

PC.DEL/476/14  
9 May 2014

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
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AT THE 999th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 May 2014

**Regarding the situation in Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, events in Ukraine are acquiring an increasingly tragic hue. If all of the sides there fail to desist, the country will be heading for disaster. We offer our sincere and deep condolences to the families of all of those who have died in Ukraine – those burnt alive and killed in Odessa, and those who have died in other cities in the country, such as Sloviansk and Kramatorsk.

The tragic events in Odessa on 2 May are an example of the criminal irresponsibility and incompetence of the authorities in Kyiv, who pander to radical nationalists including the Right Sector. Their barbaric and inhuman actions should be condemned by the international community in the most resolute terms. It is impossible to determine exactly how many people have died to date, and many have gone missing without trace. It is essential that investigations be conducted with the maximum transparency and that the facts are not concealed.

Unfortunately, the cynical presentation by our colleague from Kyiv gives an inverted picture, alleging that pro-Russian activists provoked a crowd of hooligans and extremists far exceeding them in number and then caught fire of their own accord. Too frequently the “Maidan” authorities shift blame to others and give the impression that they have nothing to do with it.

Not only has the punitive operation in the east of the country failed to stop, it is continuing with renewed force. It is using aircraft, heavy artillery and mortars. Multiple rocket launchers are being moved up. We do not know the exact number of victims that this operation has caused. The monitoring mission does not say. Every day, the punitive operations by the Ukrainian forces and extremists posing as the National Guard are claiming new victims among the civilian population. The actions of those participating in these punitive operations are not only a violation of the Geneva agreements but also a crime against their own people. International pressure needs to be put on the authorities in Kyiv without delay to bring an end to this criminal policy. It is unacceptable that an even more forceful campaign to suppress dissidents has started up again under the battle cry of “restoring order”.

Our colleagues from the United States of America and the European Union are heavily praising Kyiv for its restraint. In fact, in terms of real rather than declared progress towards de-escalation of the situation, the authorities in Kyiv are indeed showing astonishing restraint. Kyiv has done practically nothing to initiate a constitutional process with the participation of all regions of Ukraine, which would offer a way out of this most acute political crisis. Instead of concrete visible measures that would be seen by the inhabitants of the south-east of the country, it is limiting itself to vague pronouncements.

No one has forgotten what the authorities in Kyiv have done since 21 February, including one of the very first decisions to repeal the law on the basic language policy. In the Verkhovna Rada only representatives of the Party of Regions and the Communist Party have spoken in favour of Russian becoming a second official language. In spite of the importance of this issue for a considerable section of the country's population, the ruling parties do not wish to hear anything about it.

On Tuesday, members of the Communist Party were ejected from the Verkhovna Rada because they demanded an explanation from the authorities as to why people had been killed in Odessa. This is not really a responsible way of initiating national dialogue. Even today the authorities in Kyiv have expressed no desire whatsoever to talk with their own people.

It is unlikely that citizens who see what is going on in Odessa, Sloviansk and other cities in Donbas will trust vague and non-specific statements by Arseniy Yatsenyuk about the "decentralization of authority" or a willingness to give "additional guarantees" to the Russian-speaking population. People already know what these statements are worth.

We do not quite understand how it will be possible before 25 May to conduct serious discussion in Ukrainian society and in all regions on the most important aspects of the future structure of the country. One might think that the media could help. But in Ukraine the provision of information is extremely one-sided. Every effort is being made to conceal the crimes of the ultra-radicals and the authorities who pander to them. Russia is blamed for all of the misfortunes. And yet practically all Russian television channels are jammed and journalists are regularly detained and expelled.

The United States of America and the European Union, who encourage the authorities in Kyiv to conduct a crusade against the dissidents, still calling them "supporters of federalization", are entirely responsible for the failure to achieve a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Attempts to shift the blame on to Russia are cynical and absurd. This is the latest manifestation of the double standards that are a regular practice in Washington and Brussels.

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter met the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin yesterday in Moscow. Mr. Putin made the following statement about the outcome of the meeting:

"We must look for ways out of the situation as it is today. We all have an interest in ending this crisis, Ukraine and its people above all. Thus I say that we all want the crisis to end as soon as possible and in such a way that takes into account the interests of all people in Ukraine no matter where they live. The discussion with Mr. President showed that our approaches to possible solutions to the crisis have much in common.

Russia urgently appeals to the authorities in Kyiv to cease immediately all military and punitive operations in south-east Ukraine. This is not an effective means of resolving internal political conflicts and, on the contrary, will only deepen the divisions.

We welcome the release of Mr. Gubarev, but we hope to see all the other political prisoners released too. We think the most important thing now is to launch direct dialogue, genuine, fully fledged dialogue between the Kyiv authorities and representatives of south-east Ukraine. This dialogue could give people from south-east Ukraine the chance to see that their lawful rights in Ukraine really will be guaranteed.

