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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1231st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 June 2019

On the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation in eastern Ukraine still shows no noticeable sign of improvement. The promises by the new leadership of Ukraine to stop the hostilities against its own people have so far not been realized. It would appear that the Ukrainian military has not received any orders or instructions about a ceasefire. The inhabitants of Donbas continue to suffer as a result of shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces. The reports by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) have brought bleak news in recent days. A civilian was injured as a result of shelling in Holubivka in the Luhansk region. Garages attached to residential buildings were damaged in Vesele as a result of shelling from a Konkurs anti-tank missile system from a westerly direction, and a local man was injured. Six houses were damaged as a result of shelling in Sentianivka. Residential buildings were also shelled in Horlivka. An elderly woman with shrapnel wounds and a girl in a state of shock appeared at the hospital there. A residential building was also damaged in Yasynuvata.

According to media reports, the Donetsk filtration station and the Vasylivka pumping station were subjected to shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces on 3 June. A bus carrying Donetsk filtration station employees came under fire. On 4 June, a mosque in Donetsk was shelled at a time when around 100 worshippers were inside the building and in the courtyard celebrating the holiday of Eid al-Fitr. The building was damaged and one person injured. The shelling continued even when SMM representatives approached the area, and nine explosions from 82 mm calibre mortar shells were recorded in the immediate vicinity of the mosque. We are counting on a prompt investigation by our Special Monitoring Mission.

In Donetsk and Luhansk they have made a count of the number of children who have suffered as a result of the conflict unleashed by the authorities in Kyiv. During the military operation in Donbas, 119 children have died because of the Ukrainian security forces, and a further 310 have been injured. This is the price of the absence of political will on the part of the authorities in Kyiv to resolve the internal Ukrainian crisis and the indifference of Western governments. Just think about these figures. We once again urge the SMM to prepare a report on the casualties among the civilian population since the start of the conflict.

Mr. Chairperson,

We trust that the return of Leonid Kuchma as Ukraine's representative in the Minsk-based Trilateral Contact Group and the appearance of other Ukrainian negotiators will make it possible to move the settlement process forward. We note that the dialogue has indeed improved. At yesterday's meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group, an agreement was reached on the preparation of a new ceasefire arrangement to be signed at the meeting on 19 June. Substantive discussions took place on the disengagement of forces and hardware in Stanytsia Luhanska (scheduled for 10 June) and the repair of the bridge there, and also on the exchange of detained persons and the resumption of socio-economic ties between Donbas and the rest of Ukraine. This is movement in the right direction. We hope that it will not remain a mere declaration, but will be followed by real steps that bring us closer to peace in Donbas.

There is a need in the Trilateral Contact Group for the urgent adoption by the parties of measures to strengthen the ceasefire regime, the complete disengagement of forces and hardware in the three pilot areas and then along the entire line of contact, and the withdrawal of heavy weapons. Real progress is needed in the political aspects of a settlement, first and foremost the formalization in writing of the "Steinmeier formula", an amnesty and the exchange of detained persons based on the principle "all for all".

We welcome the start of work by the new Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik. We trust that he will continue the efforts of his predecessor, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, to reduce tension in Donbas. Balanced monitoring on both sides of the line of contact and clear identification of those responsible for initiating the shelling and destruction of civilian facilities will be the key to the SMM's effectiveness. It is also important to keep track of the consequences of the continuing socio-economic embargo on Donbas. The Mission should not ignore the situation in the rest of Ukraine either. All cases of human rights violations, including the rights of national minorities, the persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, rampant aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, the clamping down on freedom of the media and repression of journalists require careful monitoring. The latter is especially relevant in the context of the Day of Journalists in Ukraine today, 6 June.

Recent events have shown that neo-Nazis still feel free in Ukraine. The latest act making a mockery of the historical memory of the Soviet people's victory over Nazism and the liberation of Ukraine occurred in Kharkiv on 2 June. With the police looking on, nationalists destroyed the monument to the eminent Soviet general Georgy Zhukov. Against this backdrop, a monument to Roman Shukhevych, the leader of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army who bears the stain of having committed atrocities against the civilian population and collaborated with the Nazis, was unveiled recently in Ivano-Frankivsk. Poland and Israel have already protested against this. It seems that despite the change in power, the policy of rewriting history and glorifying Nazi criminals continues. We trust that the new leadership of Ukraine will act on the trust it has been credited with by the electorate and put a stop to its dangerous flirtation with nationalists and radicals.

The Minsk Package of Measures endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202 and the agreements reached within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format remains the sole framework for achieving lasting peace in Ukraine, which will be possible only through full implementation of all these provisions in direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. We urge our international partners to encourage the Ukrainian leadership to take this path.

Thank you for your attention.