

PC.DEL/1444/18  
23 November 2018

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1203rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 November 2018

**On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement  
the Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

The degree to which the Ukrainian leadership's actions are at variance with their profuse assurances of commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the east of the country is becoming increasingly apparent. Instead of concrete steps towards a politico-diplomatic settlement, the Ukrainian Government continues to artificially exacerbate military tensions in Donbas and does not rule out the use of force. There is no other way to explain the recent transfer by the Ukrainian authorities of large-calibre artillery, Uragan multiple-launch rocket systems, BUK and S-300 surface-to-air missile systems and United States weapons models to this region. These facts, as we have already mentioned, are confirmed in the November reports by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM).

Overall, according to the Ukrainian authorities, in 2018 the Government of Ukraine increased its military spending by 37 per cent compared to 2017. It was decided to increase military spending further in 2019, bringing the combined total to 5.36 per cent of the GDP. Since the start of the year, the Ukrainian armed forces have received over 3,500 units of weaponry and military equipment, including T-72 tanks, BTR-3 armoured personnel carriers, Stugna-P and Corsar missile systems and 82 mm mortars. Speculation about Ukraine purchasing lethal weapons abroad, including unmanned combat aerial vehicles and related technology, continues unabated.

The price of such militarization of the country can be seen in the human lives cut short, the broken futures, and the destroyed homes and families. Over the past week, the SMM has recorded artillery strikes against Debaltseve, Mykhailivka and Kruta Balka. Several houses have been damaged. Representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions also report that a civilian was injured in Trudivski on 17 November, a woman in Holmivskyi on 15 November and an electrician in Maryevka on 14 November. We expect the SMM to verify this information promptly.

We call on the Mission to step up its monitoring activities along the line of contact. A new thematic report on civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure is needed. Since 16 September 2017 (the publication date of the last thematic report), there have been many cases of shelling of residential areas of Donbas by the Ukrainian armed forces.

We note the attempts by the Ukrainian Government to restrict the SMM's monitoring activities. Last week, long-range unmanned aerial vehicles were jammed near Vyskryva, Stepanivka, Vershyna, Myronivskyyi, Prychepylivka and Popasna. On 12 November, the SMM spotted an automatic aircraft communications jamming station (R-934B/BM VHF/UHF) near Prychepylivka. The security forces denied the monitors access to military facilities in Novoselivka Druha and Starohnativka.

The consequences of the Ukrainian armed forces' actions are also being felt by the inhabitants of other regions of the country. The number of crimes connected with front-line weapons falling into the wrong hands and their subsequent use for criminal purposes is growing. According to the Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine, Anatolii Matios, one in three soldiers leaves Donbas with what he calls "military trophies". The Ukrainian law enforcement forces in fact admit their inability to control and restrict the circulation of weapons not only in Donbas but throughout the country. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, there are currently more than 3 million illegal weapons in circulation in the country. Furthermore, only 4,500 in total have been seized since 2014. This information is perhaps of interest to those who intend to supply weapons to Ukraine.

The alarming rise in tension in Donbas is taking place against the background of a lack of political will on the part of the Ukrainian Government to implement the provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures. The Ukrainian negotiators in Minsk studiously ignore the political aspects of the settlement and refuse to engage in substantive discussions regarding the special status, constitutional reform and amnesty. On the verge of sabotage, they shy away from setting out on paper the Steinmeier formula and implementing the agreement of the Normandy Quartet leaders, which was confirmed twice at the summits in 2015 and 2016, on its inclusion in Ukrainian legislation.

The Ukrainian Government clumsily camouflages its unwillingness to implement the Minsk agreements with manifestations of anti-Russian hysteria. The Ukrainian leadership's Russophobic initiatives are having a negative impact on the human rights situation. The current Law on Education and the draft law on ensuring the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the State language, adopted at its first reading, are aimed at limiting the rights and opportunities of almost half of the country's population to participate fully in public and political life, receive education and medical care, and their access to culture.

