



**EMBASSY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
IN THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

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PRESS RELEASE

The latest news regarding situation around Ukraine

**Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE
Alexander Lukashevich's remarks at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent
Council on the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk
Agreements, Vienna, March 8, 2018**

Mr Chairperson,

The latest ceasefire, which was coordinated between the representatives of Kiev and certain districts in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, began on March 5. According to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), the number of ceasefire violations in Donbass has radically decreased. We welcome this.

In order to further stabilise the situation on the contact line, the parties must publish ceasefire orders, withdraw heavy weaponry and the radical Ukrainian volunteer battalions from the contact line, as well as return military equipment to the permanent weapons storage sites. An important step towards this goal will be investigations conducted by the parties on SMM reports of damage due to firing at residential areas and bringing those guilty to account.

We pinned strong hopes on the disengagement of forces and weapons in Stanitsa Luganskaya, which would offer an opportunity to coordinate new security areas where necessary on the contact line. The ceasefire along this section of the line lasted nine weeks from December 26, 2017. We urge the

SMM to analyse video information so as to clearly establish who opened fire there on March 3.

Over the week preceding the start of the Spring Ceasefire, the SMM reported six shooting attacks on the residential areas controlled by the self-defence forces from the government-controlled positions. On the evening and night of February 24 and 25, the SMM reported an attack at the power substation in Mikhailovskoye, where large amounts of mercury are stored. An oil tank was damaged in the attack and started leaking oil, which is fraught with an environmental disaster that can cause irremediable damages. Residential buildings in Dokuchayevsk, Kominternovo and Slavyanoserbsk have been damaged in these and other similar attacks. Artillery attacks have been delivered at Zaitsevo and Molodezhnoye.

Over the past month, the Ukrainian army accumulated weapons on the contact line in violation of the Minsk Agreements. The SMM observed Ukrainian military aircraft at the frontline, in particular, a Mi-8 helicopter flying over the entry-exit checkpoint in Maryinka on March 6. This amounts to a gross violation of Clause 7 of the Minsk Memorandum of September 19, 2014 and an alarming signal that may point to Kiev's preparations for a large-scale offensive operation.

In this situation, the SMM must monitor the contact line especially closely and the flashpoint areas around the clock. The SMM's freedom of movement at the contact line must not be restricted by the "mine threat." SMM observers have a restraining effect on the parties. The SMM must be able to promptly report new ceasefire violations and try to identify the shooting parties. The SMM must make wide use of its technical equipment, primarily unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), to monitor the contact line. We hope for the resumption of operation of the SMM forward patrol base in Popasnaya as soon as possible.

We condemn cases of threats against SMM observers, such as the one that took place near Kozatsky on March 5, when a man in military-type attire pointed an assault rifle at an SMM vehicle.

Mr Chairperson,

The alarming increase in militant rhetoric and confrontational acts must be reversed. We urge our colleagues to see the dangers of this situation and to send a clear signal to Kiev regarding the unacceptability of opportunistic military activities in Donbass.

Kiev has recently taken a number of other dangerous steps in addition to the accumulation of forces and indiscriminate shelling.

The law on the so-called reintegration of Donbass, which aims to disrupt the Minsk Agreements, has come into force and is being used as the basis for planning a so-called joint military operation. More foreign military shipments are expected in Ukraine. The number of foreign mercenaries and instructors is growing.

On March 4, a US RQ-4B unmanned aircraft made yet another 10-hour-long reconnaissance flight along the contact line in Donbass in violation of Clause 7 of the Minsk Memorandum of September 19, 2014.

Recent statement by US officials regarding the need to eliminate the structure of certain districts in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions are pampering militarist sentiments of the Ukrainian authorities and hinder the possibility of negotiations within the Contact Group.

On February 28, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine invalidated the law On the Principles of the State Language Policy. The first attempt to invalidate this law was made on February 23, 2014, immediately after the state coup in Kiev. It exposed the true intentions of the radical forces that seized power in Ukraine and poured fuel on the flames of the internal divisions in Ukraine. Alexander Turchinov, who seized the position of president, decided against signing the order invalidating this law. He opted for a gradual offensive on the Russian language.

