19. Items relating to Ukraine

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled “Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)”. The meeting took the form of a briefing. More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is given in the table below.

On 18 February 2020, Council members held a meeting at the request of the Russian Federation. At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine.

The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs said at the outset that the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, together with the Minsk protocol and the Minsk memorandum, remained the only agreed framework for a negotiated, peaceful settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. In her briefing, she updated the Council on the progress in the implementation of the Minsk provisions since her last briefing in July 2019. She said that a number of important developments had since given rise to hope for long-elusive progress in the implementation of the Minsk provisions, including its key security and political aspects. She highlighted that on 9 December 2019, after a three-year hiatus, the leaders of France, Germany, Russia Federation and Ukraine had met in Paris under the so-called Normandy format. The Normandy Four meeting called for immediate measures to stabilize the situation in the conflict area, measures to implement the political provisions of the Minsk agreements and follow-up steps. The leaders committed to a full and comprehensive

536 For more information on format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

implementation of the ceasefire, strengthened by the implementation of all the necessary ceasefire support measures, as well as to supporting the development and implementation of an updated demining plan and an agreement within the Trilateral Contact Group on three additional disengagement areas, with the aim of disengaging forces and equipment. The Under-Secretary-General also highlighted that she had used the opportunity of her first visit to Ukraine in December 2019 to reiterate the Secretary-General’s support for the ongoing peace efforts and critical reforms in Ukraine, noting that her interlocutors were clear in their desire to see tangible progress in the negotiations with many stressing the need for greater involvement by women in the ongoing peace efforts. She also noted from her visit that the conflict continued to exact an unacceptable humanitarian toll on the Ukrainian population. It destabilized overall peace and security in Ukraine, but also potentially in the region as a whole. She added that the positive momentum and the stated commitment of the Normandy Four and the Trilateral Contact Group participants to address the conflict with renewed impetus and a sense of urgency needed encouragement and full support.537

The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office briefed the Council on the recent discussions and efforts by the Trilateral Contact Group to reach a sustainable solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. She provided updates on the exchange of detainees, opening of additional crossing points and disengagement of forces and hardware in pilot areas that had taken place during the reporting period. She also noted that on 1 October 2019, parties to the conflict had accepted the Steinmeier formula, which detailed the sequence of steps to be taken with regard to local elections in the non-Government-controlled territories and the entry into force of the special status for those territories. The Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine reported on the general security situation on the ground, noting that while there had been an overall decrease in the average number of ceasefire violations, isolated spikes in violence had continued to occur, including a major ceasefire violation in the Luhansk region that occurred on the same day as the Council meeting. He provided additional details on the

537 See S/PV.8726.
implementation of the measures agreed upon by the Normandy Four during its December 2019 meeting.

During the discussion, Council members welcomed the December 2019 meeting of the quartet in the Normandy format and called on the parties for compliance with the Minsk agreements, as endorsed by the Council in resolution 2202 (2015). Speakers expressed differing views on the responsibilities for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Some speakers accused the Russian Federation of violating the Minsk agreements. More specifically, the representative of France called on the parties, in particular the separatist armed groups, to refrain from any provocation, in order to avoid any military escalation on the ground and for the Russian Federation to use its influence on the separatists for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The representative of the Russian Federation cautioned that every time Council members said that Russia was failing to comply with the Minsk agreements, they were deliberately misleading their own people and the international community. The representative of the Russian Federation recalled also that the Normandy format had been created specifically to support the implementation of the Minsk agreements and reiterated that the efforts made under that format would be effective only if they were rooted in unconditional implementation of the package of measures and agreements reached under the Normandy format. He added that its implementation by all parties, primarily Ukraine, would become a decisive factor for the Russian Federation in assessing the viability of a new meeting in the Normandy format.

While recognizing the progress achieved on various fronts, including prisoner exchanges, the establishment of new disengagement areas and the opening of new crossing points along the line of contact, several Council members also noted the continuing violations of the ceasefire, as indicated in the reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and called for the immediate cessation of hostilities in eastern Ukraine. In that connection, several delegations condemned the attacks which had been carried out on that same day near the Zolote disengagement area and had resulted in Ukrainian casualties. Speakers also stressed the need for safe access to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for ensuring effective monitoring and

538 Ibid., United States, Germany, United Kingdom, Estonia and Belgium.
539 Ibid., United States, Germany, Estonia and France.
verification of the Minsk agreements ceasefire regime, and called for full and unconditional access to international human rights and humanitarian mechanisms to all areas of Ukraine.

On the holding of local elections, the representative of the Dominican Republic believed it appropriate to convene a future Normandy format meeting in order to ensure that local elections were held in the best conditions and guarantee the continuity of the negotiations within the framework of the implementation of the peace agreements. The representative of the United Kingdom agreed with the Russian Federation that local elections would pave the way for special status to be granted in parts of the Donbas region. She noted, however, that the local elections could take place only in proper conditions, and those conditions included a comprehensive ceasefire, unfettered access for the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine of the OSCE and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Also participating in the meeting, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine said that his Government looked forward to holding local elections throughout the territory of Ukraine, including its temporarily occupied parts, once the security and political conditions allowed it in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and the Copenhagen document of the OSCE and under Ukraine’s control of its internationally recognized borders.

Meetings: Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

540 Ibid., Germany, United Kingdom, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Estonia, France, Belgium and Ukraine.
541 Ibid., Germany, United Kingdom, Estonia, France, Belgium, and Ukraine.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting record and date</th>
<th>Sub-item</th>
<th>Other documents</th>
<th>Rule 37 invitations</th>
<th>Rule 39 and other invitations</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S/PV.8726</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ukraine[a]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All Council members,[b] all invitees[c]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 February 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[a] Ukraine was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[b] The representatives of Germany and the Russian Federation took the floor more than once in order to make further statements.
[c] The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission participated in the meeting via video-teleconference from Kyiv. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine took the floor more than once in order to make a further statement.