

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1048th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 April 2015

**Regarding the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
on assisting with the implementation of the Minsk agreements**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan. We greatly value the activities of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), whose monitors work in extremely difficult conditions.

We note the SMM's effective work in observing the implementation by the parties of the provisions of the February Package of Measures. For today, this is the top priority. As Ambassador Apakan stressed, the ceasefire regime does not hold everywhere on the line of contact. Armed clashes are breaking out anew. We share the SMM's concern about the subversive activities of the volunteer battalions in Shyrokyne and near Donetsk airport. We were particularly concerned by the information in the report citing the opinion of senior officers at the Russian-Ukrainian Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) that the skirmishes near Donetsk were provoked by some "third force". As we well know, this means the "Azov" volunteer battalion militants.

We welcome the SMM's support for dialogue on the ground aimed at de-escalating tension. In particular, we note the SMM's work together with the JCCC to secure a local truce in Shyrokyne. It is important that the monitors organized 24-hour duty there. We agree that reinforced SMM teams must be deployed in the most problematic sections of the line of contact. If the current human resources are not sufficient, the SMM has every means to increase them to 1,000 people, as provided for in its current mandate. In that connection, there has already been a decision to increase the number of monitors to 600. But that is just the first step.

We note the closer practical co-operation between the SMM and the JCCC and their joint efforts to prevent and put a timely end to violations. We particularly support the efforts aimed at withdrawing the forces of the parties to the conflict from the line of contact in Shyrokyne. We hope that this will be put into practice and go on to be used as a precedent for the rest of the line of contact.

We share Ambassador Apakan's concern about ensuring the safety and security of the monitors and the restrictions on their freedom of movement by both sides in the security zone. We do not agree with our colleagues' assertions that in the areas controlled by Kyiv, there are supposedly only sporadic reports of restrictions on the SMM. It is apparent from the reports that in areas that are key for the purposes of de-escalating tension, the Ukrainian security forces are repeatedly establishing zero access zones. The Ukrainian armed forces are not allowing the SMM into the area near Volnovakha, Hranitne and Zolotoe. They have been prohibited several times from entering the area of the residential areas of Mirnoe, Luhanskoe, Krymskoe, Olginka and Staroignatevka, near Horlivka. On 19 April, when an SMM vehicle was approaching the Zolotoe residential area, Ukrainian troops fired into the air.

We are seriously concerned that the Ukrainian armed forces will continue to stop the SMM vehicles regularly in order to establish the monitors' nationalities and to pick out the Russians in the teams. There were 31 such incidents in April alone.

At the same time, a campaign attacking the SMM monitors is being waged in the Ukrainian media and knowingly slanderous rumours are being spread. Not only does this undermine the SMM's authority but it also endangers the monitors' safety, which is absolutely inadmissible. In our view the obstacles imposed on the monitors and the threats to their safety are unacceptable. We are bound once again to remind Ukraine that it bears full responsibility for the SMM monitors' safety including under the Memorandum of Understanding with the OSCE.

We should also like to point out that illegal use of OSCE emblems is inadmissible. Photographs have appeared online of white vehicles with Ukrainian licence plates and SMM logos, which do not belong to the Mission. This carries an inherent danger of incidents and directly threatens the safety of the OSCE monitors. We call on the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities to take immediate action to find and punish the instigators, whoever may be backing them.

We note the SMM's attention to the dire humanitarian situation in Donbas. We agree with the SMM that the restrictions imposed by Kyiv on citizens' freedom of movement into and out of the "anti-terrorist operation" zone and the suspension of the work of the State institutions in Donbas and the payment of pensions and benefits has a negative impact on the situation of ordinary people. This means that Kyiv is failing to implement points 7 and 8 of the Minsk Package of Measures.

Of particular concern is the situation of the civilians living near the "hotspots", as well as the minefields. We welcome the SMM's efforts, especially in Trokhizbenka and Kominternovo, to help to promote dialogue on the ground to make the locals' situation easier, including by clearing often unmarked minefields, deactivating unexploded munitions and carrying out repair and restoration work. The SMM has indicated that the insurgents are willing to provide it with a map of the minefields at the same time as the Ukrainian armed forces. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the latter's response to communications from the OSCE monitors.

We urge the SMM not to lose sight of the situation in the rest of the territory of Ukraine and to provide timely information on manifestations of xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, violent extremism and other types of ethnic and religious intolerance, and violations of the right to freedom of speech and of the media. We note the analysis of

worrying trends in Ukrainian society provided in the SMM's weekly and spot reports. The OSCE monitors rightly note that such measures as the package of laws on so-called "decommunization" and the glorification of Nazi collaborators could lead to further polarization of Ukrainian society.

At the same time, we are perplexed by a phrase that recurs in SMM report after report – that the monitors "continued to monitor the situation" in the central and western Ukrainian towns where they are posted – and nothing more. And this on the very days that a wave of political murders swept through Kyiv. Just last week, Ukrainian journalists Oles Buzina, Olga Moroz and Sergey Sukhobok, and former member of parliament Oleh Kalshnikov, have perished at the hands of murderers. All of these people as well as many others who have died recently were well known for standing up for their own opinions, which were out of line with those of the current authorities.

There has been a severe deterioration in the situation of journalists' rights and human rights in general.

This alone highlights the need for the SMM to pay closer attention to the political persecution of Ukrainian citizens.

To all intents and purposes, open season on hunting the separatists has been declared in the country – citizens are called upon to denounce suspects to the Ukrainian Security Service. Apparently the enemy from without is no longer enough and the nationalist forces have begun to seek the enemy from within. We trust that the OSCE monitors will warn us of potentially dangerous trends.

In conclusion, we should like to highlight once again the importance of providing the SMM as soon as possible with all necessary human and technical resources. Russia stands ready to provide the SMM with all necessary assistance in this regard. We take it that the SMM will remain exclusively civilian, pursuant to its mandate. Its membership may not include any military personnel.

Thank you for your attention.