



## **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  
December 18, 2014

As this is the last scheduled PC of 2014, it's a time to take stock. Next year, as we all know, marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. That Act, the founding document of this Organization, enshrined ten fundamental principles designed to guide the relationships among participating States. Those ten principles – referred to as the Decalogue – are the carefully negotiated and agreed foundation of this Organization and provide the means for ensuring comprehensive security for the States represented around this table, and most importantly, for our citizens.

Over the past eight months, through its actions in and around Ukraine, the Russian Federation has failed to uphold the principles in the Decalogue. Russia has violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and intervened in Ukraine's internal affairs. Russia has undermined efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully through the Minsk Protocol and agreements, to which Russia is a signatory, through continued military, political, and financial support of the armed separatists operating in eastern Ukraine. De-facto authorities in Crimea have abused the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people living there, and Russia has actively supported pro-Russia separatists as they abused the human rights of Ukrainians. Russia has made a mockery of the fundamental principle of self-determination through the so-called "referendum" held in Crimea. Russia's actions have undermined cooperation among States.

The consequences of Russia's actions are suffered every day by those killed and wounded in the fighting in Ukraine's Donbas region. They are felt by the people in eastern Ukraine struggling to find food and shelter in conflict areas, as highlighted recently by the United Nations. They are felt by the people of Crimea forced to live under an occupying power.

The cause of this crisis and the consequences that flow from it are clear. The way forward is equally clear. Russia and the separatists it backs must fully implement their commitments under the Minsk agreements. Russia must end its occupation of Crimea, and fulfill its obligations under international law. And any further militarization of the Crimean peninsula during Russia's occupation would be extraordinarily dangerous.

We were alarmed to hear of incidents on December 12 and December 15 that again threatened the safety of the Special Monitoring Mission's (SMM) patrols. We were relieved to hear that there were no injuries to SMM personnel. We reiterate our call for all actors to ensure that the SMM be allowed to operate in a secure environment.

We fully support the challenging work being done by the SMM. The entire team, led by Ambassador Apakan, demonstrates its professionalism, courage, and determination every day.

There has been some good news recently. We welcome reports that violence has decreased markedly in eastern Ukraine following the Government of Ukraine's unilateral announcement of a Day of Silence. This is a positive step and an opportunity to advance the prospects for a lasting political solution by fully implementing all components of the Minsk agreements. We are also encouraged to hear of a possible "all for all" prisoner exchange. We repeat our call for the immediate release of Nadia Savchenko and Oleg Sentsov, and all other illegally detained persons held in Russia or pro-Russia separatist-controlled areas.

We continue to see the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE as a platform that Russia and Ukraine should use to accelerate the implementation of the Minsk Protocol. We thank Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini for her continued expert service, and look forward to productive future meetings of the Contact Group.

Mr. Chair, in closing we encourage all to uphold their commitments under the Minsk agreements and move further on a productive path to a peaceful, political solution.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.