



Only through dialogue can enduring and sustainable solutions be found to the crisis in and around Ukraine, said OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić on Thursday as he joined his Special Representative to the Trilateral Contact Group and the OSCE's Chief Monitor in addressing a side event on the margins of the 22nd Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

Dačić said that at the beginning of the year the conflict was at its peak but efforts to implement the Minsk agreements have shown certain results. The work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has also been considerably enhanced.

"It is of particular importance to consolidate the ceasefire. We have also noted progress in the withdrawal of some weapons, agreed upon in late September," said Dačić. "However, the situation remains extremely fragile and enabling the continuation of the political process calls for full engagement of all, including the OSCE."

Martin Sajdik, the OSCE Chairperson's Special Representative in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, said that the sides must not content themselves with blaming each other.

"Too much time has already been lost on mutual accusations, which do not contribute to the implementation of the agreements to which they all have committed themselves," said Sajdik.

Chief Monitor of the SMM, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, said the work of the Mission has been challenging but that it has a well-established presence throughout the country, with a focus on the eastern part of Ukraine.

"The SMM has been monitoring the withdrawal of weapons under the Addendum to the Minsk package of measures and is now verifying the compliance of all sides with the agreement. However, we observe that some proscribed weapons are still in the field," he said. "The SMM is ready to continue its work towards peace in eastern Ukraine. Yet we need the political will from the sides to a full ceasefire," said Apakan.

*Photo by:OSCE/Jonathan Perfect*