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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1012th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 July 2014

**On the situation in Ukraine and the  
continuing violations of the norms of international humanitarian law  
during the punitive operation in eastern Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We once again express our condolences to the families of those killed as a result of the destruction of the Malaysian aircraft in Ukrainian airspace. Russia is doing, and will continue to do, everything within its power to ensure a transparent and independent international investigation.

We welcome the efforts of the OSCE and of the Swiss Chairmanship to ensure that the conditions are in place for an independent investigation under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) that is as open as possible. The OSCE Permanent Council has managed to adopt an important Declaration in this regard swiftly. The United Nations Security Council resolution regarding an international investigation under the auspices of the ICAO is also very important. The insurgents who control the territory where the fragments of the aircraft fell are, as we can see from the reports of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), working together with both Ukrainian and international experts.

We think that it is important for the Trilateral Contact Group to continue its work with the participation of representatives of the insurgents. Practical issues surrounding the transportation of the remains of those killed from the crash site to Kharkiv have been resolved. As noted in the report by the SMM, Dutch experts made a positive assessment of the process of recovering and storing the bodies of those killed.

We note the work of the SMM observers, who obtained full access to the site of the disaster. Both Ukrainian experts and those from other countries were able to do their job. The black boxes have been found and transferred to representatives of Malaysia and the Netherlands. We trust that once they have been decoded, an international expert group under the auspices of the ICAO will begin work on them. Russia is ready to participate in these efforts.

We believe that applying pressure or meddling in the work of international experts is unacceptable. We also think that it is inappropriate to make biased judgements about who may be to blame for the catastrophe, pre-empting any results of an investigation.

The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation has presented air data records held by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. This was discussed in detail yesterday in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). This material has been provided to experts from interested European countries and Malaysia. We will continue to update you on what is ascertained.

At the same time, we should like to know the whereabouts of the air data records held by the Ukrainian and United States authorities, including radio exchanges between the pilots of the Malaysian aircraft and the Ukrainian air traffic control service. No answers have been forthcoming. Instead, we hear only barefaced propaganda and unsubstantiated accusations that are far removed from any desire to establish the real causes of what happened.

I emphasize once again: it is vital to ensure that there is an absolutely impartial, independent and open international investigation under the auspices of the ICAO. Full transparency should rule out any efforts at framing or fabrication. Unfortunately, such fears are justified.

At the last meeting, Ukraine showed us propaganda that would barely pass muster in the tabloids. These materials do not stand up to serious expert scrutiny. For example, the audio recording of the radio exchanges was cobbled together from several conversations, including some from 17 July. The same is true of the photographs of the Buk system that have been disseminated. These pictures were taken in territory under Ukrainian control near to the town of Krasnoarmiysk.

Clearly, lessons from the United States in manipulating public opinion have done the trick. This mainly involves a massive barrage of unfounded or fabricated accusations, as in the case of Iraq and Kosovo, intended to shift public opinion in one's own favour.

It seems that now, too, we are dealing with a carefully staged and co-ordinated campaign that is a far cry from an attempt to establish the truth.

I should like to highlight the strange "manoeuvres" of the Ukrainian and United States delegations during work on the Permanent Council Declaration regarding the Malaysian aircraft disaster. An attempt to use the tragedy in order to, without any investigation, brand the insurgents and label them terrorists nearly caused the collapse of negotiations on the text. Their efforts to diminish in every way possible the role of international organizations, and specifically the ICAO, in the investigation have also not gone unnoticed.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the following facts.

In spite of all of the previous bold statements and agreements, no serious discussion has yet begun within the Trilateral Contact Group on the conditions for a mutual ceasefire. Yet possibilities for this were and are still there: videoconferencing contact has been re-established.

Where, then, is the much-promised national dialogue?

There has not been any real dialogue – and there is none now – with the south-east on constitutional reform. Instead, it is suggested that everyone, *en masse*, should be labelled terrorists, who, as the representative of Ukraine stated only yesterday at the FSC, need to be destroyed. It seems that all Ukrainian citizens who took part in the referendums on 11 May and all those who have supported the militias – in essence, all those who disagree with the Kyiv authorities – should fall within the scope of the “clean-up” taking place in the filtration camps.

The fight against dissidents has already reached not only the streets and squares of Kyiv and other towns and cities in Ukraine, but also the Verkhovna Rada itself. Deputies who do not share the opinion of those at the top are hounded out of the parliament. Steps are being taken to ban the Ukrainian Communist Party and to intimidate and marginalize dissident members of the Party of the Regions. We all know from history what the persecution of non-conformism ultimately leads to.

In recent days we have seen an unprecedented intensification of the punitive military operation. And, as is typical, this once again follows yet another conversation with the United States Vice President, Joe Biden, which took place on 19 July. There is massive, entirely arbitrary shelling of towns. Ukrainian security forces do not spare infrastructure or human lives. There has been no restraint in evidence for a long time now. Provocative shelling on Russian territory continues. Yesterday, staff had to be evacuated from the Kuibyshevo border checkpoint.

The OSCE SMM reports that in the past two months, 250 people have been killed and 850 people have been wounded in Luhansk. On 18 and 19 July alone, 29 civilians were killed and 150 were wounded. As a result of artillery fire in residential areas of Luhansk, residential buildings, including blocks of flats, as well as schools and shops, have been destroyed. The OSCE observers did not record any insurgent military facilities in the vicinity. In Sloviansk, up to 30 per cent of buildings in residential areas of the town have been destroyed. It will not be possible to blame all of this on the militias.

In Luhansk region, two battalions made up of 600 to 800 so-called “volunteers” are operating. According to local residents, they are robbing and kidnapping people. The public is submitting complaints of human rights violations, beatings and disappearances at Ukrainian checkpoints to the OSCE observers.

According to the SMM, the Sich battalion, made up of supporters of the extreme-right-wing Svoboda (Freedom) party from Dnipropetrovsk, as well as a detachment of 300 members of Right Sector from Kherson, are preparing to be sent to eastern Ukraine.

According to the United Nations statistics cited in SMM reports, the number of displaced persons in Ukraine increased by 8,138 in the three-day period from 9 to 11 July alone.

Distinguished colleagues,

We see Kyiv's attempts to use the air tragedy to justify the need to step up the already bloody punitive operation as sacrilegious.

The violence in Ukraine must be stopped immediately. Every day, the continuing punitive operation will bring new suffering and create new victims among the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as among the Ukrainian military personnel sent to kill them.

For our part, Russia will do everything in its power so that the conflict in eastern Ukraine moves from its current combat phase to a phase of discussions around the negotiating table through peaceful and exclusively diplomatic means. But our efforts alone are woefully insufficient. We must not forget that a ceasefire and the transition to the start of a national dialogue depends on Kyiv, and on those whose orders Kyiv is so faithfully carrying out.

To allay concerns about the situation on the Russian-Ukrainian border, and in accordance with the quadripartite declaration made in Berlin on 2 July and Russia's invitation, the mandate for an OSCE observation mission at two checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border has been drawn up and adopted today. We see this as a useful and timely confidence-building measure.

Thank you for your attention.