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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1334th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 September 2021

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The process for settling the crisis in Ukraine is not making any headway. The situation is deteriorating, as was confirmed by the discussions that took place on 31 August during the special session on Ukraine at the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference.

Around 4,700 violations have been tallied by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) since the beginning of August. Over this period, the conflict has claimed seven casualties, of whom two were fatal. On 31 August, the SMM confirmed that two children – a seven-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy – had been injured after coming under fire in the garden of their house in the town of Horlivka in certain areas of the Donetsk region. These children will see in the start of the new academic year in hospital. We expect the Mission to reflect in its reports as soon as possible the circumstances of this cruel shelling – that is, the type and calibre of the weapons used and the direction of fire. Judging from the report, the SMM monitors know the children's address.

The escalation of tensions along the line of contact during the run-up to the new academic year prompted the urgent convocation of an extraordinary meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group's Security Working Group at the request of the representatives of Donetsk. Unfortunately, the Ukrainians once again sidestepped the proposals by the representatives of Donbas for a substantive discussion on the procedure for the involvement of a co-ordination mechanism for responding to ceasefire violations through the facilitation of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination in its current setting – that is, with the participation of representatives of the Ukrainian armed forces and the armed formations of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This, by the way, is explicitly provided for by the ceasefire-strengthening measures that were agreed on back in July last year.

The fact that strengthening the ceasefire and enhancing the mechanism for monitoring it are among the priority tasks was brought up at the aforementioned Conference by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), Mikko Kinnunen. Nevertheless, the course of the discussions at the TCG on this and other issues pertaining to the settlement process continues to be disappointing.

It is quite obvious that neither the Ukrainian Government nor its foreign political sponsors have any need at all for peace on the basis of dialogue with the authorities in Donbas. For them it is more important to maintain tensions within Ukraine itself as they liberally sprinkle Russophobia and myths about “Russian aggression” into their explanations as to why the suffering of that country’s inhabitants must continue.

During the recent visit by the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to the United States of America, the allocation to the Ukrainian Government of a new military aid package worth around 60 million US dollars was announced: part of that package will be used to secure supplies of US-made Javelin missile systems. To induce those in Kyiv to feel confident about their military capabilities and put their faith in the notion of resolving the conflict in Donbas by force, a series of joint military exercises with NATO countries are being conducted on Ukrainian territory this year. Foreign formations regularly arrive to take part in these exercises together with weapons and equipment. Some of this equipment is left behind in Ukraine.

Stationed on a rotational basis in a number of regions of Ukraine, groups of foreign military instructors are training Ukrainian military personnel in the “art of war” and helping them to practise offensive operations in urban terrain. For example, a relevant training complex was built in the settlement of Starychi (the Yavoriv military training ground) and US and Canadian military personnel are based there. Visits by foreign military to Donbas also happen quite frequently.

This begs the question of how all this squares with the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, which stipulates the withdrawal of all foreign armed formations and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring by the OSCE.

Incidentally, it is not quite clear why the SMM is ignoring the so noticeable foreign military activity on the territory of Ukraine. In accordance with its mandate, the Mission is tasked with reporting on the security situation in the area where it is present. As is known, the SMM has ten regional teams, which carry out monitoring throughout the entire territory of Ukraine, including those regions in which military exercises involving foreign armed formations and military equipment are taking place. Significantly, it is asserted in public by the leadership of Ukraine that this military activity is bound to have an impact on the security situation in the country.

We must stress that the militarization of Ukraine, whereby the country is being pumped full with foreign weaponry, is not in keeping with the letter and the spirit of the Minsk agreements; it is not helping to swiftly establish peace in eastern Ukraine and is undermining the OSCE’s efforts to that end.

On 8 August, a draft law was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) on the “State policy of the transitional period in the temporarily occupied territories”. Detailed analysis of its provisions leads one to the conclusion that this instrument is aimed at undermining the Minsk agreements and legislatively formalizing the policy of seeking to sabotage implementation of the provisions of the Package of Measures. By the way, the Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly pointed out that the document was sent for examination to the embassies of the Group of Seven (G7) countries. Does this therefore mean that the scuppering of the Minsk agreements has been approved by the Ukrainian Government’s foreign “handlers”.

We have taken note of the visit by the co-ordinator of the TCG Working Group on Economic Issues, Herbert Salber, to Donetsk and Luhansk from 17 to 19 August. He was able to have useful discussions with representatives of the local authorities. All this is doubtless not only helping the co-ordinator to be better informed about the real situation in certain areas of Donbas, but also paving the way for effective work within the Working Group. We would also point out that he did not make an issue out of compliance with public health recommendations in connection with his visit.

It would be good for the other co-ordinators and participants in the settlement process, and also for the OSCE leadership, to likewise acquaint themselves personally with the real situation in Donbas. As we can see, the argument that the local authorities are allegedly incapable of guaranteeing the physical safety of visitors from the OSCE does not stand up to scrutiny; nor do the comments about the anti-COVID entry requirements being impossible to fulfil.

The situation in Ukraine with regard to respect for rights and fundamental freedoms, including ensuring that the press are able to work unhindered, remains disheartening. Extrajudicial punishment continues to be meted out to “undesirable” media outlets and journalists. It is impossible to list all such instances. I would merely remind you that almost 500 Internet resources, along with dozens of Ukrainian and foreign television channels, are affected.

Ukraine is arguably the only OSCE participating State that is imposing certain “sanctions” on its own citizens. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro, expressed her concern over this practice in a press release of 25 August. She emphasizes that the recent restrictive measures adopted by the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine have barred the public from accessing a number of outlets, including such popular ones as *Strana* and *Vedomosti*, among others. In her view, this points to “undue interference” by the State in the media’s work. Extrajudicial repression also clearly puts a question mark over the rule of law in Ukraine.

We once again call on Ukraine’s foreign “handlers” to take appropriate measures so that the Ukrainian authorities abandon their reprehensible practice of flouting international obligations. This also concerns the need to ensure an appropriate dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk on the basis of the Minsk agreements, which were developed with the OSCE’s involvement and endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202.

Thank you for your attention.