In this context, we also appeal to representatives of south-east Ukraine and supporters of federalization to hold off the referendum scheduled for 11 May in order to give this dialogue the conditions it needs to have a chance.”

Mr. Putin stressed that the presidential election the Kyiv authorities plan to hold was a step in the right direction, but it would not solve anything unless all of Ukraine’s people first understood how their rights would be guaranteed once the election had taken place. Indeed, this is why we believe that direct dialogue between the Kyiv authorities and representatives of south-east Ukraine is the key to settling this crisis.

One of the essential conditions for getting dialogue under way is an unconditional end to the use of force, whether with the help of the armed forces, which is completely unacceptable in the modern world, or through the use of illegal armed units, radical elements and forces. Russia is ready to contribute as it can to resolving the Ukrainian crisis and playing an active and positive part in the Geneva process.

We support the President of Switzerland’s idea of a road map. It should focus on the implementation by the parties to the conflict of the Geneva agreements. We are currently studying the document made available to us. As far as we know, the Swiss Chairmanship is in the process of conducting talks with all of the participants in the Geneva agreements – in Brussels, Kyiv and Washington. Our aim is to help in the fulfilment of the agreed commitments to settle the crisis in Ukraine. But we must not forget that these proposals must also be presented to the representatives of the east and south of Ukraine. The representative of the European Union once again said that he was concerned by our troops next to the Ukrainian border. President Putin emphasized yesterday that they had been withdrawn and were now not on the Ukrainian border but were carrying out their regular exercises at the test grounds. This could be easily verified using modern intelligence techniques, including from space, where anything can be seen. Inspections under the Treaty on Open Skies are also currently taking place.

The agreements contained in the Geneva statement of 17 April must be observed with binding effect. And they must be observed by all Ukrainians – the regime and those who oppose it. They live in the same country and they need to agree on practical measures to de-escalate the situation on a mutually respectful and equal basis.

We believe that the OSCE could also play a key role in this process, as provided for in the Geneva agreements. We appreciate the efforts already undertaken by the Chairperson-in-Office, the Special Monitoring Mission and the experts under

Ambassador Hidajet Bišćević to establish contact with all parties to the pan-Ukrainian national dialogue.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission could assist the parties in reaching agreement on the procedure for de-escalation – who should be involved from the opposing sides, what should be done and in what time-frame.

We believe that it is essential for the Mission to work more actively within its mandate to encourage local dialogue. It has established contact with all sides. We once again point out the need to work more closely with representatives of civil society in Ukraine and with the concerns of individual citizens. The Mission would be more professional if its reports were more detailed and objective. The events in Odessa have shown that all regions of the country demand careful attention even if at first glance the situation in them appears to observers to be “calm”.

As far as the position of the Crimean Tatars is concerned, Russia is looking objectively into the way in which the interests of the Crimean Tatars living in Crimea and Sevastopol are taken into account. Their involvement in representative authorities has been ensured. A large proportion of the Crimean Tatar community has given its consent to their representatives being sent to work in leading positions. They also sit on the Council of Ministers of Crimea in the person of Lenur Islyamov as the first deputy chairperson and Zaur Smirnov as head of the republican committee for nationalities and deported citizens. Work is under way on establishing the national and cultural autonomy of the Crimean Tatar people.

The President of Turkey Abdullah Gül discussed this issue at the end of April in Ashgabat with the President of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov. He advocates direct contact with the Crimean Tatar community with a view to a settlement of any differences. A Tatarstan representative office has opened in Simferopol. A meeting between Mr. Putin and the Crimean Tatar community is being negotiated.

Mr. Dzhemilev is not the leader of the Crimean Tatars, although he used to be. Today they have other leaders.

Besides the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, there are other no less authoritative structures in Crimea: the Council of Elders of the Crimean Tatar People, the Milliyy Firqa and others. Attempts by the former leader of the Mejlis Mr. Dzhemilev to assume the role of spokesperson for the interests of all Crimean Tatars are ill-founded. For the Crimean Tatars themselves the most pressing problems are not in the politicized field of inter-ethnic or interreligious co-operation but are of a clearly social and economic nature. These problems must be solved systematically.

On 21 April the President of the Russian Federation signed a decree on measures to rehabilitate Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek, Crimean Tatar and German populations and State support for their revival and development. This is a very important measure, for which the Ukrainian authorities have not had any time.

As to the refusal to allow Mr. Dzhemilev to enter Russia and his recent attempts at provocation on the border, I should like to remind my Ukrainian and Turkish colleagues that very many Russian citizens have been denied entry to Ukraine – not only various political

and public figures on an individual basis but also whole groups of citizens on account of their age and gender. We do not understand the basis for this refusal. And as for refugees from Crimea, their numbers have not changed during the course of the crisis and are still in the region of 3,000 to 5,000 persons.

Thank you for your attention.