



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

## **Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1318<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
3 June 2021

### **Madam Chairperson,**

The developments and discussions of the previous days made it abundantly clear that Russia considers transparency at the Ukrainian-Russian state border as the most serious threat to its false narratives on the situation in Donbas. Its systematic efforts to undermine monitoring capacities of the OSCE SMM and BOM, two field presences on the ground, which shed light on Russia's military activities, continue unabated.

Establishment of permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian State border and verification by the OSCE, specifically provided by paragraph 4 of the Minsk Protocol signed by Russia, cannot be achieved until the Russian side stops its policy of obstructing it. It is no wonder that the issue of transparency was so extensively raised by many participating States at the previous meeting of the Permanent Council.

The situation is only worsening. Last week, the SMM registered 86 occasions of signal interference in the work of its UAVs, the highest number ever recorded by the Mission in one week.

In the PC meeting on 20 May, we have already raised serious concerns on this situation, which prevents the SMM from monitoring the remote border areas and heavy weapons storage sites in the Russia-occupied parts of Donbas. We have also provided the list of exact locations along the entire line of contact, in which the modern Russian jamming systems with operational range of up to 90km are stationed.

On 29 May, one of those locations was confirmed by the SMM: a long-range UAV spotted the Russian electronic warfare system "RB-636V Svet-KU" in Novoazovsk. Russia's false accusations that it is Ukraine which uses such systems to jam the SMM UAVs are deplorable, as it is Ukraine which is most interested to have them flying and registering Russia's illegal military activities in the remote parts of the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

We continue to rely upon the OSCE to deliver truth on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine to the international community. Last week's five-day official visit by Secretary General Helga Schmid to Ukraine was very welcomed in this regard. A number of high-level meetings and a trip to Donetsk region were useful to share views and underline the role of the OSCE as mediator in facilitating

resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. In particular, we hope that such issues as demining, opening of the EECs, unimpeded access of humanitarian organizations and environmental protection in the occupied parts of Donbas, will be raised further on the OSCE agenda, despite Russia's objections.

The recent SMM thematic report on the impact of mines and UXOs on civilians in the conflict-affected regions of eastern Ukraine was useful to draw additional attention to the hardships faced by civilians as a result of Russia's armed intervention into Ukrainian territory. Since November 2019 until March 2021, the Mission corroborated 76 civilian casualties including 20 fatalities. In this regard, we reiterate our position that Russia must urgently give its consent within the TCG on the updated mine action plan including 19 new areas agreed in principle, without any artificial links to its politicized demands of so called "direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk".

Let me take this occasion to remind that Russia is not a neutral mediator; it is a party to the international armed conflict now raging in the Donbas region of Ukraine and a brutal aggressor responsible for the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as well as parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. We reject any attempts to exonerate Russia of its responsibility – both legal and political – for its flagrant violations of international law, military invasion of Ukraine, occupation of territories and attempts to redraw internationally recognized borders. We will not rest until international law prevails, justice is restored and the perpetrator is brought to account.

We also stress, once again, the need to ensure unimpeded access of international humanitarian organizations and NGOs to the Russia-occupied parts of Donbas, which would be able to support mine-risk awareness activities in the schools, regularly held in the government-controlled areas, but not available to the occupied territories, as mentioned in the SMM thematic report. Moreover, Russia must stop supplying the banned anti-personnel mines to its illegal armed formations: on 25 May, an SMM mini-UAV spotted for the first time four anti-personnel mines "PMN-2" inside Petrivske disengagement area, assessed as belonging to the Russian armed formations.

The dire humanitarian situation in the occupied parts of Donbas can be easily demonstrated by the incident on 27 May, when a 16-year-old girl risked her life to cross the line of contact through the mine field in order to reach the government-controlled area near Verkhnotoretske, Donetsk region. Millions of her compatriots remain hostages of the Russian occupation in Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

As we marked International Children's Day on 1 June, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that since the beginning of Russia's aggression in 2014, more than 240 Ukrainian children lost their lives, 56 more went missing, and hundreds were wounded.

The government-controlled areas along the line of contact remain vulnerable towards Russia's armed attacks: last week, the SMM confirmed damage to residential areas in Mar`inka, Hranitne and Pivnichne, all caused by mortar rounds, projectiles and anti-tank guided missiles fired from an easterly direction.

We continue to severely condemn Russia's attacks against civilian population. They must be stopped. Russia needs to focus instead on implementing its part of the security provisions of the Minsk agreements.

We also urge the Russian side not to proceed further with its creeping integration of the occupied territories of Donbas and revoke any decisions and steps undermining Ukraine's sovereignty. On 31 May, graduates of some schools

in the occupied part of Donetsk region passed their final exams under the Russian educational system and laws. We ask the SMM, in line with its mandate, to verify this information and reflect it in the Mission's reports to participating States.

Reports by international bodies remain an important source of verified information on Russia's massive violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied parts of Ukraine. In its most recent Update on the human rights situation in Ukraine issued on 31 May, the UN OHCHR informed on a number of such violations in the temporarily occupied Crimea, including prosecution of religious communities, tortures of detained persons by the occupation law enforcement agencies, restrictions of freedom of opinion and expression, violations of fair trial guarantees and many others.

We thank participating States, which highlight these violations in their statements, including by referring to specific cases. As stated many times before, public attention often prevents tortures of detainees and abuses of human rights. It also contributes to the international pressure on Russia to make it release all Ukrainian political prisoners.

On 1 June, the Russian occupation court illegally sentenced Chairman of Mejlis of Crimean Tatar People Refat Chubarov in absentia to 6 years. Instead of fulfilling the order by the International Court of Justice to withdraw its ban on the Mejlis, Russia continues to persecute its members and other Crimean Tatars under trumped-up charges.

We, again, urge the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, militarization of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations, mercenaries and their hardware from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**