However, the anti-Russian propaganda is not uniting Ukrainian society but dividing it. On the fifth anniversary of the Maidan, the majority of the country's population regret those events. According to a survey conducted by the NewsOne television station, 91 per cent of the 10,000 or so people questioned responded negatively to the question whether they would go out to the Maidan if it were possible to turn back the clock. Of the former participants in those events, only the radical nationalists feel at ease today.

Under these circumstances, it is no longer surprising that, at the meeting of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, Ukraine voted against the resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to

fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. But despite this, the document received comprehensive support (it is telling that together with Ukraine only the United States of America voted against the resolution). This is a clear illustration of who finds themselves really isolated in important matters on the international agenda.

Sensing their impunity, the Ukrainian radical nationalists continue to commit their iniquitous crimes. According to the SMM report dated 16 November, in the early hours of 5 November 94 crosses in memory of Polish prisoners were uprooted in the First World War cemetery in Kolomyia in the Ivano-Frankivsk region. On 15 November, nationalists attempted to set fire to St. Andrew's Church in Kyiv. The SMM reported that the security guards at the church were injured when they tried to prevent the attack. On 17 November, Right Sector supporters attempted to storm the residence of the Metropolitan of Krivoy Rog and Nikopol Ephraim. Canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church priests have been summoned by the Ukrainian Security Service for "a chat" – probably with the aim of forcing them to change their beliefs.

The Ukrainian Government is attempting to conceal from the international community the aforementioned manifestations of radicalism. It restricts freedom of speech and condones the persecution of journalists within the country. The editor-in-chief of RIA Novosti Ukraine, Kirill Vyshinsky, remains in detention on absurd trumped-up charges. The Ukrainian Security Service arrested Oleg Sagan, film director, journalist and author of documentaries on Orthodoxy, on 6 November in Kyiv. The pensioner, who is seriously ill, is accused of challenging the territorial integrity of Ukraine and inciting religious hatred. On 9 November, Ukrainian Security Service officers descended on the apartment of Roman Vasilishin, editor-in-chief of the Ukrainian magazine *Kontrolniy vystrel*, who had been investigating corruption in the Ukrainian armed forces. Two journalists were attacked in Kyiv on 18 November. According to the head of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, more than 160 such cases have been reported in the country since the beginning of 2017. The leader of the C14 group explained live on air on the Magnolia-TV television station that such actions are the "people's court". The perpetrators generally go unpunished. We are counting on a reaction from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Désir.

Mr. Chairperson,

The problems of freedom of speech, persecution of the Church, radical nationalism and infringement of the rights of national minorities deserve proper attention from the OSCE in the context of the Organization's contribution to resolving the crisis in Ukraine. I recall that the principal and only possible framework for this is the Minsk Package of Measures endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 2202 of 17 February 2015 and the statement delivered by the President of the UN Security Council on behalf of the Council on 6 June 2018. The political aspects of the settlement are no less important than the military ones and require urgent and rigorous implementation. The concept of parallel steps in the areas of politics and security was confirmed during the Berlin summit of the Normandy Quartet on 20 October 2016. Additional security-building measures are required in the military sphere – prohibiting the shelling of populated areas and commando and sabotage activity, promulgating the orders for a ceasefire, and disciplinary proceedings for those who violate them. Finally, the disengagement of forces and hardware in Stanytsia Luhanska needs to be completed in accordance with the Framework Decision of 21 September 2016 and the status quo restored in the other two pilot disengagement areas in Zolote and Petrivske. It is

time to break the deadlock on a number of acute problems in the humanitarian sphere, ranging from lifting the trade and transport blockade imposed by the Ukrainian Government to repairing the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska on the basis of the project by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The internal conflict in Ukraine can be solved only by direct negotiations with Donetsk and Luhansk in strict conformity with the Package of Measures.

Thank you for your attention.