014

**On the situation in Ukraine and violations of the  
Minsk agreements by the central authorities**

Mr. Chairperson,

In our response to the statement by Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, we touched in detail upon the most important question in helping to overcome the internal crisis in Ukraine – the need on the part of Kyiv to establish sustainable direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk following the elections that took place in Ukraine and on the territory that is now controlled by the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk.

Let me repeat: Russia advocates the unconditional preservation and continuation of the Minsk process – a unique format in which the parties to the conflict are represented and Russia and the OSCE participate. The Minsk agreements provide for an entire set of essential short- and medium-term steps, including security guarantees and political dialogue. We will work to ensure that they remain a basis for the efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution. We will work to ensure their implementation and urge all those who signed them to do the same.

I should like once again to mention the important role played by the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship and the Chairperson-in-Office personally in establishing the Trilateral Contact Group and in its operation. It is in this format that it has been possible to reach agreement on a range of steps aimed at stabilizing the situation, the first of which is an immediate bilateral ceasefire and separation of the conflicting parties.

Unfortunately, this key provision is not being implemented satisfactorily. Monitors from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and representatives of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination are constantly reporting the widespread use of heavy weapons. On 17 November, SMM monitors reported considerable destruction in militia-controlled Pervomaysk as a result of the shelling of houses and apartment blocks, a maternity hospital and an Orthodox church. None of these buildings was more than a kilometre away from the combatants' positions. There were reports of shelling in Horlivka on 15 November, as a result of which local residents, including children, were killed. Residents

of the Ukrainian-authority-controlled village of Mykolaiivka in the Luhansk region have complained to the OSCE representatives about the problems they face because of military convoys of security forces regularly passing through their village. Residents of Telmanovo have spent the last three days in their cellars hiding from Ukrainian security force shelling. Many of their houses have been damaged. OSCE monitors saw an unexploded Tochka-U missile with their own eyes near Samsonovskaya-Zapadnaya in the Luhansk region. Houses and infrastructure continue to be destroyed in Donbas, and civilians killed. More and more information is being received regarding the build-up of Ukrainian troops in close proximity to Donetsk, Luhansk and other towns in Donbas, which the militias are obliged to defend. The previous day, reinforcements from the Kryvbas battalion arrived in Krasnoarmiysk, 7 Grad missiles and 18 tanks in Rozivka, and 400 troops and 40 armoured personnel carriers in Kurakhovo.

Our colleagues periodically recall that there are foreign mercenaries in Ukraine. We pointed out that the Western press has also begun to show an interest in this topic, noting the large-scale presence of neo-Nazi mercenaries from Western Europe in so-called Ukrainian volunteer battalions, and in particular that the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* recently reported about Swedish mercenaries fighting among the ranks of these battalions.

As we have already said repeatedly, a meaningful and inclusive national dialogue taking into account the interests of the population of all the regions of the country is the key to a settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. The crisis settlement agreement signed on 21 February by the then Ukrainian authorities and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of three European countries provided for the creation of a government of national unity, which was to prepare a constitution acceptable to all Ukrainians and hold elections on this basis. This agreement was unceremoniously trampled upon the very next day.

The Ukrainian authorities were also unable to launch a dialogue and constitutional reform after the Geneva agreements of 17 April. The draft amendments to the Ukrainian Constitution were not discussed with the public, as the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe was also forced to acknowledge. Even the laws on special status and amnesty, which could have helped to foster national dialogue, did not enter into force in the end.

Instead of dialogue, the “government of winners” in Kyiv has conducted a punitive operation against the inhabitants of the eastern part of the country who openly spoke out against the new arrangements. Attempts to make out a large group of people to be “terrorists” can only lead to further alienation.

One need only to look at the results of this brutal action. It is impossible to calculate the exact number of casualties among the civilian population, but it is clearly in excess of the 4,500 cited in United Nations sources. The number of displaced persons is huge. Almost half a million Ukrainian citizens (478,400) have applied for official status in Russia alone.

According to information submitted to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, a significant number of major enterprises of importance to the economy are unable to operate owing to the punitive operation in eastern Ukraine: around 45 per cent in metallurgy, 51 per cent in mining, 55 per cent in mechanical engineering and the entire chemical industry. Between 1 and 1.8 million people are unemployed.

