

PC.DEL/789/14
4 July 2014

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1006th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 July 2014

**On the situation in Ukraine and the continuing violations of the norms of
international humanitarian law during the punitive operation in
south-eastern Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to begin with a positive point. We welcome the release of the observers from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. This has come about largely thanks to the personal appeal by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the contribution of the Russian Orthodox Church, in particular Metropolitan Mercury. The direct appeal of the OSCE Mission leaders to the representatives of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, who held direct talks with the individuals who were detaining the observers, played a significant role. We note that their release took place without any preconditions or stipulations.

We constantly appealed for the immediate release of the observers. This is because we believe that it is unacceptable for the OSCE observers to be prevented from carrying out their activities and their personal safety to be threatened. We trust that their release will make it possible for the OSCE Mission to continue monitoring the situation in Ukraine, presenting objective and exhaustive reports and also helping to de-escalate tensions in the country, including on the basis of the OSCE Swiss Chairmanship's road map, the Geneva statement of 17 April 2014 and the Berlin declaration of 2 July 2014.

Unfortunately, events in Ukraine today have taken an extremely dangerous turn. The President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, whose election held such high hopes, has decided to resume military operations in the east of the country. In taking this step, he has assumed full responsibility for what follows – at both the military and political levels.

The Ukrainian leadership continues to claim that the security forces are not using force against civilians and that they never shell residential areas. However, the facts attest to the opposite.

There have been countless victims among the civilian population as a result of the regular shelling of towns and settlements by units of the Ukrainian armed forces, the National

Guard and various territorial formations. The destruction of the infrastructure in the besieged towns continues. Artillery shells fall on schools, houses and churches. An orphanage in Luhansk had to be evacuated. Local residents seek refuge from the shelling in cellars and bomb shelters. Sloviansk is completely surrounded and without electricity. The power supply to several facilities in Kramatorsk has been disrupted.

In the early hours of 2 July, Ukrainian security forces used mortars to shell the Topolek children's home in the Artem district (Sloviansk, Donetsk region). A direct hit destroyed the roof, completely demolishing an entire storey.

On the morning of 2 July, the village of Staraya Kondrashovka situated 20 kilometres from Luhansk was subjected to a missile attack. Seven civilians were killed, including a five-year-old child. Eight people are in hospital with shrapnel wounds. Fifteen houses were completely destroyed. There were no militia military facilities in the vicinity, and only civilians suffered.

On 2 July, the Ukrainian air force bombed the settlement of Stanitsa Luhanskaya ten kilometres from Luhansk. According to militiamen, Ukrainian fighter jets dropped at least three heavy bombs on the settlement. Houses in the centre were badly damaged.

On 2 July, on the road out of Sloviansk near the bridge across the Kazenniyy Torets river, a civilian bus came under fire as it was attempting to leave the city. Two people were killed and three injured.

In the early hours of 3 July, Kramatorsk was once again subjected to shelling. Houses were badly damaged, and there were deaths and injuries among the local inhabitants. The outskirts of Kramatorsk were shelled using Grad rocket systems.

On the morning of 3 July, several shells fell on the Russian checkpoint at Novoshakhtinsk as a result of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine. The checkpoint building, car park and customs terminal were damaged.

The number of displaced persons is growing. Many seek refuge in Russia, and we shall of course provide assistance to all those who need it. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees alone, there are around 110,000 displaced persons. Some of them are applying for official refugee status or temporary asylum. Most are looking to legalize their status on Russian territory by other means. Owing to intensified fighting near the border, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to flee dangerous areas. Two buses carrying refugees from Kramatorsk came under fire from Ukrainian security forces in the Donetsk region 20 kilometres from the Russian border. There were 84 persons on those buses. It was just sheer luck that no one was injured.

The savage and completely unlawful persecution of Russian journalists continues; they are actually being hunted down. Anatoly Klyan, a cameraman working for Channel One, was killed in Donetsk on 30 June. A car carrying journalists from the LifeNews television channel was fired on by a military unit in the same area. Fortunately, the occupants survived. On 1 July, a film crew from the Russian television channel REN TV came under Ukrainian mortar fire near the Ukrainian customs post at Izvarino in the Luhansk region. The correspondent Denis Kulaga was concussed and wounded as a result of the exploding projectile, and the cameraman Vadim Yudin suffered concussion.

