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**STATEMENT BY MR. VLADIMIR ZHEGLOV,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1260th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 February 2020

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The tragic events that occurred in Kyiv six years ago set a negative trend for Ukraine's development in the ensuing years and provoked armed confrontation in the east of the country. On 22 February 2014, the unconstitutional removal of President Viktor Yanukovich from power made null and void his agreement with the opposition, which had been adopted the day before, with France, Germany and Poland as guarantors. Having volunteered as mediators, they were unable to guarantee a peaceful and lawful resolution of the political crisis in Ukraine, since the attempts undertaken by a number of Western countries to destabilize the situation had already gone too far. The Government in Washington, by the way, was perfectly aware of the role of the United States of America in the dismantling of the Ukrainian State. Neither the handing out of food on the Maidan by US Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, nor the co-ordination and the "remote steering" of the riot instigators by a number of Western capitals can be expunged from history. These events featured clearly in the recent documentary by the US political scientist Michael Caputo.

The Maidan tragedy, which was accompanied by massacres of both protesters and law enforcement officers, has not yet received a proper legal evaluation. Society has never been given clear answers as to who was firing at whom (and killing people), from where, why and with what weapons. At the same time, other information is accumulating as to who has been hiding the truth about these events and why. Needless to say, we have taken note of the admission by the Georgian army general and former commander of the Avaza (Panther) battalion, Tristan Tsitelashvili, broadcast a few days ago by a Ukrainian television channel. As he put it, the post-Maidan authorities promised him a "good and beautiful life" if he kept quiet about the role of the Georgian snipers in those terrible days for Kyiv of February 2014.

Following the coup d'état, a "government of victors" was installed in Kyiv, which instead of solving the acute socio-economic problems began its persecution of dissent in its striving to hold on to power. They tried to impose on society alien ideals based on rabid Russophobia. First, they tried to impose legal restrictions on the use of the Russian language by repealing the law on regional languages. In fact, Yulia Tymoshenko, one of the "icons of the Maidan", said after Yanukovich's removal from power that any Russians remaining in Ukraine should be "nuked".

It is not surprising that all this aggressive radicalism scared the inhabitants of south-eastern Ukraine, who were calling for greater autonomy. However, instead of engaging in dialogue, the Maidan authorities deployed the army and armed nationalists against them. They brought in tanks and heavy artillery, and began to shell peaceful towns. A civil crisis had turned into armed confrontation.

Six years later, there is still no peace in Donbas. The Ukrainian armed forces continue their military provocations, in particular, as seems to happen miraculously often, on the eve of significant international events. A new government, but the same old approaches. On 18 February, ahead of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council dedicated to the fifth anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2202, which endorsed the Minsk Package of Measures, the Ukrainian military tried to carry out a diversionary operation near Zolote. It would appear that Ukrainian armed forces' commanders sent their soldiers into a minefield under a hail of bullets simply to be able subsequently to accuse the militia of breaking the truce. The fact that the body of the dead Ukrainian soldier whose photo the representatives of the Ukrainian Government held up that very same day at the UN Security Council was to be found in a Luhansk morgue, clearly shows who came to whom – unfortunately, by no means for peaceful purposes. The destruction of several residential buildings in nearby settlements in certain areas of the Luhansk region recorded by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) also indicates who came under attack. In these circumstances, there is a need for increased attention by the SMM to the areas behind the lines of the Ukrainian armed forces and for keeping track of how the Ukrainian Government delivers arms to the line of contact, with a view to providing early warning of a possible escalation and preventing new casualties and destruction.

The SMM reports on some of these instances. On 15 and 18 February, civilians were injured in the Trudivski area of Donetsk and in the settlement of Holubivske near Zolote. On 14 February, before classes had started, a shell landed on a football pitch next to the school in Zolote-5/Mykhailivka. Residential buildings were damaged in Holubivske, Zolote-5/Mykhailivka, Staromykhailivka and Oleksandrivka. We trust that the Mission will pay close attention to any information on casualties among the civilian population, which should be catalogued in a separate thematic report.

On the anniversary of the bloody coup d'état in Kyiv, which was inspired, organized and sponsored from abroad and which, for opportunistic political purposes, the "Maidan victors" dubbed the "revolution of dignity", Ukraine found this very dignity being put to the test. Its citizens who had been waiting for weeks to be evacuated from the Chinese province affected by the viral epidemic were finally brought home. I think everyone saw how they were received outside the treatment facilities. The security forces had to clear a path through aggressive protesters, who were blocking the road and hurling stones at the buses carrying the Ukrainian evacuees. This violence has already been condemned by the Office of the UN System Resident Coordinator in Ukraine. And shortly before that, residents of a number of Ukrainian regions gathered at spontaneous rallies with just one demand – that the evacuees should not be housed in their region. There have even been calls from the west of Ukraine to isolate people by sending them to the radiation-contaminated Chernobyl exclusion zone. We will not dwell on the ethical side of this issue. We merely note that what happened was a manifestation of the systemic crisis of governance and communication between the authorities and society brought about by the coup d'état. Against this background, the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine announced the launch of a project, some kind of "national platform for reconciliation and unity", for dialogue with the inhabitants of Donbas. The people of Donbas have not only been able to see how the Government conducts such dialogue with the country's citizens from the treatment of the Ukrainian evacuees, but also felt it for themselves in the night of 22 February during the shelling of almost a dozen residential buildings in Oleksandrivka in the Donetsk region carried out by the Ukrainian armed forces with 30 mm guns.

The political forces that came to power following the 2014 coup d'état made aggressive nationalism the State ideology in Ukraine and set the standard for discrimination and infringement of the fundamental human rights of entire population groups in the country. The current Ukrainian leadership is generous with its rhetoric about national reconciliation, but instead of real steps towards such reconciliation it is moving in the opposite direction. Discrimination continues in the linguistic, religious, cultural, economic and political fields.

Indulging manifestations of radical nationalism and neo-Nazism has become a kind of emblem of the Maidan authorities. It is still going on today. The glorification of Nazi accomplices from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the official introduction of “notable dates” associated with them as public holidays, and the tolerance of the excesses of neo-Nazis, who insult the memory of those who fought against fascism, have become commonplace in Ukraine. Programmes to educate young people in the spirit of such “ideals” receive funding from the State budget.

The destructive momentum created by the “Maidan” still prevents the Ukrainian leadership from taking effective measures to resolve the crisis in the east of the country. Despite the vote of no confidence in Petro Poroshenko's regime delivered by the Ukrainian electorate, their hopes for change and peace in the country have still not been realized. Before it could gather strength, the positive momentum that emerged after Volodymyr Zelenskyi came to power has given way again to bellicose rhetoric calling into question a political and diplomatic settlement.

The Ukrainian Government still has no intention of fulfilling in good faith its commitments under the Minsk Package of Measures and the agreements of the leaders of the Normandy Four countries. Furthermore, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Vadym Prystaiko, when recently addressing the UN, once again justified the need to revise the Minsk Package of Measures endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 2202, a number of provisions of which allegedly “cannot be implemented”. The facts show that the Ukrainian Government simply lacks the political will to fulfil its commitments in accordance with the letter of that document; this was once again also demonstrated by yesterday's meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. In that regard, we note the position voiced on 26 February by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama, namely that the Minsk agreements should be implemented without any ifs or buts. We would like to recall that the only path to peace in eastern Ukraine lies in the implementation in good faith by the parties – the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk – of their obligations stemming from the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements of 12 February 2015, which has been recognized as the sole valid framework under international law for a settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.