



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

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

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
September 18, 2014

The United States condemns, in the strongest terms, Russia's direct military intervention in eastern Ukraine, its continuing efforts to destabilize the country, and its ongoing occupation of Crimea. Despite the plan outlined in the September 5 Minsk Protocol that includes a cease-fire agreement, Russian troops continue to reinforce separatist positions in eastern Ukraine. These separatists continue their attacks against Ukrainian positions. Last weekend, separatist forces again shelled Donetsk, especially near the Donetsk airport. Even OSCE monitors came under fire and sustained serious damage to their vehicles, as we earlier noted in our response to Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) Chief Monitor Apakan. These actions are intolerable and escalate tensions at a time that demands cooperation, transparency, and restraint.

This past weekend, Russia continued its violation of Ukrainian sovereignty by sending more than 200 trucks into Ukraine without the permission of Ukrainian authorities, supposedly to provide humanitarian aid. Several news outlets have reported indications that the convoy offloaded military equipment in Ukrainian territory. These actions are hardly in keeping with either international law or the spirit of the Minsk Protocol.

Due to Russia's direct military intervention and continuing efforts to destabilize Ukraine, the United States—joining the European Union—announced deepened sanctions against Russia's energy, financial, and defense sectors. These sanctions will further isolate Russia from international trading and business partners if it continues its aggressive pattern of actions and violations of international law. As President Obama has stated, Russia must abide by its commitments to implement the Minsk Protocol before discussions can begin about sanctions being rolled back.

Mr. Chair, we applaud the Ukrainian Parliament's passage of laws on Amnesty and Special Status for select parts of Donetsk and Luhansk. This highlights Ukraine's commitment to the Minsk Protocol and to resolve the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine peacefully. The United States also continues to support President Poroshenko's Peace Plan and the government's efforts to find a peaceful solution to the entire crisis. President Poroshenko has stressed his continued commitment to a way forward that includes decentralization, the free use of the Russian language, state-assisted housing, and job creation. But Ukrainian resolve alone will not bring peace. Russia and the separatists it supports must end their destabilizing actions in Ukraine and follow through on their obligations under the Minsk Protocol.

We also continue to reject Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and reject the so-called regional and local elections in Crimea on September 14. The United States does not recognize the legitimacy of these so-called elections and will not acknowledge their outcome. In addition, we are concerned by numerous reports that de-facto authorities in Crimea are mistreating Crimean Tatars and other minorities on a widespread basis. For instance, earlier this week, police officers and armed men entered and searched the Mejlis, the Tatar legislative assembly. The Mejlis raid, the prosecution of Mejlis member Esadullah Bairov, and raids on local mosques and madrassas appear to be further manifestations of the mounting pressure on Tatar communities under the cover of "extremism" legislation. Russia also continues to deny re-entry of residents into Crimea. These actions are unacceptable and we call for an immediate end to such practices.

Mr. Chair, it is now time for Russia to implement its own commitments. Russia must withdraw its forces, weapons and equipment from Ukraine; Russia must do its part to secure and respect the international border between the two countries; it must ensure that all hostages are released; and it must support the implementation of a buffer zone along both sides of the border, monitored by the OSCE. Russia must also prevail on separatists to stop violating the ceasefire.

The United States will continue to support the democratic, sovereign, unified and stable Ukraine that its people yearn for and deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.