

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1000th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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Regarding the situation in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

The continuing lie as regards Russia's violation of OSCE commitments on the territory of Ukraine and the statements about the alleged aggression are clearly intended as provocation. They do not contribute to a consolidation of the efforts of the international community, first and foremost the signatories to the Geneva statement of 17 April, to help stabilize the situation in Ukraine and are instead undermining them.

The reality is that the sensational claims about the presence of some Russian saboteurs on Ukrainian territory are completely unfounded. We remember how this audience was shown photographs of bearded middle-aged men who allegedly were members of the special forces of the Main Intelligence Directorate. They were even published in newspapers. Later, however, retractions were made. Now the image of the bearded "bogyman" is very popular among the protesters in the south-east.

There have been reports, which, however, only the authorities in Kyiv can confirm, that the Ukrainian intelligence services have instructions to capture Russian citizens across the country who do not have relatives in Ukraine and pass them off as saboteurs.

It is completely ludicrous to claim to see "Moscow's hand" in the fact that the report of the Human Rights Assessment Mission undertaken by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities mentions vehicles with Russian number plates, which brought demonstrators to anti-Maidan rallies.

Nevertheless, the purpose of this "propaganda" is quite clear. A terrifying image of the "Russian threat" and mythical external aggression is being created, which can be used to mask the complete inability to solve the country's own serious socio-economic problems and avoid heated discussion with fellow citizens in the east and south.

This argument has been embraced with enthusiasm by NATO. At last, there is an opportunity to breathe fresh life into this throwback from the Cold War. All questions

regarding what NATO will do after the withdrawal from Afghanistan planned for the end of the year are immediately off the agenda.

This policy is even more useful for those who are now in power in Kyiv. The need to deal with the “Russian threat” can be used to explain a multitude of sins: punitive operations in the east of the country, increased spending on the army, a reduction in the already pitiful salaries of public sector employees, the creation of paramilitary units from among the ranks of Right Sector militants and other “Maidan units”. Lastly, it justifies the horrific events in Odessa on 2 May, the violence in Mariupol on 9 May and host of other things. Given the information monopoly of Ukrainian television, it is easy to create the “climate of fear and intimidation” that some of our colleagues speak of.

If we are talking about violations of OSCE commitments in Ukraine, we should first take a closer look at the actions of the authorities in Kyiv. This not only concerns the punitive operation, the violent persecution of dissidents and the media “under siege”. It also concerns the blatant pandering to ultra-radicals. Anyone who says Nazism does not exist in Ukraine should pay more attention to the actions and statements of the Right Sector and the Svoboda Party. Not so long ago, European Union (EU) representatives assessed this party and its leaders from a more objective standpoint. The European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2012 on the admission of the Svoboda Party to the Verkhovna Rada contains a clear condemnation of its views, which go against the EU’s fundamental values and principles, and appealed to pro-democratic parties in the Verkhovna Rada not to co-operate with Svoboda.

The radicals’ ideology has not changed. On the Internet they are calling for “Ukraine and Crimea to be cleansed” of Russian-speaking citizens. There are thousands of these ultranationalists, and the best evidence of this is the formation of the so-called National Guard from among the ranks of right-wing radicals.

The explanations provided by the deputy governor of Dnipropetrovsk province, Boris Filatov, fit in perfectly with this cynical ideology. He described on his Facebook page how to deal with the actions of those who are dissatisfied with the new authorities in Kyiv: “This scum should be given promises, guarantees, and any concessions. Then we will hang them”.

The policy of the Kyiv regime is leading to rampant neo-Nazism, manifestations of anti-Semitism and xenophobia, including on a day-to-day level, confiscation of property, degradation and robberies, including on trains. Representatives of various national minorities, including Czechs, Hungarians, Jews and Russian-speaking citizens, feel themselves in danger.

I shall touch on only a few facts attesting to the manifestations of anti-Semitism, which our Western partners claim does not exist in Ukraine. On 24 February, four extremists carried out an arson attack on a synagogue in Zaporizhia. On 8 March of this year, unknown assailants set fire to a Jewish memorial in Chyhyryn in Cherkasy province with the aid of Molotov cocktails. It had been erected in 2012 near a cemetery where the graves of Hassidic elders had been discovered. On 13 March, Rabbi Hillel Cohen was assaulted by neo-Nazis in Kyiv. He was beaten and stabbed twice. On 14 March, a group of neo-Nazis followed a Hassidic couple (citizens of Israel and the United States) in the Ukrainian capital as they made their way to the synagogue. At the last minute, the couple managed to jump into a taxi,

which was pelted with stones. On 8 April, vandals painted swastikas and offensive graffiti on dozens of houses in Odessa. A memorial to the Jewish dead near Tolbukhin Square and the Jewish section at Tairov cemetery were also defaced with swastikas. The vandals sprayed the words "Right Sector" and "Glory to Ukraine" on the cemetery fence.

On 9 April, the memorial to victims of the Holocaust was desecrated in Odessa. Vandals painted swastikas and the neo-Nazi Wolfsangel (Wolf's Hook) symbol on the monument to the memory of the tens of thousands of inhabitants of Odessa murdered on 19 October 1941. In the early hours of 19 April, vandals threw Molotov cocktails at the entrance to the synagogue in Mykolaiv. On 2 May, during the tragedy in Odessa, Ukrainian nationalists were heard shouting the slogan: "Drown the Yids in Russian blood". According to the most recent report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, members of the Jewish community in Lviv continue to experience discrimination at the hands of the local authorities and are afraid to approach the police out of fear for their lives.

