



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 956th FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against
Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea

(30 September 2020, Hofburg, also via video teleconferencing)
(Agenda item 3, General Statements)

Madame Chairperson,

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea.

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba has reminded the Russian government of their direct role in the armed conflict in Donbas and the regular escalation by its armed formations. He noted on 18 September that the Kremlin has signed the 2014 Minsk Agreements, confirming its status as a party to the conflict. Russia has stuffed occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions with Russian weapons, in particular, the newest and experimental ones, that are being used on Ukrainian soil as on a military training ground; carried out artillery shelling of Ukrainian territory from the territory of the Russian Federation, and involved regular units of the Russian army in military operations in Ukraine. Dmytro Kuleba also stressed that Russia had shot down the MH17 passenger plane with its Buk anti-aircraft missile, introduced the Russian ruble in the temporarily occupied areas, and imposed Russian passports and the so-called "educational programs". The Kremlin has created a Russian tax zone and many other things that are being imposed by Moscow onto the temporarily occupied territories of the Ukrainian Donbas. The Minister added it was Russia who seized dozens of Ukrainian industrial enterprises, having plundered them and withdrawn equipment from the Ukrainian territory.

According to the information of the Ukraine's MoD, **in the first half of September, 2020 Russia delivered 1,200 tonnes of fuel, six wagons and more than ten trucks full of anti-tank mines and munition, including for artillery systems. These illicit means were delivered by rail and road transport from Russia to the temporarily occupied territories** of Donetsk and Luhansk regions through the segment of the Ukrainian-Russian state border currently controlled by Russia and its occupation administrations in Donbas. In addition, more than 15 units of military equipment, including 122mm Grad multiple rocket launchers, were delivered to the units of the Russian occupation forces after a major overhaul at the Russian defence industry enterprises.

During the week from 21 through 27 September the armed formations of the Russian Federation resorted to armed provocations and committed other violations of the Agreement of the TCG on additional measures to strengthen ceasefire, reached on 22

July. Thus, they violated ceasefire regime on 16 occasions, directing fire against the positions of Ukrainian Armed Forces, with the use of grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms. On 23 September, twice, the Russian armed formations used UAVs, which crossed the contact line, near Transazov. Ukrainian forces had to use electronic warfare to stop these forbidden activities.

The armed formations of the Russian Federation kept building up their military presence in the conflict area by **accumulating illicit weapons and military equipment in the vicinity of the contact line and further planting mines.** In its report of 21 September, the SMM observed 5 tanks (*T-72*) near the temporarily occupied settlement of Novoselivka (*37km north-east of Donetsk*) and 21 multiple launch rocket systems (*BM-21 Grad, 122mm*) near the temporarily occupied settlement of Khrustalnyi (*56km south-west of Luhansk*). Such actions endanger the ceasefire agreement and pose serious danger to the lives of civilians. The capabilities of these systems, especially if used simultaneously, are alarming. Their coverage area may reach up to 31.5 square kilometres.

Since the beginning of September, **the SMM reported on mines** planted by the armed formations in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas, used by civilians and the SMM, on numerous occasions. In particular, on 28 August, the Missions saw for the first time two rows of ten anti-tank mines in Trudivski area of Donetsk city's Petrovskiyi district, blocking a road leading to Mariinka; on 1 September – 23 anti-tank mines laid across a taxiway at the destroyed Donetsk international airport; on 4 and 7 September – 12 antitank mines laid across the road near Vesela Hora settlement, Luhansk region; on 13 September – 14 antitank mines laid across the auto route near Sakhanka, Donetsk region, and 8 antitank mines laid across the road and 20 antitank mines on the eastern and western lanes of the same road near Vesela Hora. On 19 September, the Mission also reported on **anti-personnel mine MON-200 near the temporarily occupied residential area** of Molodizhne (*63km north-west of Luhansk*), belonging to the armed formation.

These facts vividly point to disregard by Russia of international treaties, in particular, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, its Protocol 2 and 5 and Ottawa Treaty. Moreover, the Russian armed formations carry out mining activities, with the use of grenade launcher RPG-7 loaded with landmines POM-2. We reiterate our strong condemnation and indignation over the use by Russia and its armed formations of landmines in the Donbas region of Ukraine. We strongly urge the Russian side to immediately cease the supply and further contamination of the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine with landmines, other types of mines and explosive devices and proceed with demining.

Russian armed formations also continued **fortifying their positions**, notably near Vodiane settlement, which is also a violation of the Agreement of 22 July.

The trend of severe **impediment and denial of access of the SMM patrols** by the armed formations to the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas remained unchanged.

Despite the challenging circumstances, Ukraine has been restoring civilian infrastructure and improving living conditions in the conflict-affected areas under Government control, including construction of additional entry-exit checkpoint in the Schastia disengagement area. During the period from 19 through 25 September, Ukrainian demining teams destroyed 462 explosive devices on 48 hectares of land and renovated 63 civilian houses, damaged as a result of Russian aggression.

Distinguished colleagues,

During recent working trip to the Donetsk region, **President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a meeting related to the work of the Trilateral Contact Group** at the Mayorske checkpoint. The meeting was attended by Ukrainian officials, representatives of Ukraine in the TCG, as well as representatives of the OSCE SMM. The parties discussed the implementation of the agreements reached in Paris during the meeting of the leaders of the Normandy Four last December, as well as the problems that hinder the implementation of these agreements. It was noted that the regime of comprehensive and permanent ceasefire is an undeniable success on the way to peace in Donbas.

"We observe minimization of losses. Today, the silence regime has been maintained for the 62nd day. I want to thank, first of all, our military for endurance, to thank the command of the Armed Forces and the JFO, the Commander-in-Chief - for the right approach to the army, to every officer, to every soldier. And for the understanding, which made this first step towards peace in Donbas possible," the President of Ukraine emphasized.

The SMM representative in Kramatorsk said that the Mission had recorded significantly fewer violations since 27 July, when a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire had come into force. "In seven weeks since the introduction of additional measures for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, from 27 July to September 16, 1052 violations were recorded. For comparison, in five weeks before that, we recorded 18027 violations," the OSCE representative underlined, adding that only one civilian was injured during the two months of the regime of silence.

During a meeting, the parties discussed the progress on the issue of mirror disengagement of forces and assets in four agreed areas, as well as on the issue of demining in Donbas. "Pursuant to the agreements reached in Paris, demining was carried out at 12 sites, which were previously agreed. The water and gas supply facilities, which are essential for the population, have been demined. On the territory under control of Ukraine the number of people injured by mines has significantly decreased," the Commander of the JFO Volodymyr Kravchenko said.

The issue of possible opening of more checkpoints in Donbas was also discussed.

On a final note, I would like to draw your attention to the commemoration on 26 September of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Ukraine as a country, which made the invaluable contribution into the nuclear disarmament, supports further efforts of the international community on the decrease of nuclear weapons role in the international policy, gradual elimination of nuclear arsenals and forthcoming times when none of the countries have this type of weaponry. On this day, Ukraine reminded the international community that support of our state in rebuffing external aggression from the Russian Federation, which pledged in Budapest Memorandum to guarantee Ukraine`s security in return to her refusal from nuclear weapons, is of vital importance.

In conclusion, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of the Donbas, and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including withdrawal of its forces, illegal armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.