



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council on the situation in Ukraine
Geneva, 26 March 2015

With reference to the Statement made by this Permanent Mission at the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council on March 26, 2014, the Holy See reiterates its closeness and solidarity to all the people of Ukraine, whose country continues to be affected by the present conflict.

With this intervention, the Holy See intends to stress once again the urgent need to respect international legality regarding Ukraine's territory and borders, as a key element for ensuring stability at both the national and the regional level, and to re-establish law and order based on full respect for all fundamental human rights.

In this regard, the Holy See welcomes the steps taken to enforce the ceasefire, which is intended as an essential condition to arrive at political solutions exclusively through dialogue and negotiation. At the same time, it emphasizes the crucial need for all parties to implement the decisions taken by common agreement, acknowledging in this context the efforts made by the UN, the OSCE and other relevant organizations with reference to the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

The Holy See holds that the full adherence of all parties to the provisions of said Agreements is a prerequisite for all further efforts to improve the humanitarian and human rights situation in the affected territories, by, first of all, bringing an end to the loss of human life, acts of violence and other forms of abuse. It should also include the release of all hostages and illegally held persons and ensure unfettered access by all legitimate actors to provide humanitarian assistance in those areas.

At the same time the Holy See is concerned about the social emergency facing the population living in the areas affected, who suffer from poverty, hunger, insecurity and health risks. It is also concerned about injured and displaced persons and families suffering from the loss of loved ones. In this urgent situation, the Holy See is committed to offering its assistance through its institutions and requests the charitable organisations of the Catholic Church to intensify and coordinate their efforts to provide assistance to the people of Ukraine. The Holy See also wishes to express its confidence in the solidarity of the international community.