



PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO MR FELTMAN AND MR ŠIMONOVIĆ

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 8 September 2014

Mr Chairman,

I would like to thank Mr Feltman and Mr Šimonović for their presentations. Norway is gravely concerned by the situation in Ukraine, and is grateful for the United Nations' extensive efforts in the country.

Mr Chairman,

Let me note at the outset that the escalating humanitarian crisis, loss of life, and human rights violations we have seen in Eastern Ukraine would not have happened without Russia's destabilizing actions. The Russian Federation's support to separatists and recent direct military intervention in Eastern Ukraine is completely unacceptable.

In light of the deteriorating situation, Norway has stepped up its support to Ukraine. During his visit to Kyiv last week, Foreign Minister Brende announced 1 million Euros in humanitarian aid, as well as substantial contributions to ongoing Ukrainian reform efforts. This assistance will be further operationalized in the period leading up to Prime Minister Solberg's visit to Ukraine in November.

Mr Chairman,

Norway greatly appreciates the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Ukraine crisis. We also value the complementarity of the work carried out by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. This is an example to be followed in other cases.

Mr Chairman,

As the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights notes in its recent report, human rights violations are committed by both sides in the conflict.

We are deeply disturbed by these serious human rights violations, and condemn any party responsible for such acts. The UN reports an average of 36 persons killed daily, with a large increase in civilian casualties. The indiscriminate use of heavy weaponry represents a serious threat to civilians.

The armed separatists show a total lack of respect for international law. Enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, physical and psychological torture, ill treatment and other human rights violations are widespread in the areas of fighting. This has to stop!

The Ukrainian government, on its part, has to increase its efforts to ensure that forces under its command operate in accordance with international law.

In Crimea, the rights of minorities, such as Crimean Tartars and Ukrainian nationals, are threatened. The authorities in control of an area are obliged under international law to respect the rights of all inhabitants. Russia is not fulfilling this obligation.

Mr Chairman,

It is difficult for the international community to obtain reliable information about what is happening in the conflict-affected areas. This is partly due to the abductions, threatening and harassment of Ukrainian and foreign journalists by armed groups.

I take this opportunity to commend the Special Monitoring Mission for doing their utmost to monitor and report about the situation also in South-East Ukraine. The SMM, together with the CPC, the three institutions as well as the Chairmanship, illustrate that the OSCE can – and does – play an important role in the efforts to help deescalate the situation in Ukraine.

Mr Chairman,

Norway welcomes the current ceasefire, and hopes it will evolve into lasting peace. It is now pressing that the violence we have seen over the weekend does not derail the process.

Armed groups must hand in their weapons, release all detained persons, and the Russian Federation must stop immediately their support to separatist groups. This is the single most important step that has to be taken to ensure peace.

Mr Chairman,

As proposed in the UN report, all recommendations Ukraine has received could form the basis of a multi-year national human rights action plan.

Ukraine can count on Norwegian support in its efforts to put their country on a firm track towards a stable and prosperous democracy.

Thank you, Mr Chairman