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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 997th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 April 2014

Regarding the situation in Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

I shall outline our view as to what is being done and what is not being done in Ukraine in the context of the Geneva statement of 17 April. The top-priority measures to de-escalate the situation are set out in the statement. These include renouncing the use of force, threat of force and provocative actions; carrying out constitutional reform, which must be inclusive, transparent and accountable; and immediately establishing broad national dialogue with the participation of all of Ukraine's regions and political constituencies.

Apart from numerous "declarations of intent" and plans, so far we have not heard or seen anything concrete from Kyiv. More importantly, the representatives of the popular movements in south-east Ukraine, which do not agree with the actions of the authorities in Kyiv and are demanding that serious discussions start on how their concerns could be taken into account, have not seen anything concrete either.

However, we need to understand the position of the inhabitants of the south-east; they are threatened by massive use of force. Troops, some 11,000 military personnel, tanks, armoured infantry fighting vehicles, aircraft and Right Sector units are concentrated there. Kyiv has decided to resume the active phase of an operation involving the use of force in the east of the country. Protest movement activists remain behind bars. Instead of a real amnesty, these persons continue to be arrested, with ever more names being added to the list. Occupied buildings are not being vacated. As one building is vacated, another is given in its place to the Right Sector.

We see an inability or unwillingness on the part of the current leaders in Kyiv to talk to their own citizens. They are trying to demand that Russia should do this for them. In other words, they are trying to avoid taking responsibility. Instead of asking Washington and Brussels, it would be better to try to talk directly with the people from Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Donetsk and a number of other cities.

I wish to reiterate that what is happening in Ukraine is clearly an internal affair, and the Geneva agreement is addressed primarily to the authorities in Kyiv. The other signatories to these agreements, including us, have undertaken to assist in these efforts, first and foremost through the OSCE Mission. However, no one else can be a substitute for these efforts. Only the Ukrainians themselves can establish direct dialogue with one another and find a solution. Moscow, Brussels and Washington will not be able to do this for them. Unfortunately, there has so far been no such dialogue involving high-ranking Ukrainian representatives. Members of the Party of Regions faction in the Verkhovna Rada have been pushed aside in the work on constitutional reform.

It is difficult to convince representatives of the various anti-Maidan movements to make unilateral concessions without this. As we have said, any movement in this direction must be reciprocal and extend to the entire territory of Ukraine and not only to the south-east of the country.

Like our colleagues, we too are concerned about the detention in Sloviansk of a team of military observers, who are in Ukraine in accordance with the terms of the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. The Russian Federation has made efforts to obtain their release. We have made several public statements on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to that end, calling for the inspectors to be released. We are also taking practical action. One of the inspectors has already been released on humanitarian, medical grounds. Our efforts to resolve this situation will continue.

At the same time, we cannot but draw attention to the irresponsible decision – I do not know whose it was – to send a busload of inspectors to Sloviansk. What was the purpose of this? It looks very much like provocation. According to the Vienna Document, ensuring the safety and security of the inspectors is entirely the responsibility of the receiving State. It would have been logical to expect prior approval as regards the whereabouts, security and activities of the inspectors in areas where the authorities are not in control of the situation and where the atmosphere is extremely tense and a military operation has been unleashed against the country's own citizens.

We firmly believe that steps such as the immediate release of detained persons will help to de-escalate the crisis in Ukraine.

We should like once again to thank the Swiss Chairmanship and the Head of Mission for obtaining access to the arrested “people's governor” of Donetsk, Pavel Gubarev.

We call for efforts in this direction to be continued. Politically motivated arrests of public figures from the south-east and journalists are continuing. We need to establish the names of those arrested for political reasons and monitor what is happening to them. This is also a function of the Special Monitoring Mission. It is essential to obtain access to all of them. Ultimately, they should all be granted amnesty and released, as provided for in the Geneva statement.

In this regard, we once again emphasize the pressing need for representatives of the OSCE Mission to engage further with all the popular movements and Russian-speaking non-governmental organizations in Ukraine so as to promote inclusive national dialogue and help the authorities in Kyiv listen to the population's demands.

The concerns of the Ukrainian people cannot continue to be ignored. They have their reasons for these concerns, confirmed every day by new events. There has been another march in Lviv commemorating the anniversary of the establishment of the Waffen-SS unit Galichina. Mass riots involving extremists masquerading as football hooligans in Kharkiv were clearly politically motivated and there have been casualties. Only today there was an attempt on the life of the well-known and respected governor of Kharkiv, Gennady Kernes. He was shot in the back. He is in a very serious condition, but for some reason the Ukrainian ambassador fails to mention this.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to draw attention to a fact mentioned in the Mission's report of 24 April. I am referring to the interruption of the water supply to Crimea at the sluice in the canal near Kalanchak, which used to provide Crimea with 85 per cent of its fresh water. The water supply is now a dribble and its interruption could cause a partial or complete crop failure in Crimea. Half of the vineyards and 30,000 hectares of rice currently require irrigation. This is a calamity for the people living there. In addition to the environmental consequences, the damming of the water supply directly violates the human rights of the people of Crimea, including the right to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and the right to food.

We call on the OSCE, in particular the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, to deal promptly with this problem in accordance with Madrid and Helsinki Ministerial Council Decisions Nos. 7/07 and 9/08.

Kyiv's damming of the water supply to Crimea is, no doubt, its way of responding to the regular deliveries of Russian gas, despite the fact that Ukraine is not paying for them. Before anyone asks any questions, let me say straightaway that it is not a matter of arrears in payment for water. Crimea is prepared to pay in advance and at a considerably higher price than has been the case in recent years, but Kyiv will not agree to this.

Mr. Chairperson,

No one is preventing the former chairperson of the Mejlis, Mr. Dzhemilev, from returning to Crimea. If you don't know, just ask. The Crimean leadership has provided confirmation in this regard.

As for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, Russia supports its work and will continue to assist it.

Thank you for your attention.