



United States Mission to the OSCE

Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Last week, the Permanent Council discussed at length the June 3 attack by combined Russian-separatist forces on Marinka. Since then, additional details have come to light regarding the extent of the attack and the preparations made for it. We understand that on June 2 combined Russian-separatist forces moved large numbers of heavy weapons, including tanks, artillery, and Grad multiple launch rocket systems into the area. At dawn on June 3, the combined Russian-separatists launched their attack with large salvos of artillery and Grad rockets fired at Ukrainian positions around Marinka. Combined Russian-separatist forces attacked Ukrainian positions at other locations in the area as well.

But Marinka is not the exception. Rather, combined Russian-separatist forces have violated the ceasefire up and down the line of contact during the past week. The SMM has reported numerous ceasefire violations. These include the shelling of Ukrainian government checkpoints used by the local population near Donetsk, Grad rocket impacts in Pisky, salvos of Grad rockets fired from within Donetsk city, and regular firing around Donetsk airport. According to Ukrainian authorities, the combined Russian-separatist forces in Donetsk are firing not just at Ukrainian positions on the line of contact, but also at positions five to ten kilometers inside territory held by Ukrainian government forces, which can only be accomplished by using heavy weapons that should have been withdrawn according to the Minsk Package of Measures.

The actions of the separatists and Russian forces also continue to impede the work of the SMM and endanger the safety and security of SMM monitors. In the latest example, the SMM reported a June 7 incident during which shots struck close to SMM vehicles at a government-controlled checkpoint in Marinka. Ukrainian soldiers took cover and the SMM patrol left the scene.

In violating the agreed ceasefire, Russia and the separatists it backs are not only undermining the Minsk agreements, but are seeking to further destabilize eastern Ukraine. Additionally, by failing to engage seriously and in good faith through the Trilateral Contact Group or its subordinate working groups, Russia is undermining the diplomatic process intended to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Ukraine.

Russia claims that it is acting out of concern for the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk. If this concern were genuine, then Russia would be working toward a peaceful resolution of the violence in eastern Ukraine through full implementation of the Minsk agreements, and not failing to show up or walking out of Trilateral Contact Group meetings. Full implementation of Minsk means that Russia must put a stop to these military actions and release all hostages, including Nadiya Savchenko and Oleg Sentsov. Full implementation of Minsk means that Russia must fulfill its commitment to cease arming, training, and equipping separatists inside Ukraine. Russia must also work toward the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Ukraine based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and the full compliance with international law and OSCE principles. Russia must withdraw all of its forces from Ukrainian territory, respect Ukraine's sovereignty, and end its occupation of Crimea.

Colleagues, even as Russian aggression and joint Russia-separatist attacks continue, we should not forget that the people of Ukraine are not only the victims of external aggression, they have also powerfully voiced their determination to drive forward internal reform, and build a stronger, more democratic, and more prosperous future. They made clear overwhelmingly in two separate elections last year that they are committed to building institutions and a society that reflect European standards and universal values. Last week, the distinguished Ukrainian ambassador briefed us on some of the recent steps in driving forward reform. There is so much left to do, but President Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk have made clear that they are determined to press forward with reforms. Last weekend we noted that President Poroshenko dispatched over 1000 police to protect the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms by 300 participants in an equality march. We pay tribute to the police who sought to protect peaceful marchers exercising their rights from violent attacks. We send best wishes for recovery to police and marchers who were hurt. We remain committed to supporting the people and government in their pursuit of a stronger and democratic Ukrainian future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.