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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1033rd (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 January 2015

**On the situation in Ukraine and violations of the Minsk agreements by the
Ukrainian authorities**

Mr. Chairperson,

Like other speakers, we are deeply concerned at the dramatic escalation of the situation in south-eastern Ukraine. The number of incidents on both sides has increased dramatically, especially in the vicinity of Donetsk airport. Meanwhile, the shelling of residential areas in Donetsk, Horlivka and other towns in Donbas has resumed, claiming civilian lives literally every day. On 13 January, Donetsk came under the most intensive shelling attack of late. We support the efforts of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to ensure an immediate truce around the airport and are sending messages to this effect to the conflicting parties.

The intensification of hostilities in the conflict zone deals a serious blow to all the efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the crisis. All of this looks like a desperate attempt to bring the situation back to a scenario involving the use of force.

We have already warned our partners about the clearly visible and dangerous signs of a concentration of Ukrainian security forces and so-called volunteer battalions near Donbas. There are also plans for a fresh wave of military mobilization in Ukraine, which will be followed by another two waves in the coming months.

The Kyiv authorities are frantically purchasing weapons, even in the Balkans. Plans have been announced to increase military spending at the expense of other budget items, which is obviously unsustainable for the country.

The Ukrainian authorities continue to tighten the blockade of Donbas, and it looks as if they are exacerbating the situation of the people living there on purpose. Humanitarian aid and food and medical supplies have been blocked and social benefits halted. A system has been introduced along the line of disengagement whereby a pass is required to cross the line. Restrictions on the movement of people are being tightened, even in cases when emergency medical assistance is required.

All of this confirms our general impression: Kyiv does not want to implement a serious constitutional reform with the participation of the regions or achieve a settlement through political dialogue with the Donbas leadership. It prefers to resolve the conflict by military force and the economic strangulation of the population in the dissenting regions. This path will lead to a major disaster.

For our part, in addition to what was already stated at the “Normandy format” foreign ministers’ meeting in Berlin on 12 January, we reiterate our firm commitment to a comprehensive and exclusively peaceful settlement of the crisis, including the launch of a stable political process.

The Minsk agreements serve as a basis for this and should be implemented by all parties. The parties to the conflict – the Ukrainian authorities and the representatives of some parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions – should continue direct dialogue in order to make progress on this issue. This includes the creation of the necessary conditions for a viable truce, the agreement of modalities for humanitarian aid supplies and the continuation of the process of releasing detainees. Our common goal is to galvanize the parties to carry out completely and comprehensively the steps that were identified in Minsk.

There is a need for a complete and immediate ceasefire and the de-escalation of the situation. We roundly condemn all the shelling and attacks that result in civilian deaths. This also applies in full measure to the tragedy involving the bus near the town of Volnovakha in the Donetsk region. There are different versions of what happened. Before any conclusions can be drawn, an objective investigation should be conducted into this tragedy. We support the idea of conducting such an investigation under the auspices of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination. Likewise the shelling of a Donetsk school on 5 November should also be investigated.

Every day civilians are killed in Donetsk as a result of shelling from the territory controlled by Ukrainian security forces. In all, more than 4,800 people have been killed since the start of the security operation, with over 10,000 people injured and more than 1,000 residential buildings, communal facilities and vital infrastructure partially or completely destroyed or burned. Even international non-governmental organizations have pointed to the indiscriminate use of heavy weapons and cluster munitions against towns and villages by the Ukrainian authorities.

At the same time, the Ukrainian security forces, especially members of the oligarch-controlled groups such as Azov and Aidar, continue to act with complete impunity. There has been no word from the Ukrainian authorities about the outcome of the investigation into these groups’ crimes.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is now extremely important to stop the escalation of tension. Strict observance of the ceasefire is of paramount importance. The use of heavy weapons against residential areas and vital infrastructure, which is clearly of a provocative nature, is unacceptable. We urge the Ukrainian authorities to ensure complete control over the observance of the ceasefire by all units of the armed forces and other units that are not part of the armed forces but are involved in the security operation.

We take note of the remarks by the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, to the effect that he remains committed to a peaceful settlement in Donbas and will do all that is possible “and even impossible” to bring that about.

Until now, the parties to the conflict have made limited progress in implementing the Minsk agreements. The silence regime has been observed in many areas along the line of contact. Some heavy equipment has been withdrawn, at any rate by the insurgent forces. There have been exchanges of detainees. Joint patrolling has begun near the line of contact, as reflected in the SMM report. Under these circumstances, the Donetsk insurgents met the Ukrainian side halfway and allowed it on a number of occasions to rotate its personnel at Donetsk airport, presumably hoping that the shelling of Donetsk would not resume. The marked decline in the intensity of the shelling allowed the people of Donbas, who have suffered as a result of the military operations, to begin resuming normal life, despite the catastrophic situation as regards food and medical supplies.

It is essential to reaffirm the clear message that there is no alternative to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Any attempts to encourage the forces seeking to return to a scenario involving the use of force are unacceptable and could be disastrous. As the events of the past few days have shown, unfortunately, these forces have no qualms about the methods they use.

It is perfectly clear that a sustainable settlement of the crisis, which would be in the interests of Ukraine’s entire population, is possible only through direct inclusive national dialogue on constitutional reform, with the participation of all the regions and political forces of Ukraine, so as to achieve national reconciliation and national accord regarding the kind of State where all Ukrainians will feel comfortable and safe.

Thank you for your attention.