In the autumn of 2016, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a law on the mandatory quota for Ukrainian language content on the radio. The law on language quotas on television followed in May 2017. Since the autumn of 2017,

radio and television broadcasting in Russian and other minority languages has been reduced to nearly zero. The Law on Education, which was adopted in September 2017, restricted the right of non-Ukrainian-speaking people to receive education in their native tongue.

This has had a direct effect on the humanitarian situation in Donbass. According to the Donetsk administration, Kiev rejects applications for the restoration of Russian language infrastructure in the country.

We have tried to draw international attention to rampant nationalism in Ukraine more than once. The cause of Nazi accomplices from OUN-UPA has been taken up by their modern-day followers. Radicals have been attacking foreign property more often recently. On February 26, they again attacked Russia's Consulate General in Odessa. On February 27, they set fire to the Hungarian culture centre in Uzhgorod. There are more cases like this. On March 3, nationalists held a march under the banner "Lvov is not for Polish gentlemen." Ukrainian radicals keep up their pressure on the authorities. On February 27, they scuffled with police while trying to influence a court hearing for the mayor of Odessa. On March 8, radicals attacked women's rights marches in Uzhgorod and Kiev. Several people have been injured. We urge the OSCE SMM to monitor investigations into these incidents. We also reaffirm the need, long overdue, for a comprehensive report on nationalism in Ukraine.

We cannot accept the statements made by US Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker in Warsaw on March 7. Seeking to justify the actions of Ukrainian nationalists, he said that Ukraine was strengthening its national identity and needed respect and understanding. Aggressive nationalism is not an acceptable means for strengthening one's identity.

This brings to mind what the Ukrainian representative to the OSCE said about the right to a "peaceful protest" in February 2014 and at the most recent meeting of the Permanent Council. The removal of a tent camp for protestors near the parliament building in Kiev on March 3 has demonstrated the current

authorities' selective attitude to the peacefulness of protests. We have seen such hypocrisy among our Western colleagues as well.

I would like to remind everyone that the most active “peace protesters” on Maidan in 2014 later joined punitive battalions and are guilty of murder, torture, plunder and looting. Ukrainian radicals and some unscrupulous Ukrainian soldiers are now plundering residential buildings in Katerinovka and Novoaleksandrovka, which the Ukrainian army has occupied recently. The police have closed their eyes to this despite numerous complaints from local residents.

In conclusion, I would like to say once again that a comprehensive political settlement based on the Minsk Package of Measures is the only peaceful option for ending the conflict in eastern Ukraine and preserving the country's territorial integrity. Any attempts to revise this document will only deepen the crisis.

**Comment by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova on the
deportation of Rossiya 24 television channel's correspondent Natalia
Goncharova from Ukraine**

On March 17, the Security Service of Ukraine announced the deportation of yet another Russian journalist, Rossiya 24 television channel's correspondent Natalia Goncharova, who will be banned from entering the country for three years. This outrageous act is motivated by the alleged preparation of “inflammatory materials” that distort Ukraine's image and damage its international prestige.

In reality, it is precisely these actions of Ukrainian authorities aiming to completely censure the country's media space that completely discredit Ukraine as a member of the international community. On Kiev's initiative, the worst totalitarian methods of suppressing dissent are being practiced in 21st-century Europe.

We would like to point out that Ukrainian media outlets enjoy complete professional freedom in Russia, and we demand that Ukraine treat Russian journalists in the same way.

We call on the international community and specialised international institutions and NGOs to resolutely condemn Ukraine's repressive policies with regard to media outlets.

**Comment by the Information and Press Department on the recent report
by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine**

We have familiarised ourselves with the 21st report of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine covering the period from November 16, 2017, to February 15, 2018, which was circulated in Geneva.

We took note of the information about lower number of civilian casualties in the Donbass conflict. However, the statistics of losses are still shocking at 12 killed and 61 wounded.

