



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR APAKAN

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 4 February 2015

Mr Chairman,

We remain deeply concerned about the escalation of the armed conflict and the resulting catastrophic human suffering in Eastern Ukraine. We strongly condemn the offensive launched by the separatists supported by Russia and call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We call on the Russian Federation to withdraw its support to and use its influence over the separatists to make this happen.

Mr Chairman,

Norway highly appreciates the SMM's crucial role in Ukraine. Their reports are an invaluable source of impartial information. We welcome detailed spot reports on major incidents, especially those involving civilians.

We note with grave concern the report on use of cluster munitions 27 January. This incident should be investigated further. We strongly condemn the use of such inhumane and indiscriminate weapons, which have been prohibited by the Convention on Cluster Munitions adopted in 2008. We call on all parties to adhere to the norm set by the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

Safety of the monitors is of paramount importance. We appreciate Ambassador Apakan's focus on this, and we thank him for putting in place impressive security arrangements. The security visit to the area of conflict three weeks ago, in which our defence attaché in Kiev participated, was reassuring and gave us valuable insights.

Mr Chairman,

The humanitarian situation in Eastern Ukraine is grave and deteriorating. We support the call by OSCE Chairman-in-Office Ivica Dačić to establish a humanitarian truce around Debaltsevo for a minimum of three days.

Mr Chairman,

We appreciate that the SMM facilitates access for humanitarian actors. We encourage the SMM to continue reporting on the humanitarian situation and on its cooperation with organisations engaged in humanitarian relief activities.

Let me also highlight the efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group towards ensuring unimpeded humanitarian access, most recently at the meeting in Minsk last Saturday. We strongly regret that the separatists' "representatives" sabotaged that meeting. We call also on the Ukrainian government to do everything in its power to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access. Nevertheless, the recent military offensive by the separatists leaves no doubt about who bears the main responsibility for the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Mr Chairman,

The role of the SMM is more crucial than ever. I would like to express my appreciation for ambassador Apakan's thoughts on the future of the Mission as we approach 21 March, and we look forward to hearing more over the coming weeks. Norway firmly supports extending the mandate of the SMM, including by more than six months.

Thank you.