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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1016th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 September 2014

**In response to the statements by Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, United Nations
Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Ivan Šimonović,
United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We have listened with interest to the assessments presented by Mr. Feltman and Mr. Šimonović of the security situation and co-operation in the OSCE area and of the human rights situation in Ukraine.

Among the regional organizations under the terms of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE occupies a special place in view of its composition and mandate, the experience it has accumulated in political dialogue, its consensus-based decision-making and its unique set of instruments. For that reason, co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations is entirely in keeping with the current situation. What is important is to work on pooling the efforts of these organizations, taking into account their competences and capabilities, and improving co-ordination of their activities, both at the headquarters level and in field.

The crisis in Ukraine did not begin in the way that has been described here. It is the result of an unconstitutional coup in Kyiv, which was supported by the United States of America and the European Union. The new authorities in Kyiv then unleashed a punitive operation against dissenters, which has led to a humanitarian disaster in the east of the country. The consequences have been horrific.

A number of agreements were reached in Minsk with the aim of putting a stop to the bloodshed in Donbas and moving the situation towards political dialogue. If this process is to succeed, which is in the interests of all right-minded forces, a clear signal must be sent to all the parties to the conflict.

All the organizations working towards a settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, including the United Nations and the OSCE, should pool their efforts.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Ukrainian crisis has demonstrated how acutely the European security system was in need of modernization and still is. The current situation stems from an unwillingness to make a serious effort to eradicate dividing lines in Europe and establish a mutually respectful and truly equal partnership that would take into account the security interests of all countries regardless of their membership of politico-military alliances.

Instead, a policy of actively applying pressure and interfering in the internal affairs of States has been reinforced.

We firmly believe that the Ukrainian crisis would not have happened, much less grown to its current proportions, if there had been a reliable and fair European security system.

We share the sentiment of the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship that, despite the severity of the current problems, efforts to form a co-operative system of European security must continue. This should be our common project, which can only work in a climate of mutually respectful dialogue and the abandonment of unilateral approaches.

The updated European security architecture should take into account all the new factors that have appeared in recent decades in all three dimensions of security. This applies not only to the politico-military dimension, but also to the establishment of harmonized trade and economic relations between different States and integration communities regardless of their geographic location. The first contacts between the Customs Union and the European Union, which took place on 26 August in Minsk, were a step in the right direction, and this is something that should be built upon.

Human rights are another area that requires updating, with the challenge of advancing towards a common humanitarian space.

A platform for this kind of work already exists, namely the Helsinki+40 process, which, we believe, should continue to act as an important channel for dialogue on major strategic European security issues. It is important that this process focus on finding and strengthening unifying principles, which would facilitate the realization of the declared but as yet unattained principle of the indivisibility of security. The current trend of preserving and even intensifying dividing lines in Europe is clearly destructive. The situation in Ukraine is the most graphic and tragic example of this.

The recent NATO summit clearly demonstrated a strategic policy of interference in the affairs of foreign States and a desire for military domination in Europe in violation of agreements confirmed repeatedly at all levels regarding the importance of creating a system of equal and indivisible security in the Euro-Atlantic region. A policy of expanding NATO infrastructure eastwards and building up a military presence near Russia's borders has been adopted. These plans have been nurtured for a long time; the Ukrainian crisis simply provided an opportunity to begin carrying them out. The essence and tone of statements on the situation in Ukraine coupled with the plans announced for the conduct of joint exercises

by NATO member countries with Kyiv on Ukrainian territory inevitably ratchet up tensions and threaten to undermine the progress made in the Ukrainian peace process, helping to deepen the divide in Ukrainian society.

Mr. Chairperson,

We note with regret that the report on the work of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine still reveals a selective approach to the tragedy in the east of the country. It seems that the primary aim is to put all the responsibility for what is happening on the militias in Donbas, and then facts, reports and even speculations are selected to support this.

This applies not only to Ukraine but also to the territory of Crimea. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, is due to visit Crimea from 10 to 12 September. You will be able to compare his observations with the conclusions drawn by the United Nations mission.

Nevertheless, we should like to draw attention to some developments. The number of casualties and the level of violence in Donbas have already reached such proportions that the mission was forced to acknowledge the obvious. In particular, United Nations observers began to speak openly of the horrific number of fatalities among the civilian population, including children, as a result of Kyiv's punitive operation; of the use of heavy armaments and aircraft against civilians; and of the existence of a humanitarian disaster in eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Šimonović talks of a dramatic deterioration in the situation in regions controlled by the militias, in particular in Luhansk. He refers to the lack of water and electricity. In doing so, he makes no mention of the fact that Ukrainian forces bombed electrical substations and sewage treatment plants.

In the report by the observers, although by no means complete, reference is made to the criminal actions of the Ukrainian army in using aircraft and artillery to shell residential areas, mass kidnappings, detentions, torture and murder by Kyiv's armed forces and mercenary battalions, and the "cleansing" of occupied areas.

It is impossible as well to close our eyes to the religious dimension of the Ukrainian crisis. From the very outset of the excesses on the Maidan, there were calls to seize Orthodox holy sites and reform the canonical order of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Hatred of the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate was openly incited and Orthodox priests in the eastern regions of the country frequently faced reprisals under the guise of combating terrorism.

On 20 July, near Sloviansk, men armed with machine-guns forced archpriest Vadim Yablonsky to dig his own grave, and archpriest Viktor Stratovich was handcuffed and taken into the woods with a bag over his head. On 30 July, in the Donetsk region, archpriest Yevgeny Podgorny was tied up, kicked and hit with the butt of a machine-gun; his cross was removed and he was put into a hole in the ground.

There are many reports that Russian lessons have been cancelled in schools in Sloviansk. On 1 September, in Kyiv, refugee children from Donbas had to listen to

humiliating threats from their peers. Some were even beaten up. The school heads advised unwanted junior school pupils to take their things and go to Russia together with their parents.

We have been drawing attention for quite some time to the atrocities committed by radical groups in Ukraine. These groups have now for the most part been legalized as punitive battalions. Many of them openly use Nazi symbols and spout Nazi slogans. However, they remain invisible to the observers.

We call on the observers from the United Nations and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine not to ignore these various manifestations of aggressive radicalism.

The lack of progress in the investigations into the tragic events in Odessa and Mariupol is striking. A truly independent investigation, which Russia has been demanding since May, has still not been conducted. Moreover, there are reports that the commission that was meant to investigate the tragedy in Odessa has disbanded.

The investigation process into February's violence on the Maidan is dead. Almost all cases were initiated against law enforcement officers and members of Berkut, who, you will remember, did not use weapons and were attacked by aggressive elements. At the same time, neo-Nazis, who carried out atrocities on the Maidan, are regarded as "heroes" and enjoy impunity.

The "witch-hunt" started by Kyiv continues. The media are severely censored. Russian channels are prohibited, dissidence is being suppressed and hate speech is spreading. During all this time Kyiv has done nothing to improve the tense situation in the country. The promised constitutional reform has still not happened. The law on the protection of the rights of national minorities, regarded as necessary by all the major international organizations, has not been adopted.

Unfortunately, none of this is mentioned in the report by the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I should like to wish Mr. Feltman and Mr. Šimonović success in their difficult work.

Thank you for your attention.