



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **Ongoing Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine**

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Daniel Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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The United States remains deeply concerned by the ongoing attacks by Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, which have killed many hundreds and continue to wreak havoc on a population that seeks a united, secure, and prosperous future. While the government of Ukraine and the international community continue to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict, Russia and the separatists continue to violate the September 5 Minsk Protocol. Separatists continue to attack Ukrainian security forces, and Russia has not removed its weapons from Ukrainian territory.

As millions of Ukrainians cast their ballots to select their legislative representatives in Parliament through a legitimate democratic process on October 26, we were disturbed by reports that Russia-backed separatists were interfering in this process. Furthermore, we note that a number of reported Russian military personnel and intelligence agents were detained in Ukraine while attempting to undermine the elections. Despite resolute efforts by legitimate electoral authorities to organize elections throughout Ukraine, Russia-backed forces succeeded in effectively disenfranchising millions of voters in occupied Crimea and some regions of Luhansk and Donetsk, depriving them of their right to vote. In particular, we were appalled by reports that members of the self-styled "Luhansk People's Republic" distributed leaflets which threatened to execute all those who participated in the election as well as the members of the election commission. This is deplorable and unacceptable.

We are also alarmed by reports that Russia-backed separatists are threatening to conduct so-called "elections" in separatist-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions on November 2, in violation of Ukrainian law, Ukraine's constitution, and Russia's commitments made under the Minsk Protocol. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's statement that Russia is prepared to recognize the results of these so-called elections violates the pledges Russia and the separatists made in Minsk. Step nine of the Minsk Protocol states that the parties agreed, "to hold pre-term local elections in line with the Law on Special Status." Accordingly, it is clear that the only legitimate local elections in eastern Ukraine will be held on December 7.

Mr. Chair, we are concerned to hear reports that Russia plans to send another convoy to Ukraine without consent of the Ukrainian government and not in line with ICRC procedures. As with the three previous Russian convoys, neither the Ukrainian government nor the international community have any idea what will be in the trucks, who will be driving them, and what they will be taking in and out of Ukraine. We urge Russia to work through international and humanitarian organizations to administer aid, in accordance with international standards.

Mr. Chair, we are deeply concerned about new criminal charges expected to be filed against Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who is currently undergoing a forced psychiatric evaluation in Russia's infamous psychiatric hospital, the Serbskiy Center. These new charges—that she illegally crossed the border into Russia—defy logic. Ms. Savchenko was abducted in eastern Ukraine by Russia-backed separatists and smuggled to Russia against her will. Her detention, which earlier this week was extended through February 13, is an outrage and a violation of Russia's commitments under the Minsk agreement. We urge Russia to release her immediately.

Mr. Chair, we have seen reports indicating the use of cluster munitions in eastern Ukraine. The United States shares the international community's concern about the humanitarian impact of the indiscriminate use of all munitions, including cluster munitions. We note that Ukrainian authorities have stated that they did not use cluster munitions and have not and are not targeting populated areas. We continue to call on all actors to take every precaution to protect innocent lives and support an impartial investigation into allegations of abuses. I welcome the Ukrainian Ambassador's statement that Ukraine supports a thorough investigation, and values the role of Human Rights Watch.

Crimea remains an integral part of Ukraine. We reiterate our grave concern over the widespread, systematic harassment of Crimean Tatars, ethnic minorities, and others who oppose the Russian occupation of Crimea. We continue to receive reports of threats, violence, and murder against the Tatar community and others who have refused Russian citizenship. Recent reports of intimidation of pro-Ukraine Crimeans who refused to provide detailed personal information to Russian occupying "authorities" conducting a census in the region are disturbing. We note that, despite public assurances from occupying "authorities" that raids on Tatar homes and institutions would cease, these alarming incidents have continued, with several reported in recent days. We are also concerned by apparently increasing efforts to undermine the Crimean Tatar Mejlis and co-opt the Tatar community through the creation of alternative Kremlin-loyal bodies of Tatar community self-governance. We also condemn the ongoing harassment and intimidation of independent media outlets and journalists in Crimea and stress the importance of media freedom and journalists' safety. We call on Russia to end its occupation of Crimea and support calls for the international monitoring of conditions in this region. Today's side event underscored the urgency of the situation, and indeed a recommendation of the human rights defenders was that the international community presence is needed.

Mr. Chair, as we have stated before, the fastest way to a sustainable peace in the region is for the separatists, and their Russian backers, to implement the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum immediately. This includes: ending all attacks; removing all Russian fighters, weapons and equipment from Ukraine; returning the Ukrainian side of the international border to the Ukrainian government's control; establishing a heavy weapons-free security buffer zone on both sides of the international border, to include meaningful OSCE monitoring and verification; and releasing all hostages—including Nadiya Savchenko and Oleg Sentsov.

The United States will continue to stand with the people of Ukraine and their new government as they forge ahead in their determined efforts to strengthen national unity and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.