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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1339th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 October 2021

**On the deteriorating situation in Ukraine and the continued non-implementation by the
Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements**

Madam Chairperson,

During the reports to the OSCE Permanent Council on 7 October, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Mikko Kinnunen, and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), Yaşar Halit Çevik, emphasized the deteriorating security situation in eastern Ukraine.

Numerous unpunished violations of the ceasefire agreements in force, new fortifications near the line of contact in Donbas, the deployment of heavy equipment in residential areas, and an increase in the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements are all leading to new casualties and destruction. The number of civilian casualties in Donbas is breaking sorry records – three quarters of them over the past four months have been recorded in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Twice as many civilian objects have also been damaged there.

On 25 September, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Lieutenant General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, announced the presence of sniper teams of the Ukrainian armed forces at the line of contact. It is obvious that their “work” in violation of the ceasefire-strengthening measures of 22 July 2020 is not conducive to a swift political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict. The sad results are already manifesting themselves: according to reports from the Donetsk municipal authorities, on 9 October a resident of the settlement of Oleksandrivka was injured while in the courtyard of his home as a result of a single shot fired from a Ukrainian armed forces position. We expect the SMM to verify this information promptly and reflect it in its reports.

Against this background, the external “handlers” of the current Ukrainian authorities continue to flood the country with lethal weapons. The latest consignment of weapons, ammunition and equipment worth 60 million US dollars arrived from the United States of America at Kyiv’s Boryspil airport on 10 October. Which towns in Donbas will they be firing at with this ammunition?

The Ukrainian Government’s military operation in Donbas has been going on for more than seven and a half years. During this time, a whole generation of children, who started school last month, has been

born and raised on both sides of the line of contact. They have not had a peaceful life. These are the children of the people of Donbas – including those who were forced to take up arms to defend their right not to recognize the results of the bloody coup d'état in Kyiv in February 2014, accompanied by unprecedented foreign interference in the internal political affairs of Ukraine at the time.

Despite the provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures endorsed by the United Nations Security Council about the need to grant special status to certain areas of Donbas on a permanent basis by the end of 2015, nothing has been done so far. Such a status would enable the region's residents to secure their linguistic, cultural and other rights as part of Ukraine. And generally speaking, it would provide a basis for a lasting settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis. However, the scenario of establishing military control over the territory of the region without any political guarantees for its population has still not been ruled out in Kyiv. This is evidenced, for example, by the Ukrainian Government's active pushing through of a draft law on the so-called "transition period" – it is currently being considered by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament). The draft law does not provide for any special status for Donbas. Instead, it envisages the creation of some kind of civil-military administrations on those territories that the Ukrainian Government expects to be occupied by the Ukrainian military and security forces. This completely contravenes the Minsk agreements.

By wagering on nation-building based on the worst form of nationalism, all the "post-Maidan authorities" of Ukraine have only deepened the civil divide and contributed to a greater polarization of society. Experiments with the rewriting of history and the State policy of glorifying Nazi collaborators in particular are not helping to normalize the situation.

It was not so long ago that we were discussing here the 80th anniversary of the shooting of civilians at Babi Yar in Kyiv. We spoke about how it is inadmissible to glorify the Ukrainian nationalists who were complicit in Hitler's crimes on the territory of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, this policy is actively pursued in Ukraine.

Last week, members of the Lviv regional council declared 2022 to be the year of the so-called Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in the region. We would remind you that this army is tainted by massive bloody crimes, including the Volhynia (Wołyń) massacre. But in Ukraine, members of this paramilitary structure are going to be honoured as "heroes". A list of events commemorating the 80th anniversary of its creation in 1942 is set to be presented by 1 December. In three days' time, on 14 October, at the instigation of the central Ukrainian authorities, the anniversary of the UPA's creation will be marked as part of the Defenders of Ukraine Day celebrations.

Roman Shukhevych, a functionary of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, succeeded in becoming the "commander-in-chief" of the UPA. When the Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union, he crossed the border as part of the Abwehr battalion Nachtigall and took part in punitive operations against the civilian population and in battles with Red Army units. Under the slogans of Ukrainian nationalism, he co-organized actions to exterminate civilians in western Ukraine, among them Poles, Jews and other nationalities. Today, the image of Shukhevych adorns the banners hoisted by those who, under these very same slogans, seek to suppress dissent in eastern Ukraine by military means.

But it is becoming increasingly difficult to oppose such initiatives by the authorities, which are dividing Ukrainian society. The systematic nature of the policy of suppressing dissent in Ukraine is confirmed, for example, by the policy of obstructing the work of those media outlets that dare to express a viewpoint that is disagreeable to the authorities. Their activities are suppressed without any trial, investigation or right to legal defence. On 25 August, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro, expressed concern about the practice of such sanctions against media outlets and journalists.

Last week, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada Al-Nashif, also emphasized this topic at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

All the aforementioned dangerous trends – the sabotage of the settlement of the conflict in Donbas, the clampdown on rights and fundamental freedoms, and the pandering to nationalistic and neo-Nazi manifestations – are examples of the bloody-mindedness of the policy pursued for the country by the current authorities of Ukraine. We call on their external “handlers” and the relevant OSCE structures to exert all possible influence to ensure that the Ukrainian Government fulfils its international obligations.

Thank you for your attention.