

PC.DEL/232/15
27 February 2015

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1041st MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 February 2015

**On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the
Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

It would seem that the statements by the representatives of the European Union and the United States of America were written two weeks ago using old templates without any regard for what is happening, and since then there have been no attempts to refresh these templates.

The Paris meeting of the four Normandy format foreign ministers to review the implementation of the Minsk agreements of 12 February was conducted in a different tone.

It was recognized that the ceasefire is being observed for the most part and the frequency of the shelling has decreased significantly. The main thing now is to consolidate the ceasefire. Unfortunately, sporadic violations by both sides continue to be reported in a number of places. This is mentioned in the reports by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine and the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC).

We firmly believe that the withdrawal of heavy weapons should be carried out on a reciprocal basis and without delay, without waiting for the time “when not a single shot is fired” as Ukraine is insisting. There is no mention of such prerequisites in the Minsk agreements, which Mr. Petro Poroshenko, among others, also supported. All the conditions for the withdrawal are in place. A schedule and procedure for the withdrawal has been agreed. There is a decision on the establishment of a joint control commission with the participation of the representatives of the parties, the JCCC and the OSCE to verify the withdrawal process.

We should like to draw the Permanent Council’s attention to the fact that for several days now the insurgents have been withdrawing their heavy equipment on a unilateral basis. Yesterday, some 400 units of heavy weaponry were withdrawn from the contact zone. It is a pity that the representatives of the European Union and the United States doggedly strive not to notice this. According to the schedules submitted to the JCCC, the insurgent units hope to

complete the withdrawal of artillery systems with a calibre of 100 mm and more to the prescribed distance by 27 February. The Luhansk People's Republic has been withdrawing its heavy weapons for several days now. Today, it is doing so in the presence of observers from Stakhanov. It is regrettable that the European Union representative is not also aware of this. We welcome the determination of the Donbas insurgents to take these steps in order to create a security zone in line with the Minsk agreements.

Unfortunately, we have no confirmed information that the Ukrainian security forces are withdrawing their heavy weapons. There are merely claims that this will be done after a certain, sufficiently long interval and after the insurgent forces have withdrawn their heavy weapons. Let us be frank, the Minsk agreements make no provision for such a sequence, and such an approach contravenes the agreements.

The OSCE should assist the weapons withdrawal process with the support of the Contact Group (point 2). Point 3 of the Minsk Package of Measures provides for "effective monitoring and verification of the ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons on the part of the OSCE". The Normandy quartet ministers confirmed in Paris that the OSCE should indeed carry out this role. To that end, it has been decided to extend the SMM's mandate and increase the personnel, equipment and funding available to it. In that connection, there is no need to devise some kind of new monitoring formats.

We are puzzled at the fact that the Special Monitoring Mission was not immediately involved in directly observing the withdrawal process.

The monitors were repeatedly and specifically invited to observe the withdrawal of heavy equipment. They were provided with information regarding the withdrawal and granted access to all the relevant areas. The plan for the withdrawal of heavy weapons was agreed upon in the JCCC and the OSCE Mission is aware of it.

We note that today OSCE monitors have actively begun to carry out the functions entrusted to them of monitoring the withdrawal of heavy weapons from quite a number of points. In order to effectively verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons, the SMM will have to regularly patrol the entire security zone under the control of the insurgents and the Ukrainian armed forces in equal measure. We look forward to regular and informative reports on the results of this work. It would be useful if the Chief Monitor were to personally visit the sites where heavy weapons are being withdrawn. The leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics are willing to ensure his safety and security.

We once again remind delegates of the strictly civilian nature of the SMM, which is one of the most important factors for confidence in it by both parties.

The necessary conditions for the OSCE monitors' safety and security are not ensured in all areas within the withdrawal zone. Engineering work was planned for 24 and 25 February to clear up Donetsk airport terminal and remove the dead bodies of Ukrainian military personnel. Representatives of the SMM and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were to have been present. However, it proved impossible to obtain security guarantees from the Ukrainian side, and Donetsk airport once again came under fire from the Ukrainian military.

Mr. Chairperson,

We recall that the need for implementation of all the remaining points of the Minsk agreements of 12 February was reaffirmed in Paris. The Contact Group needs to get down to the practical consideration of these points as soon as possible and set up the relevant working groups.

Constitutional reform, the agreement of issues connected with the holding of municipal elections and the inclusion of these territories in the rest of the Ukrainian economy are of key importance for a sustainable settlement.

The need to establish dialogue on the restoration of socio-economic ties and the provision of banking services to the population of certain areas in Donbas was noted as a particular priority. It is crucial to ensure the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to the regions affected.

Unfortunately, we see the opposite happening. Kyiv's policy of a financial and economic blockade of Donbas continues. A border regime has to all intents and purposes been established along the demarcation line. The movement of people has been made extremely difficult by a complicated permits system. Shipments, including those containing food, are blocked or have unlawful levies imposed on them by volunteer battalions that are involved in looting and extortion.

We welcome the progress made in the process of exchanging prisoners. However, here too we have drawn attention to the fact that many of the people captured by the Ukrainian security forces had never held a weapon in their hands, and many of the insurgents released were subjected to torture while in captivity.

For our part, we maintain intensive contacts with the ICRC. We call on Kyiv not to prevent humanitarian aid from reaching Donbas. The Ukrainian representatives still have every opportunity to see for themselves the humanitarian nature of the cargo sent from Russia.

Mr. Chairperson,

We cannot but draw our colleagues' attention to the latest provocation against Russian journalists in Ukraine. Yesterday, Channel One journalists Elena Makarova and Sergey Korenev and NTV's Andrey Grigoryev were detained without explanation in Kyiv and subsequently deported. The entire territory of Ukraine is becoming an increasingly dangerous place for journalists. It is obvious that this incident is in line with the recent decisions to cancel the accreditation of Russian media with Ukrainian Government bodies. This is an attempt to create a totally controlled information space, in which not only the Ukrainian "Ministry of Truth" and the "Internet army" it has recruited are actively involved but also the law enforcement authorities.

We demand that the hounding of media representatives cease. We expect a clear and prompt response from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Overall, the situation regarding the law enforcement authorities and judicial system in Ukraine is cause for serious concern. Evidently, the lustration factor has an impact on the

independence of investigations and justice. The versions put forward in the investigation into the sniper affair on the Maidan were as surprising as they were absurd. No clear results have been presented in the case of the tragedy in Odessa either. On the other hand, those who witnessed or were involved in these events continue to disappear.

A veritable witch-hunt is unfolding in the country. The fate of the journalist Ruslan Kotsaba who stands accused of treason is cause for concern. A similar fate may await many more journalists, teachers, public figures and even bloggers or ordinary social media users, the protection of whose rights our Western colleagues are so concerned about.

We believe that the OSCE monitors could take a closer interest in at least the most high-profile cases, keep statistics on detentions and sentencing for “political reasons” and attend trials.

In conclusion, we should like to point out that very important words, the right words, are heard in Kyiv, including at the official level, regarding the need to find a formula that will enable all the inhabitants of Ukraine to co-operate and coexist in a single country, regardless of the region where they live, their political preferences, nationality, faith or language.

Such a formula needs to be found by the inhabitants of Ukraine themselves. But in order to do this it is important to stop engaging in self-destruction and fratricide. A year has elapsed since the Maidan activists brought about a regime change – long enough to look around and do some serious thinking.

Thank you for your attention.