

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
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AT THE 1144th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation in the conflict zone in Ukraine remains tense. Violations of the ceasefire regime are recorded on a daily basis. Civilians are being killed. Militia-controlled settlements and territory continue to be shelled by the Ukrainian armed forces. For instance, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) documented the destruction of houses in Stakhanov and Kominternove. It has not been possible to record the consequences of many other instances of shelling. Information from the SMM cameras in Avdiivka and Shyrokyne shows that the intense exchanges of fire in these areas were provoked by firing from territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces.

The restrictions on patrols, which were introduced for security reasons, have had an impact on the completeness of the SMM reports. We express our support for the Mission, which continues its work despite these difficulties. The Mission plays an important stabilizing role in the conflict zone. It is crucial to maintain close monitoring of the line of contact and adjacent areas.

The explosion involving an SMM vehicle on 23 April right on the line of contact near the village of Pryshyb in the Luhansk region requires a thorough, impartial and objective investigation. It is important for all the parties involved to play a part in the investigation – the OSCE, the authorities of Ukraine and certain areas of the Luhansk region, the Trilateral Contact Group and the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC). We would be grateful to the Chairmanship and Secretary General for more detailed information on the steps being taken by the OSCE in this regard.

Both sides are restricting the SMM's freedom of movement. Accusations that the militia are organizing a "campaign against the SMM" are unfounded. The SMM reports show that the militia warn the SMM of danger. For example, on 28 April, at a checkpoint in Luhansk (near Molodizhne), a member of the militia signalled to the monitors that they should leave the area immediately. As soon as the monitors had got into their armoured

vehicle, they heard a shell exploding in the air some 50 to 100 metres to the north-west. It should be clear to everybody who was shooting at the checkpoint. On 27 April, a Luhansk demining team accompanied by Russian JCCC officers provided assistance to monitors in facilitating the recovery of an SMM mini unmanned aerial vehicle that had made an uncontrolled landing in a potentially mined area in Stanytsia Luhanska.

We highly appreciate the efforts of the SMM to facilitate repair work, thanks to which the inhabitants of the areas near the line of contact can hope to have their electricity and water supply restored. On 2 May, the Donetsk filtration plant was once again shelled by the Ukrainian armed forces, and the decision was taken to evacuate its staff. As far as we are aware, the power supply has still not been restored.

Distinguished colleagues,

The excesses of the Ukrainian radicals continue to go unpunished. We marked the third anniversary of the Odessa tragedy on 2 May. Some people here would prefer to forget about this, but we remember. On 2 May 2014, Ukrainian nationalists forced defenceless people into Trade Union House and burned them alive. The perpetrators have still not been brought to justice. The Ukrainian authorities have done everything possible to cover up the tracks and destroy the evidence, just as they did with the snipers shooting on the Maidan. It is absolutely outrageous that the Ukrainian authorities arrested the victims. Not those who were hurling Molotov cocktails, but those who were peacefully protesting against the unconstitutional change of power in Kyiv. These are the real political prisoners in Ukraine. They should be freed as soon as possible.

In three years, no matter how hard it tried, the Ukrainian Government has been unable to come up with any intelligible version whatsoever of what happened. Once again, we are obliged to join the international community and repeat in this room the call for a transparent and fair investigation and for the guilty parties to be punished. However, no one believes the current government is capable of this. The SMM has informed us on several occasions about the influence of radical elements on the courts. This also applies to the case of the arson attack on Trade Union House in Odessa.

The burning in Odessa of dissenters was a watershed event in the development of the civil war in Ukraine. It showed the whole country, the whole world, what radical Ukrainian nationalism is. Everyone saw what the nationalists were prepared to do with dissenters and how the new authorities would react to this. The subsequent events in Donbas have completely confirmed this. The inhabitants of Donbas are defending themselves from this lawlessness.

At the moment, radical nationalists in Ukraine feel that they have absolute impunity. Some are probably anticipating that this will not always be the case and therefore hide their faces with masks and rags. We are sure that the time will come when they are brought to justice.

Radical nationalists and the “war party” in Kyiv remain the main opponents of a peaceful settlement in Ukraine and are doing all they can to ensure that the Minsk agreements remain unimplemented for as long as possible. It is clear that the return to the Ukrainian legal framework of millions of people who remain committed to friendly relations with other

peoples, including the peoples of Russia, and who reject the ideals of the neo-Nazis – the followers of Stepan Bandera – does not suit them.

As the Ukrainian Government realizes that yet another attempt to cleanse Donbas by force will lead to disaster, the authorities become ever more consistent in pursuing a policy aimed at ultimately casting Donbas off, cutting this region and the people who live there off from the rest of Ukraine. The work of the Ukrainian financial institutions has been suspended, the payment of pensions and other social benefits stopped, trade terminated and a transport blockade imposed on the region. It has been made extremely difficult for the inhabitants of the region to obtain Ukrainian documents, even to renew passports or register vehicles. Economic ties between businesses on the different sides of the line of contact have been destroyed. The electricity supply is being disconnected, the water supply will be next.

The fact is that only the Minsk agreements now guarantee the preservation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. However, without decisive and co-ordinated pressure on the nationalistic wing in Kyiv, it will be difficult to achieve their implementation.

Nevertheless, the Minsk agreements remain the only framework for resolving the situation. Among the main objectives should be stabilizing the line of contact and ending the shelling of towns and villages and infrastructure facilities, which can be achieved through the disengagement of the forces and hardware of the parties to the conflict. It is necessary to step up the work on the political aspects of the Package of Measures, establish direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk, consolidate the special status of the regions in legislation, hold elections and carry out constitutional reform.

Thank you for your attention.