



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

**Statement in response to the Vice-President  
of the International Committee of the Red Cross,  
Ms. Christine Beerli**

As delivered by Ihor Prokopchuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1160<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
12 October 2017

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The Delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Christine Beerli at the Permanent Council and thanks her for the insightful presentation.

We view the impartial and dedicated work of the ICRC on ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance to victims of armed conflicts and on promoting respect for international humanitarian law as a significant factor and contribution towards protection of human dignity, human rights and freedoms, which are at the core of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

Over three years of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine have led to enormous sufferings and deprivation of the population in the conflict-affected and occupied areas of Donbas. I firmly reject the unfounded and hypocritical accusations of Ukraine that we heard earlier in the statement of the Russian Ambassador.

We highly value the large-scale program of assistance provided by the ICRC for Ukraine to alleviate the consequences of the external aggression.

We note with appreciation that among different activities only this year, from January to June 2017, over 2500 metric tons of humanitarian aid were delivered by the ICRC to people in the conflict-affected areas; over 575,000 people benefited from ICRC assistance on water supply in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts; over 80,000 people benefited from distribution of food and hygienic parcels; 111 health care facilities received different medical products; 1575 mine signs and 15 km of marking tape were installed. This morning ten trucks with ICRC humanitarian assistance proceeded to non-government-controlled area of Donetsk oblast through the checkpoint in Novotroitske.

These examples of significant and genuine humanitarian assistance to the people in need put into sharp contrast the practice of the Russian Federation of sending so-called “humanitarian convoys” in violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principles of international humanitarian law. Ukraine

strongly condemns this practice. Russia has consistently ignored the modalities agreed by the ICRC, Ukraine and Russia in 2014 concerning the role of the ICRC in delivery of humanitarian assistance. Russia has also consistently ignored Ukraine proposals to use the border check-points under the control of the Government of Ukraine for delivery of what is alleged to be humanitarian aid.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

We recall the agreement of the Normandy Ministerial of March 2016 that all restrictions on operation of the international humanitarian organizations in the occupied part of Donbas must be lifted and the ICRC must have access to hostages and illegally detained persons. This has not happened until now.

Not only Russia continues to block the process of release of hostages and illegally detained persons, as envisaged by the Minsk agreements, but Moscow and its proxies deny access to the overwhelming majority of these persons. Some of them have been in illegal detention for over three years, their health conditions are unknown. We stress the importance of access of ICRC to places of illegal detention and consistently urge Russia to remove any obstacles in the occupied part of Donbas that restrict the ICRC from performing in full its role.

We also encourage confirmation of active involvement of the ICRC in facilitating the search of missing persons.

As established by the UN, the human rights situation in the Crimean peninsula has been steadily and significantly deteriorating since the beginning of the illegal occupation by the Russian Federation in 2014. It is marked by grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law on the part of Russian occupation authorities. We encourage involvement of the ICRC to relieve the plight of the people suffering from repressive policies and illegal detentions on the peninsula.

I will conclude by reiterating Ukraine's interest in furthering co-operation with the ICRC and wishing it success in performing its noble work.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**