

ENGLISH only

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
at the 23rd Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE**

(Hamburg, 8 December 2016)

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I want to thank our German hosts for their warm hospitality that we are all enjoying. The ship of the OSCE community has entered the port of Hamburg under the skilful and dedicated leadership of Minister Steinmeier, assisted by his able team.

Unfortunately, the troubled waters do not become any calmer. For the third year the OSCE finds itself operating in extraordinary conditions. The guiding Helsinki principles remain violated and under further attack. This challenge has been compounded by other serious challenges of terrorism, hybrid threats and migration.

Indeed, hybrid warfare and asymmetric threats is nothing new. It is even older than the Trojan horse. However, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country, which has become a testing ground for modern methods of irregular warfare, I can confidently say that the stakes are bigger and the price is higher.

Horribly, the death toll of the Russia's war against Ukraine has already risen to 10,000. Hundreds more remain in unlawful captivity in the occupied Ukrainian regions of Donbas and Crimea while round 1.7 million Ukrainians have had to leave their homes and become internally displaced people (IDP'S).

The European security crisis, which was triggered by Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, continues to evolve. Combined international efforts and sanctions have curtailed Russia, however have not succeeded in forcing that country to abandon its aggression and confrontation.

Ukraine's Crimea under illegal Russian occupation is subjected to severe repressive policies and violations of human rights. Russian regular troops and their proxies in Donbas persist in provoking hostilities, thus increasing the toll of casualties. And Russia keeps on supplying weaponry and ammunition in large amounts and continues killing my fellow Ukrainians, soldiers and civilians alike.

I am here to call on all the participating states to do its utmost to stop Russia from fuelling the war against my country. Ukraine's sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders must be safeguarded.

Ukraine is committed to stop Russian aggression and de-occupy Donbas by implementing the Minsk agreements.

What the people in Donbas urgently need - is peace and security.

So when Russia admits ceasing the fire only after having achieved political compromises from Ukraine, this is utterly unacceptable and contradictory to the Minsk agreements. We regret that Russia fails to translate into practical deeds its commitments to peaceful resolution.

Another priority is the release of all hostages and illegally detained persons, including Ukrainians who are political prisoners in Russia. It is a crucial benchmark for assessing Russia's readiness to embark on the path of de-escalation.

Uncontrolled sections of the border between Ukraine and Russia remain the source of escalation on the ground, as flows of Russian weaponry and military personnel into Donbas persist.

OSCE permanent monitoring and verification of the Ukrainian-Russian state border is necessary and it is an agreed measure between Ukraine and Russia contained in the Minsk Protocol. It must be implemented.

The OSCE plays an important part in broader international efforts aimed at stimulating Russia's compliance with international law. We positively assess the OSCE activities on the ground, in particular those conducted by the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. It is commendable that against the backdrop of regular impediments to the SMM in the occupied areas of Donbas and persistent attacks on its technical equipment by the Russian hybrid forces, the Mission seeks avenues to duly perform its mandated functions. So let me thank once again the Chief Monitor Ambassador Apakan, members of his team and all monitors for doing a great job!

What we additionally need is an armed police mission, deployed throughout the conflict-affected area, including at the state border. This is a critical prerequisite for progress on the political track of the Minsk agreements.

Russian aggression against Ukraine has highlighted the problems, related to the protection of human rights in the areas of occupation.

Murder, torture, harassment, illegal detention and the enforced disappearances and persecution of journalists, human rights defenders and activists - are among the most widespread human rights violations in the occupied Crimea.

Millions live in fear of being labelled an extremist, a terrorist or a Ukrainian spy and risk being thrown into jail or abducted without trace. We must all stay firm in seeking establishment of international monitoring in the occupied Crimea and holding the occupying authorities responsible for failing their obligations under international law.

Mr. Chairman,

The conflict instigated and fuelled by Russia, will not be resolved until Russia gets out of, not only Donbas but also the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol. These remain an integral part of Ukraine. We must not allow that our fundamental principles and values get sacrificed or compromised as this will only generate only more uncertainty and instability in the future. The sanctions as a response to aggression must stay in place until Russia gets off Ukrainian soil.

We expect that the issues of restoring adherence to the OSCE principles and commitments, through correcting the violations, committed by Russia against Ukraine, will remain at the top of the OSCE agenda for 2017 under the Austrian Chairmanship. Our collective interests can only be served by a serious and genuine effort from all concerned and this must also include Russia. We see as an essential part of our broader efforts to aim at increasing military transparency and predictability while at the same time developing mechanisms for responding to military incidents.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman.