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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1037th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 January 2015

**On the situation in Ukraine and violations of the Minsk agreements by the
Ukrainian authorities**

Mr. Chairperson,

According to my estimates, we have held some 70 discussions on the internal Ukrainian crisis at Permanent Council meetings. However, honest attempts at constructive discussion of the true causes of what is happening or to seek a way out of this situation together have been extremely rare. Once again, what we are hearing today are merely hollow accusations that Russia is engaging in aggressive actions of some sort, when in fact we should be discussing the aggressive actions of the Ukrainian authorities against their own citizens living in Donbas.

Recent events have once again confirmed what we have been warning our colleagues about, including here in the OSCE Permanent Council. The truce announced in the conflict zone in late December was used by Kyiv to build up its offensive potential and prepare for another attempt to resolve the situation by military means.

Kyiv has been preparing for war all this time and is not hiding its intentions. Forces and materiel, including heavy weapons, have been assembled along the line of contact, fresh waves of mobilization have been announced, and plans for disproportionate militarization of the economy are being made.

We can now see the results, as the Ukrainian security forces commit considerable forces and step up the intensity of the shelling of towns and villages, cynically referring to these criminal acts that kill the elderly, women and children as “exercising the right to self-defence”. According to the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination, from 23 to 27 January alone, 29 civilians were killed and 57 wounded. On 27 January, Luhansk and its suburbs came under rocket and artillery fire from the Ukrainian security forces. The Kyivsky, Kuibyshevsky and Petrovsky districts of Donetsk as well as Horlivka and Yenakiieve also came under fire. Over the past 24 hours, 68 shelling attacks on the civilian population were recorded. Neither Washington nor London, let alone Ottawa, have bothered to demand that the Ukrainian authorities stop these deadly actions.

Given all this, we do not see the slightest sign of willingness by Kyiv to put a stop to the hostilities, engage in dialogue with the population of eastern Ukraine that disagrees with Kyiv or begin the process of a political settlement and a comprehensive constitutional reform, which many European countries, the United Nations Security Council, the Council of Europe and other international organizations are calling for.

Generally speaking, the logic behind the Kyiv leadership's actions is clear. If a settlement process takes the place of hostilities, how then will they be able to ask Western capitals for more money and weapons or demand that increased pressure be put on Russia to make it more accommodating? Hence, all the loud talk about aggression and the made-up figures about a Russian military presence that grows with every day. It is impossible to miss the fact that some recent tragedies are being deliberately used by Kyiv to substantiate its requests and demands. This is what happened the other day during a NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting, at the Davos forum and, most likely, will happen again today at a meeting of the Council of the European Union.

Once again, I should like to point out that of the 12 provisions of the Minsk Protocol Kyiv remembers only the one about border monitoring. For some reason, it tends to forget about all of its other obligations, in particular the law on the special status of the region, about amnesty, and about improving the humanitarian situation in Donbas and the programme for its reconstruction.

Let me now turn to Donbas. The Kyiv authorities are ratcheting up the measures to suffocate the residents of Donbas and have organized what is for all practical purposes a complete blockade. In addition to stopping social benefits for people who are fully entitled to them, they are blocking the delivery of food, medicines and other essential items. All cargo is halted by volunteer battalions. As a matter of fact, there is only one supply line left – Russian humanitarian aid. But this is not enough: they continue to destroy infrastructure such as hospitals and water and power supply facilities. United Nations humanitarian agencies, Doctors Without Borders and other non-governmental organizations are sounding the alarm and warning of an impending humanitarian disaster. We would like to receive a clear answer to a simple question: does Kyiv believe that Donbas is part of Ukraine or not? If it does not, then many things become clear for us.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the Ukrainian authorities are trying to make the conditions unbearable for the people living in the areas that they do not control. The number of refugees, which began to decline at the end of last year, has increased sharply again. Many of them are once again fleeing to Russia.

More and more people in Ukraine are beginning to realize where their war-obsessed leaders are pushing them and refuse to be accomplices to crimes against their own people. According to some sources, including Ukrainian ones, growing numbers of young people are fleeing Ukraine in an attempt to dodge the draft.

In view of all this, we should like to make an appeal to the representatives of those States that can influence the Ukrainian leadership, primarily, the United States of America. It is time to stop pandering to the Ukrainian war party and its hawks, covering up their inhumane acts and emboldening them to continue military operations in eastern Ukraine. This can only lead to a major disaster.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have the opposite approach. Despite the complexity of the situation, we are convinced that achieving peace and harmony in Ukraine is a completely realistic prospect, but it must be based on inclusive national dialogue. It is clear that the rights and interests of all regions and citizens, without exception, must be fully guaranteed. We advocate the continuation of work within the Minsk process, which must be based for the main part on direct contacts by Kyiv with Donetsk and Luhansk. In this case, it is not important which people maintain these contacts. What matters is the authority and accountability for the decisions made.

We hope that the discussions started in Donetsk during preliminary consultations will continue, in particular, on topics such as a ceasefire, withdrawal of artillery and missile systems from the demarcation line, the start of work to determine the demarcation line and the exchange of prisoners.

Thank you for your attention.