

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1007th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 July 2014

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

Mr. Chairperson,

To our regret, a veritable civil war is continuing in Ukraine. One can, of course, try to dress up this indisputable fact in euphemistic terms like “counter-terrorism operation”, “measures to protect territorial integrity”, “measures to ensure order”, and so on. This does not change what is at issue here. If we look at what is happening with an open mind and without political slogans, it is clear that the regular Ukrainian armed forces are employing the entire arsenal of weaponry at their disposal: assault aircraft, heavy artillery, tanks and multiple-launch rocket systems. The means and methods of warfare they are using should be investigated. In particular, reports regarding the use of cluster munitions, poison gas shells and incendiary weapons in populated areas should be verified.

If we are to believe President Poroshenko, the Ukrainian army has strict orders not to shell towns, villages and residential areas and not to bomb civilians. Who, then, is shelling Luhansk, Donetsk, Kondrashovka and Stanitsa Luhanskaya? Once again, they are trying to convince us that the militia are, as always, firing on themselves.

We can see what shelling by the Ukrainian army leads to. The humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine is very serious. People are still dying. Food, medicine, water and electricity supplies are disrupted. The stream of displaced persons fleeing dangerous regions, including those that are now under the control of the Ukrainian authorities, continues to grow. According to official figures from 8 July, more than 113,000 Ukrainian citizens have approached the regional authorities of the Russian Federal Migration Service for assistance. This includes various requests for refugee status, temporary asylum, citizenship of the Russian Federation or a temporary residence permit. However, these are only the ones who have officially applied for this status. The number of refugees is much higher. Only yesterday, 6,200 persons arrived in Rostov region from Ukraine in 24 hours.

Humanitarian corridors, which would provide a way out of the crisis regions for the civilian population and a way in for essential goods, have still not been established, although

this has been promised several times by Kyiv. Instead, filtration camps are being set up to gauge the loyalty of those citizens who have remained in the towns captured by the Ukrainian military.

In our view, this problem is of the utmost importance. We are making efforts via all the channels available to us. In particular, we have suggested to the Ukrainian authorities that all patients requiring medical care should be given the opportunity to receive treatment in Russia. We are willing to send all manner of humanitarian aid, including food and fuel.

Earlier, in response to the statement by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, Ambassador Apakan, we noted that the observers can and should see the entire picture of what is happening and make the Permanent Council aware of the real consequences of the military operation, warts and all. The main thing is that they be willing and able to do this.

For now, however, we are relying on the work of journalists in the conflict zone and on ordinary people. Modern technology means that anyone with a telephone, video camera and Internet access can collect and disseminate evidence – in real time. There is more than enough evidence of the countless victims among the civilian population and of the large-scale destruction. It is becoming increasingly difficult to hush this up. We are willing to provide the latest set of facts. They were presented today during the briefing by the Ambassador-at-Large, Konstantin Dolgov.

The time has probably come for independent Western media to travel to Luhansk and Donetsk to provide an objective picture. We are confident that the Ukrainian authorities cannot refuse them accreditation even if they have to work in territory that the authorities do not control. Then again, judging by the attack on the editorial office of *Vesti*, they are not completely in control of the situation in the centre of Kyiv either.

The conclusion is obvious. We have been saying this since the very start of the “Maidan” disturbances. Violence – from whichever side – is inadmissible and needs to be stopped immediately. The main thing is to agree as soon as possible on a sustainable and long-term ceasefire that will be observed by all parties. The quadripartite declaration by the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine calls for this – an unconditional ceasefire – and this is what Ukraine and its partners signed.

However, someone has convinced the President of Ukraine to continue the bloody suppression of dissidents, even if it costs human lives and means destroying cities. It is the citizens of Ukraine, not only those in Donbas but also in other parts of the country, who have been forced to pay with their lives, health and deteriorating prosperity because the authorities have opted for war instead of negotiations.

Nevertheless, there is a framework for moving forward – the Geneva statement, the Berlin declaration and the Swiss Chairmanship’s road map. It is important to provide full support for the resumption of the Contact Group in its complete form to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine on this basis.

It is surprising that our colleagues still harbour illusions with regard to the so-called Poroshenko peace plan. It envisages a permanent solution to the Donbas question by presenting the other side with a choice: surrender or destruction. This kind of ultimatum is

hardly the basis for a ceasefire. The call to lay down arms will be accepted only if there are guarantees regarding the non-use of force by the other side and an alternative is offered. There are no such guarantees as yet. Consultations involving all stakeholders are needed for this.

Mr. Chairperson,

Earlier, we proposed adopting an OSCE decision in support of the Swiss Chairmanship's road map. The idea did not garner support.

Russia has in fact invited OSCE observers to the Russian checkpoints at Gukovo and Donetsk, as was mentioned in our statement of 2 July, during the observance of a mutually agreed ceasefire. Unfortunately, no ceasefire is in place.

We have put forward the idea of a Permanent Council decision aimed at preventing the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine from deteriorating, and which calls for a ceasefire, the start of a national dialogue and the creation of humanitarian corridors. This would be a "document of the 57 participating States" in support of those agreements that have been secured in narrower formats in Geneva and Berlin. We said straight away that we were willing to show flexibility in terms of wording and consider compromise proposals.

We are not so naïve as to think that it is possible to achieve a ceasefire in Ukraine with a single Permanent Council decision. Nevertheless, we believe that a common position among all the OSCE participating States on key aspects of the current crisis in eastern Ukraine is necessary to support an approach aimed at peacefully resolving the situation, putting an end to the violence by both parties to the conflict and alleviating human suffering.

Unfortunately, the first response to our proposal is not encouraging. Instead of constructive discussion, there are unfounded accusations against Russia. It seems that neither the Ukrainian authorities nor their sponsors have any need for peace or negotiations. They are placing their faith in military pressure. We can see where that leads to in today's Libya, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. It is a road to nowhere.

Thank you for your attention.