Yet another deplorable fact testifies to the confrontational attitude of the Kyiv authorities. Just a few days ago Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, was denied entry to Ukraine. He was on a purely peaceful mission, namely to congratulate Metropolitan Iriney of Dnipropetrovsk and Pavlograd on his 75th birthday. What is behind this aggressive attack on the Russian Orthodox Church, millions of whose followers of different nationalities live in Ukraine? Why the need to introduce a religious factor into such a highly charged situation?

We are no longer surprised that our Western colleagues remain stubbornly silent about the Russophobic utterances of the new political élite in Ukraine and the persecution and battering of anyone who disagrees with the new authorities. Anything that does not fit in with the preconceived scenario is rejected. Anything that does not tally with Washington's point of view is declared a lie. We have not forgotten, however, who in fact lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq or about civilian mass graves in the village of Račak. And now such lies are being spread about Russia and the Ukrainian citizens in the south-east of the country, who are being called terrorists and separatists.

At previous meetings we asked our colleagues to confirm that there were no employees of United States private security firms on the territory of Ukraine. We were assured that there were no such persons there. However, reports have now appeared not in the Russian media, but in the Western media, in particular the well-known German newspaper *Bild*, about the presence of foreign mercenaries in Ukraine after all. We have seen a denial by the United States National Security Council, referring for some reason to a press release from March by the firm Academi. It is now May. This is not convincing. United States mercenaries are actively involved in co-ordinating the actions of the Ukrainian security forces in the punitive operation in the south-east of the country.

Russia is constantly being enjoined to do things it has already done or not to do things it is in fact not doing. At the meeting on Monday and at the Forum for Security Co-operation yesterday, recent aerial photographs of Russian military facilities taken, incidentally, by United States observers were compared with similar material obtained a year or two ago. They concerned facilities that some of our partners have expressed concerns about, wishing to invoke procedures under Chapter III of the Vienna Document on Confidence-and Security-Building Measures (Taman, Boguchar, Rostov-on-Don, Belgorod, Novorossiysk, Kushchevskaya, Morozovsk and Primorsko-Akhtarsk). The comparison showed that there

has been no build-up of equipment at these facilities. Our Ukrainian colleague was not there. If there is anything the representatives of the United States and the EU did not understand, we can repeat the presentation.

As for the calls for us to make high-level statements in support of de-escalating the situation in Ukraine, we have already done so on many occasions – and at different levels, including with respect to the voting on 11 May in the Donetsk and Luhansk provinces of Ukraine. The inhabitants of these provinces clearly demonstrated their desire to decide for themselves on matters of vital importance for them. The events in Ukraine once again confirm the need for the establishment without delay of broad national dialogue with the participation of all political forces and regions of the country. In response to our Ukrainian colleague's comments on the round table, we should point out that it was attended by persons appointed by Kyiv, in particular the oligarch Serhiy Taruta. Even the Western media note that these negotiations will not bear fruit without the participation of those who really represent the interests of the south-eastern regions.

What have the EU and the United States done to implement the Geneva agreements? They are party to these agreements, just like Ukraine and Russia, but studiously pretend that there are just the two countries and that the commitments under the Geneva statement do not apply to them. Can you name any specific steps on the part of Washington and Brussels to implement the Geneva agreements? There have been no public appeals by President Obama or by the high representatives of the European Union to the authorities in Kyiv to stop the violence against their own people and to begin real dialogue with the regions, as required by the Geneva agreements. Instead there are statements of a different kind, which simply encourage Kyiv to continue its punitive actions.

Against this background, we should like to mention once again the efforts of the Chairperson-in-Office and his entire team, which has been working on a road map. We trust that all those interested in a peaceful settlement of the situation in Ukraine will make every effort to implement it.

As for Crimea, it is not a subject for consideration in the context of the situation in Ukraine. We therefore see no need to respond to the various assumptions and insinuations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me say a few words about the report of the Human Rights Assessment Mission to Ukraine. Unfortunately, there can be no talk of this document objectively reflecting the human rights situation in Ukraine. The document has blatantly been made to order. This is not surprising either. We know who initiated and paid for it.

Despite the promises to cover the entire territory of the country, the experts' work focused on the south-eastern regions and on the situation in Crimea during one week in mid-March at a time, incidentally, when Crimea was in a state of transition. Other provinces were virtually ignored. In the ODIHR report, for example, only one paragraph mentions a "limited number" of reports of "ethnic intolerance" against the Russian minority in the west of Ukraine. It describes how ethnic Russians are "at times" perceived as opposing the "Maidan" movement and, as such, experience "disapproval" and "at times" provocations.

This contrasts with what we have seen in the media and on the Internet, and the countless letters and appeals by citizens and other right-wing and criminal outrages on the part of the ultra-radicals. We are certain that the ODIHR is aware of these facts. However, they are careful not to mention this “harsh truth”.

This, to put it mildly, is not what we expected of the Mission. It does not help in any way to deal with the excesses that occurred on the Maidan nor shed any light on the story with the snipers.

Instead of this, it draws a staggering conclusion, claiming that following the seizure of power in Kyiv it was the supporters of the Maidan who suffered most.

All things considered, we believe that with this work the ODIHR has done great harm to its reputation. It has demonstrated political bias and prejudice. Worse still, when the people mentioned in the report become aware of its content not only will the image of the ODIHR suffer but also that of OSCE as a whole.

Thank you for your attention.