Not only Russian journalists are at risk. A 16-year-old youth who was filming events in Mariupol on 9 May on his mobile phone and posting them on the Internet was pursued, caught and beaten up.

The Ukrainian authorities are using any means to put a stop to attempts at making the world and the Ukrainian people aware of what is really happening. It is far more advantageous to inflame anti-Russian hysteria, attributing all the problems to Russia.

The results of the investigation into the events on the Maidan and in Odessa, Mariupol and Luhansk have still not been made available. The demands addressed to the Ukrainian authorities by Russia and other representatives of the international community that objective investigations should be conducted into all the cases of attacks on our journalists and other attacks on civilians in the conflict zone remain unanswered.

There have been serious crimes, including the use of prohibited means of warfare, murder and kidnapping, and interference in the professional activities of journalists. The guilty parties will be brought to justice.

We once again urgently demand that the Ukrainian authorities, if they are still in a position to assess the consequences of their criminal policy in a reasonable manner, refrain from shelling peaceful towns and villages in their country and return to a real ceasefire. Solving Ukraine's political problems through the physical destruction of its citizens is hardly in keeping with the norms of a civilized European society, which Kyiv claims to be today.

Mr. Chairperson,

The ceasefire lasted only ten days and was also violated by both parties to the conflict, but it was nevertheless an important step. It provided hope for a peaceful way of resolving the crisis and for establishing dialogue.

A number of specific measures have been taken in support of a peaceful solution, including some that were requested by our partners. They include tighter control at borders and repealing the resolution of the Federation Council on the use of the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, and the start of work by the Contact Group. All this time intensive talks have been held at the highest level. As a gesture of goodwill, the President of Russia proposed deploying representatives of the Ukrainian Border Service and OSCE observers on Russian territory at three border crossing points, while the ceasefire was in place.

In support of this proposal, the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine agreed on a quadripartite declaration. It underscored the need for the urgent resumption of the activities of the Contact Group to reach an agreement on a mutually agreed and sustainable ceasefire. It called for the swift release of all hostages.

At the last moment, Ukraine refused to publish the agreed document. It opted to resolve the crisis by force and through bloodshed. Three days of renewed fratricidal war has cost dozens of lives and injured hundreds, including civilians.

Unfortunately, neither Russia nor our European partners, even through joint efforts, have been able to convince the Ukrainian leadership that the path to reliable, lasting and long-term peace cannot be through war. Evidently, there are other external forces that have an interest in continuing the bloodshed.

The statement by the representative of the United States of America to the effect that they will support any decision by Kyiv is virtually a direct encouragement to continue the violence.

We note the repeated systematic attempts to hush up and downplay the scale of the tragedy in eastern Ukraine. Once again we hear cynical arguments about the “restraint” that is allegedly being shown by the Ukrainian security forces. Where are the limits of such restraint? Massive use of artillery, multiple rocket launchers, tanks – is this restraint? What other forms of weapons must be used before Washington finally recognizes the obvious?

Those who directly or indirectly support the punitive operation are accessories to the crime.

Attempts to portray the Ukrainians fleeing the war as tourists are outrageous. It is said that they are visiting relatives and will come back. Evidently, these are the same tourists who are filling refugee facilities on Russian territory in their thousands. And yet the United States representatives in all seriousness try to pass off these tales, if they may be called that, as the truth.

Once again we urgently call on the Ukrainian authorities to desist from shelling peaceful towns and villages. We emphasize the need for a sustainable ceasefire, which must be agreed as soon as possible in order to stop the bloodshed in Ukraine and preserve human lives. We call on all our partners to support this.

The agreement reached yesterday in Berlin provides yet another chance to return to peace. This chance should be used. As stated in the declaration, the ministers invite the OSCE to take all necessary steps to deploy OSCE observers in response to the Russian invitation at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, while the mutually agreed ceasefire is in place.

This would make it possible to set about solving the serious humanitarian problems and beginning real talks among the parties on settling the internal crisis in Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.