Of particular concern is the fact that the number of casualties from shelling civilian targets from rocket systems has doubled. At the same time, observers managed to reliably establish that the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics account for three quarters of all the casualties during the reporting period, for which likely "the government is responsible".

The number of civilian deaths resulting from explosions of mines, booby-traps and IEDs remains inordinately high.

We join the appeal of the Monitoring Mission to the parties to the conflict asking them to strictly comply with the ceasefire agreements, including to withdraw heavy artillery from the line of contact. We emphasise the need to restore critically important infrastructure. Disruptions in the work of water treatment and power plants have left more than half a million residents of Donetsk without drinking water, electricity and heating, and put the region on the brink of an ecological disaster. We would like to remind the Ukrainian

authorities that the shelling of civilian infrastructure is a direct violation of their international legal obligations.

The level of gross human rights violations on the part of the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and the Security Service recorded by the Monitoring Mission, which, according to the most recent UN reports, are systemic in nature, causes major concern. These include unlawful confinement, kidnapping, detention with no outside communication, torture, sexual violence, and using anti-terrorism legislation to crack down on political opposition and dissent in society. Again, the UN mission members had to admit that the Ukrainian authorities lacked political will and interest in conducting a full-scale investigation into all the cases of human rights violations by members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Security Service. This feeds the atmosphere of permissiveness and impunity in the country.

The lack of progress in investigating the crimes committed in Odessa in May 2014 is no longer surprising given these circumstances.

We are seriously concerned by the findings of the UN mission members regarding Kiev's discriminatory policy against the citizens of Ukraine residing in Donbass. The authorities' reluctance to pay pensions and social benefits to residents of southeastern Ukraine, lack of procedures for reimbursing their own citizens for the loss of housing and property resulting from the actions of the Ukrainian military, the artificial restrictions on crossing the contact line by the people have led to further impoverishment of the poorest groups of the population, further dividing Ukrainian society and, thus, reducing the chances for national reconciliation in the future.

We share the Monitoring Mission's concerns regarding the mounting offensive by the Ukrainian authorities against civil and political freedoms in that country, including increased attacks on freedom of expression, freedom of the media and physical attacks on journalists. According to the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, 90 media workers were attacked in 2017 alone. We support the UN demand to ensure prompt, effective and unbiased investigations

into all violations caused by the work of the Myrotvorets website, to revise state policy on forming TV and radio content, and to cancel the disproportionately strict bans on imports of printed products into that country.

We are concerned about the numerous cases of discrimination and violence against representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its worship sites established by the UN mission. According to the Monitoring Mission, the issue is not about isolated instances of intolerance against the UOC, but a coordinated campaign which is being carried out with the obvious connivance of official authorities and law enforcement officers.

We urge Kiev to carefully heed to the assessments and recommendations provided by the Monitoring Mission and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe regarding the law On Education, which grossly violates the rights of the linguistic minorities living in that country, especially Russian speakers. We look forward to the authorities making the necessary amendments to article 7 of the law, withdrawing private schools from its sphere of application and providing for sufficient education in minority languages at public schools.

Again, we are forced to remind everyone that the mandate of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine does not include reviewing the situation in third countries. The Republic of Crimea and the city of federal importance Sevastopol are part of the territory of the Russian Federation, and the latest attempt to include an assessment of the human rights situation in this Russian region in the report on Ukraine is inappropriate.

Briefing by Deputy Director of the Information and Press Department

Artyom Kozhin, Moscow, March 23, 2018

Ukraine's decision to end economic cooperation programme with Russia

Ukraine, primarily its current government, is a constant supplier of news that call for comment.

The other day, Kiev announced yet another victory over common sense – the decision of its government to terminate the 2011-2020 economic cooperation programme with Russia. In this way Kiev is consistently and stubbornly working to advance its “strategic goal” – to damage its own economy as much as possible. By refusing to cooperate with Russia, the current Ukrainian authorities, in their anti-Russian frenzy, are actually destroying their inheritance from the Soviet Union in advanced areas – the nuclear industry, nuclear power and aerospace engineering, space and aviation technology, transport and the defence industry. These are the areas that the Ukrainian people could be rightly proud of in the past.

