



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 858th FSC Plenary Meeting**

(12 July 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 3)

Mr. Chairperson,

According to the results of the talks between President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko and US State Secretary R. Tillerson on 9 July in Kyiv the President of Ukraine, stressed that if Moscow does not want to waste time in the future, then it should follow the logic of all the other members of the Normandy format. **First** - a stable, reliable ceasefire. **The second** is the withdrawal of all Russian occupation troops from the Ukrainian territory. **The third** is to stop the intimidation of international observers. **Fourth**, the establishment of reliable international control over the uncontrolled section of the Ukrainian-Russian border and the contact line in order to ensure a permanent ceasefire and peace and to stop the illicit supply of weapons. And **fifth** - the release of all hostages who are illegally detained both in the occupied territory and in Russian prisons.

Since the last FSC plenary Meeting held on 21 June, the overall situation at the front line in East of Ukraine has continued to remain volatile and rather tense with numerous armed provocations instigated by Russia-backed militants and shelling of Ukrainian positions. At the same time, we have to admit that the last three weeks were marked with a slight reduction in the number of pro-Russian militant's attacks by one-third, compared to two previous weeks. The number of ceasefire violations ranged between 48 (on June 23 at the highest point) and 13 (on July 05 at the lowest). The number of instances of heavy weapons use by the hybrid Russian forces decreased and has been fluctuating between 19 (on June 23) and 0 (on July 4). A slight de-escalation in the past weeks was due to yet new truce agreed upon in Minsk. The ceasefire regime was introduced starting from June 24 due to the necessity of security guarantees for civilians performing farming activity at the frontline area.

The hybrid Russian forces have **continued performing air reconnaissance**, using drones, mostly focusing at the Luhansk sector. Over the past three weeks, UAF registered 39 episodes with enemy scouting drones, 75% of which have been recorded at the Bakhmut road area. Having been worried by an intensive use of Russian UAVs, on 27 June the Ukrainian side officially called upon the Russian Federation with the demand to immediately stop illegally use of combat reconnaissance systems by the hybrid Russian forces on the certain areas of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. As a part of combat reconnaissance systems several Russian drones ("Orlan", "Granat", "Takhion", "Eleron", "Forpost" etc.) were registered flying over the certain areas of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts on 27, 28

and 29 May. As a result of these reconnaissance flights 18 military servicemen of the UAF were wounded and at least 2 civilians were killed.

On 6 July the SMM camera in Avdiivka recorded an unmarked UAV flying east to west and returning in the opposite direction 4-5km east of the camera. At the same time, efforts to blind the SMM continued on 3 July, when the SMM lost contact with its mini-UAV near non-government-controlled Slovianoserbsk.

According to the last Weekly Report of 5 July 2017, the SMM recorded about 25% more ceasefire violations compared with the previous reporting period, as hopes faded that the “harvest ceasefire” would belatedly take hold. The security situation is poised and the risk of sudden upsurge remains as weapons that should have been withdrawn according to the Minsk agreements continued to be used or located near the contact line. The Mission noted a three-fold increase in the use of weapons that should have been withdrawn according to the Minsk agreements with over 350 instances of fire from such weapons compared to about 100 the previous week. Such weapons were predominantly used in two areas: the Popasna-Pervomaisk area (about 65% of ceasefire violations) and in the area near Svitlodarsk (about 35%). Fighting continued to be concentrated around areas where almost all ceasefire violations were recorded: Popasna-Pervomaisk, Svitlodarsk, Avdiivka, Yasynuvata, Donetsk airport and east of Mariupol.

The SMM opened a forward patrol base (FPB) in government controlled Popasna on 24 June, which gave it a night-time presence in the area. On the evening of 27 June the SMM recorded about 100 mortar round impacts in the area east and south-east of Popasna. On 30 June, following shelling in the area of Popasna the SMM temporally relocated from its FPB. This is another clear evidence of resolve of the Russian side to prevent the SMM from providing full picture on the ground.

Despite its mandate providing for safe and secure access throughout the country and repeated calls to ensure this access and the safety of SMM monitors, the SMM was yet again violently attacked and fired upon on the territories not under the Government control. On 20 June, at the “DPR”-controlled Yasynuvata railway station an armed man in military style attire attempted to break the windows of an SMM vehicle with the gunstock of his assault rifle, causing damage. When the SMM was leaving the area, the armed man fired a burst of his assault rifle into the air, followed by three shots that the SMM assessed were fired at the patrols. It was the third incident in the area this year involving small-arms fire near SMM members.

“LPR” and “DPR” members continued to take deliberate actions that compromised the security of the SMM. On 29 June in Vesela Hora two armed “LPR” members threatened to shoot SMM patrol members having alleged that on the previous day the SMM had congratulated residents on the anniversary of the Ukrainian constitution. In the following days a senior “LPR” member disputed the facts the SMM had established and reported. Other “LPR” members used the media in an attempt to blame the SMM for the incident. Rather than seek a remedy and hold perpetrators accountable, “LPR” members have used the episode to attack the SMM, creating an enabling environment for attacks on the SMM to continue. It was against this backdrop of continuing impunity and the lack of measurable response to such serious security incidents that “DPR” members withdrew armed

guards from the SMM's office in Donetsk city on 26 June, leaving the Mission without security for a full week. Over the days the SMM repeatedly asked what actions the Russian part of JCCC had taken to assist in ensuring safety and security for the SMM. Rather than take action, they told the SMM to address the issue in a letter to "DPR" members, allowing a dangerous security vacuum to develop for the Mission. In view of the ongoing absence of armed guards, the SMM asked the JCCC to deploy its own officers to ensure a round-the clock presence to assist in ensuring safety and security for the SMM until further notice. Only on 2 July two armed guards returned to their posts in what they said was a temporary measure.

