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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1114th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 October 2016

**In response to the statements by Ambassador Apakan, Chief Monitor of
the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and Ambassador Sajdik,
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine
and in the Trilateral Contact Group**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome the distinguished Ambassadors Ertuğrul Apakan and Martin Sajdik.

We highly appreciate their contribution to the peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. The only acceptable way of resolving it is through full implementation in the established sequence of the Minsk Package of Measures through direct dialogue between the parties – Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk.

We shall also continue to provide assistance in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group, the Normandy format and the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) and to support the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM).

We note the efforts by our Western colleagues in the Normandy format to help the sides to reach accord under the Framework Agreement. Its fulfilment could give a positive stimulus to the entire Minsk process and overcome the stalemate in the political negotiations. This should be a particular focus at the present time.

We welcome the timely start of the disengagement of forces and hardware in the Zolote area. Unfortunately in two other areas, Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska, the disengagement schedule is being disrupted by the Ukrainian armed forces.

According to information received from the JCCC, Donetsk began to disengage its forces in Petrivske at 3 p.m. yesterday, 3 October. The militia withdrew to the positions provided for in the schedule. Soon afterwards, however, Ukrainian security forces opened fire on them. The militia were obliged to return to the point of departure. It is quite clear that the

disruption to the disengagement of forces and hardware in this area was caused by the Ukrainian armed forces.

In Stanytsia Luhanska as well, the militia troops were preparing to withdraw the required distance, but the Ukrainian armed forces there, ignoring the agreed schedule, did not even show any willingness to proceed with disengagement.

We are looking forward to a clear report from the SMM on the situation in all three disengagement areas.

There is a need for Kyiv to act in good faith without artificial delays as in Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska. We trust that our Western colleagues will exert an influence in this regard.

It is also important to prevent external interference in the disengagement by radical elements and representatives of Aidar, Right Sector and the like. To judge from their statements, the agreements reached do not correspond to the interests of the radicals. They would prefer the alternative used in Shyrokyne, where, contrary to what had been agreed, the positions abandoned by the militia were occupied by the security forces.

In spite of the problems with the Ukrainian armed forces in connection with the withdrawal of forces in two of the three pilot areas, the designation of new areas for disengagement should not be held up. We trust that tomorrow's meeting of the Contact Group will manage to make progress. The main thing, obviously, is for the agreements to be reinforced by measures on the ground.

We trust that in the near future a full ceasefire regime will be established along the entire length of the line of contact, which is something that demands greater attention by the SMM. The information from the SMM shortly after the announcement of the unilateral ceasefire by Donetsk and Luhansk is highly revealing. It is clear that Kyiv's assertion that it is observing the peaceful settlement is greatly exaggerated. Even the freedom of movement of the SMM has been restricted by both sides in practically equal measure in recent times.

In the last two weeks of September there were 370 ceasefire violations by the Ukrainian security forces. In the security zone there are 50 Ukrainian large-calibre artillery pieces subject to withdrawal, including multiple-launch rocket systems. More than 300 armaments that used to be in the depots of the Ukrainian armed forces are missing from them. Only 7 per cent of their military equipment is in the storage locations, and if large-calibre artillery is included, it is just 1 per cent in total. In August and September, the monitors discovered 253 Ukrainian pieces of equipment in the security zone.

The priority for the monitors today is to observe the disengagement areas and the line of contact as a whole. At the same time, we regard the reporting we receive from other regional SMM command posts to be disproportionately small. Many events coming under the Mission's mandate are taking place in Ukraine today that need clarification.

We are grateful to the SMM for its professional approach to monitoring the situation regarding polling stations opened in Ukraine for the elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation. Ukraine was the only place on the planet where the conduct of the elections encountered manifest problems, intimidation and physical interference with voters.

The most pressing issue in Ukraine concerns the radicals and nationalists. Having kindled the fire of internecine conflict in Ukraine, they are doing nothing to put it out and are preventing implementation of the Minsk agreements. We have still not seen any progress in the prosecution of those responsible for the victims of the fire in the Trade Union Building in Odessa. It is highly revealing to note how the radicals reacted to the event marking the anniversary of the tragedy of Babi Yar and the mass shooting of Jews there by the Nazis and their accomplices from among Ukrainian nationalists. This is one further example of the attempt to rewrite history and to conceal the link between today's nationalists and radicals and their predecessors, who have the blood of the victims of Babi Yar and the Volhynia massacre on their hands.

The SMM's mandate also calls for its co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. In this area the situation in Ukraine is simply lamentable. We have taken note of the information in the written reply by the head of the SMM to the complaints by Ukrainian journalists at the deteriorating situation regarding freedom of speech, particularly after the murder of the well-known columnist Pavel Sheremet and the arson attack on the offices of the Inter television station. Personal data about journalists is still being published on the Ukrainian website Mirotvorets, which already has 5,000 names. The staff and owner of the television station 112 Ukraine are being investigated. We urge the SMM to monitor this issue more closely and to prepare a separate report on freedom of speech in Ukraine and the safety of journalists.

The SMM's mandate allows this, and the size of the main office and the number of monitors in Kyiv even more so. It could well increase the monitoring presence in the Kharkhiv and Dnipropetrovsk region; they will find work to do there.

The situation cannot be stabilized without fulfilment of the political components of the Package of Measures. As we recall, it contains an interrelated list of topics: agreement on the modalities for elections and their observation by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), amnesty and non-prosecution of participants in the conflict, confirmation of the permanent special status of certain areas of Donbas, and the adoption of a new constitution in Ukraine with decentralization as a key element.

We have carefully studied the conduct of the "provisional election" in Donbas. According to our information, it was well organized and without incidents. The security situation, apart from the bombardment by the Ukrainian security forces, is satisfactory. We regard the monitoring of this event, which is so important for the region, as an integral component of the SMM's mandate. As far as we can see, this does not detract from the ODIHR's competence as observer of the coming elections in Donbas. This method of working with the voters is in no way contrary to the Minsk agreements or the OSCE's own norms.

Military and political questions must be synchronized. Progress in the field of security must be accompanied by progress in the political sphere and vice versa.

We are counting on progress in the exchange of detained persons. Here, too, unfortunately we see an unprincipled approach by the Ukrainian intelligence services, which are "rounding up" civilians from Donbas for exchange.

We find it absurd that the work of the Working Group on Economic Issues should be held up by procedural questions. The claims by the Ukrainian Government regarding representation of the other side are irrelevant, all the more so as the considerations refer strictly to the humanitarian aspects of improving the quality of life of those living in the region affected.

In conclusion, we should like once again to thank the distinguished Ambassadors Apakan and Sajdik for their assiduous work in settling the conflict. They can count on the continued active support of Russia.

Thank you for your attention.