The rupture in trade and economic ties with Russia is not compensated for in any way by the EU and the miniscule quotas allowed for the supply of “strategic” commodities to the EU – honey, mushrooms, juices, condensed milk, grain, tomatoes and poultry. We are witnessing Ukraine’s de-industrialisation. Next, Western curators – the “benefactors” of Ukraine – will demand higher gas prices for consumers, the lifting of the ban on trading agricultural land and permission to supply the EU with round timber, to name a few. In the future, Kiev will be compelled to pay through the nose for American liquefied shale gas, as is now the case with American coal.

Looking at these not quite adequate actions of the Ukrainian authorities, we can only feel compassion for the residents of Ukraine who are bound to hear new “victorious” reports from Kiev. We are convinced for some reason that more than enough pretexts will be found.

Blacklisting of independent international observers at the elections in Crimea by the Ukrainian extremist website Myrotvorets

We noted that the personal information of independent foreign observers that were in Crimea during the presidential election in Russia were included in the data base of the website Myrotvorets (Peacemaker), the server of which is

located in the United States. On March 18, the website published the names of observers from Italy, Spain and Sweden. The names of three Cypriot observers appeared there a bit later. Independent observers from Finland, Germany, Norway and Italy that visited Crimea before were included in the website's data base before March 18. The website noted that these foreigners "deliberately violated Ukraine's state border" and "engaged in propaganda efforts."

We would like to note that UN human rights agencies have already drawn attention to the website's violation of the right to a private life and presumption of innocence, and advised Kiev to conduct an investigation and shut down the server. Similar concerns are expressed in the report of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine published in September 2017. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasised in this report the lack of progress in the criminal investigation of the website Myrotvorets and called on the Ukrainian authorities to guarantee that a credible investigation of its violations be held immediately. The latest, March report of the Monitoring Mission contains similar appeals. It notes that although the Ukrainian police launched criminal proceedings against it, nothing has yet been done.

In 2016, Dunja Mijatovic, the then OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, also expressed her concerns to Kiev when the website Myrotvorets published life-threatening personal information of journalists accredited in Donbass.

The reluctance of the Ukrainian authorities to conduct a credible investigation of the activities of the notorious website and take relevant measures is a violation of their commitments in the Council of Europe, which are established by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data. The notorious website is not only using and spreading personal data for illegal purposes but is also violating the right to privacy.

In its practical activities the European Human Rights Court proceeds from the premise that in similar cases the state's practical and effective protection of an individual's private life consists in the adoption of effective measures to identify and prosecute the violators, which has not been done since the website is still functioning with the clear tacit approval of the Ukrainian authorities. The website publishes more personal information about citizens of foreign states, including the EU, every week.

Apparently, this is how Ukraine is fulfilling its obligations in the Council of Europe, the UN and the OSCE – it continues subjecting its own and foreign citizens to lethal danger. By now all observers that were mentioned in its data base have returned to their home countries. In their opinion, the elections in Crimea were held at the proper level and without serious violations. Kiev's antagonistic reaction is the best proof of this.

Latest outrage committed by radical Ukrainian nationalists

We were outraged to learn that radical Ukrainian nationalists have desecrated the monument to General Nikolai Vatutin in the town of Berdichev in the Zhitomir Region of Ukraine, where neo-Nazi young men in broad daylight broke the commemorative plaque and mocked, with impunity, the memory of the commander who led the Red Army to liberate Ukraine from Nazi invaders.

We strongly condemn this raid by vandals who call themselves "patriots." We are convinced that this and similar shameful actions are not supported by millions of Ukrainian citizens whose fathers and grandfathers helped save the world from the scourge of fascism. Yet again, we call on the Ukrainian authorities to take necessary measures to protect the symbols of victory of our peoples in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 and end its policy of indulging extremists.