According to the SMM Daily Report of 8 July, at a checkpoint on highway H-15 near the Kargil plant in "DPR"-controlled Kreminecs, an armed man pointed a rifle at the SMM and demanded it to wait. Later in the day, an armed "DPR"-man denied the SMM passage through a checkpoint in Kreminecs, citing orders from superiors. Armed men at a checkpoint in "DPR"-controlled Olenivka – a checkpoint the SMM decided to use to return to Donetsk after access was denied at a checkpoint in Kreminecs - allowed the SMM to pass through only upon checking the trailer of an SMM vehicle.

These incidents highlight the level of risks posed by hybrid fighters who enjoy impunity on the part of their commanders in Russia and areas of Donbas, de-facto controlled by Russia. Such incidents continue to regularly happen, following the on-going unwillingness of the Russian side to commit to the safety of the monitors and to start implementing its obligations under the Minsk agreements. The political will of Russia remains the necessary precondition for its proxies in Donbas to stop abusing, intimidating and attacking international civilian monitors.

Militants continued to restrict the SMM's freedom of movement. Apart from restrictions related to mines, including at disengagement areas, "DPR" and "LPR" members restricted the SMM on 12 occasions (11 times in areas under "DPR" control), while UAF restricted the SMM only twice during the week.

"DPR" members denied the SMM access to border areas east of Novoazovsk and Sidove on four instances (as in the previous week). On only one occasion during the reporting period the SMM was able to travel to the Novoazovsk border crossing point. The SMM report of 30 June informed that "a male employee of a coal mine told the SMM that it needed to get permission from "LPR" members in Luhansk in order to speak to him". While in the past the SMM has repeatedly informed on the occasions when medical personnel at hospitals in non-government-controlled areas were refusing to provide the SMM information without written permission of the illegal armed formations, such cases demonstrate the increasing scale of Russia's efforts as an occupying power to keep full control over the local population in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

According to the SMM Weekly Report of 28 June, despite the ceasefire agreement, the security situation in Donbas remains volatile, militants continued firing UAF positions and residential areas along the contact line and holding live-fire exercises inside the security zone in violation of the TCG decision as of 3 March 2016, as stated in the SMM report of 1 July.

Russia's involvement into the conflict it instigated and continues to fuel in Donbas has yet again been put into spotlight, when a subversion and reconnaissance group of six persons, including two Russian citizens, was identified

and neutralized by Ukrainian servicemen near the contact line in Donbas on 24 June, in the first day of the so called “harvest ceasefire” agreed for the period from 24 June to 31 August 2017 by the TCG on 21 June.

SMM observed mines and remnants of ammunition in non-government-controlled areas. SMM mini-UAV spotted the presence of 13 anti-tank mines on T-0519 road close to the “DPR” checkpoint near Pikuzy in two rows spaced approximately 50m apart. It observed 12 anti-tank mines on two wooden platforms placed in the middle on the road near “LPR”-controlled Pervomaisk. It continued to observe tail fins of mortar rounds were still partially buried in the asphalt road near “DPR” checkpoint Nikishyne.

The SMM remained unable to access its camera in “DPR”-controlled Petrivske due to security considerations. During the week in addition to restrictions of the SMM’s freedom of movement due to observed or potential presence of mines and UXO, the Mission’s freedom of movement was restricted 18 times, a 40 % increase compared with the previous week. These included 17 instances in areas outside of government control and only one - in areas controlled by the Government. The SMM was constantly faced with persistent restrictions of freedom of movement in “DPR”-controlled areas east and north-east of Mariupol. On a total of six occasions “DPR” members in these areas restricted or denied the SMM’s movement. On 23 June armed “DPR” members at a checkpoint near Novoazovsk prevented the SMM from crossing the checkpoint. Two days later, at the same checkpoint the SMM’s access to the border area was denied. A RF officer of the JCCC said that the SMM could not travel to the border area without written permission from the “DPR”. Such restrictions in a consistent manner continue to prevent the SMM from carrying out its mandate. In “DPR”-controlled areas, armed “DPR” members continued to delay the SMM at a checkpoint near Kreminecs.

Dear Colleagues,

The crimes committed by the hybrid Russian forces in Donbas continue to be enabled by the on-going supply of ammunition and fuel through the uncontrolled segments of the Ukraine-Russia state border. During the reporting period militants received 1680 tons of fuel and 40 tons of ammunitions from Russia.

Since the last FSC Plenary Meeting on 21 June, ***the hybrid Russian forces have violated ceasefire around 525 times, one fifth of which was carried out by the Minsk-proscribed weapons. 12 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 44 were wounded. Due to fire attacks 16 private houses and residential buildings, 3 non-residential buildings, a gas pipeline segment near Avdiivka and a power line of the Donetsk filtration station were damaged.***

We urge Russia to stop its aggression against Ukraine, to implement in good faith its commitments under the Minsk agreements, and to reverse the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula, which remains an integral part of Ukraine. As that is still not the case, we appreciate the decision of the European Council of 28 June 2017 to prolong the economic sanctions targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy until 31 January 2018 linked to the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

I thank you for the attention.