Around 5,000 residential buildings have been destroyed, as have around 5,000 energy, water and heat supply facilities, 217 educational institutions, 45 medical establishments, 51 cultural and sports centres, 1,500 transport and communications infrastructure facilities, and 14 shopping centres.

The Ukrainian presidential decree that provides for the suspension of operations servicing bank accounts on the territory of Donetsk, Luhansk and other militia-controlled territories complements the picture. These actions vividly illustrate how Petro Poroshenko intends to “win this war” against the people of Donbas: “they will have no jobs, no pensions; their children will not go to schools and kindergartens, but will sit in cellars”.

The news that Ukraine intends to notify the Council of Europe that the Ukrainian authorities are suspending their commitments under the European Convention on Human Rights in certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions is also worrying.

The terrible humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine is now obvious to everyone. However, the central authorities have a strange attitude to these people, who remain in possession of Ukrainian passports and live on Ukrainian territory. They are blocking the delivery of humanitarian supplies and food to the region. Members of the so-called 12th territorial defence battalion near Luhansk are preventing trucks loaded with food from entering the city. Kyiv is doing everything it can to hinder humanitarian supplies from Russia. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) could easily participate in the distribution of Russian humanitarian aid to the affected regions, but without Kyiv’s permission it is unable to do this. Russia recently allocated 1 million United States dollars to ICRC activities in south-east Ukraine. Therefore it is wrong to accuse Russia, as some people have done in this room, of only sending “illegal” humanitarian convoys and not giving a cent to the ICRC in Ukraine.

We believe that the approach taken by the Ukrainian leaders of combining the methodical shelling of major towns and infrastructure facilities with a policy of economic and humanitarian stranglehold on their own population is extremely dangerous. In no way is this approach in keeping with the programme of economic recovery and reconstruction of the Donbas region, which was, incidentally, mentioned in the Minsk Protocol of 5 September. On the contrary, it is leading to the destruction of the single economic and humanitarian space of Ukraine, further antagonizing the population and pushing the situation into a deadlock.

Attempts to shift the blame for the shelling of militia-controlled towns on to the militias themselves are futile. Ukrainian artillerists – live on Ukrainian television – brazenly justify attacks on residential buildings that they have “zeroed in on”. We might also recall the shelling of a Donetsk school, the results of which SMM monitors were able to witness for themselves, and the air strikes against the administration building in Luhansk. There is increasing evidence, some of it irrefutable, of the use by the security forces of cluster munitions and incendiary weapons. Moreover, this information is not from Russian sources, but from Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are unlikely to sympathize with the militias in Donbas. However, the Ukrainian representatives accuse even an NGO like Human Rights Watch of “pandering to Russian separatists and terrorists” and serving as an instrument of Russian propaganda.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE, especially the SMM, continues to come in for criticism from Ukraine. It is indiscriminately accused of pro-Russian bias in that it is all but a “cover for hundreds of Russian agents”. We have nothing against reasonable criticism; it helps the Mission to work more effectively. We have ourselves also criticized the SMM for its shortcomings on more than one occasion. In this context, however, it is a question of the security of the monitors and the direct violation not only of the SMM’s mandate but also of the Memorandum of Understanding between the OSCE and Ukraine.

Yesterday, as you are aware, Ukrainian forces opened fire on a vehicle carrying OSCE monitors. Fortunately, it was an armoured vehicle.

The recent instances of OSCE vehicles being stopped and checked by the Ukrainian military, and especially the pressure on and boorish behaviour towards Russian SMM staff, are inadmissible in our view. We would recall that in accordance with its mandate the Mission should report all obstacles placed in the way of the monitors’ work. The authorities in Kyiv bear full responsibility for ensuring the security, privileges and immunities of all international OSCE staff in Ukraine, including Russian citizens.

In conclusion, we should like once again to call for the establishment of sustainable contacts between Kyiv and the representatives of Donbas as a priority measure with a view to reaching mutually acceptable agreements. We expect support for this process from all States interested in a peaceful settlement. It is important to refrain from pandering recklessly to everything the “war party” in Kyiv is doing.

Thank you for your attention.