



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine at the 975th FSC Plenary Meeting

(12 May 2021, via video teleconferencing)

(Agenda item 2, General Statements, on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”)

Mr. 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”.

Over the past two weeks of 26 April – 9 May the armed formations of the Russian Federation operating in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas kept shelling positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and civilian infrastructure sites. The purpose of such actions is a deliberate attempt to provoke response fire and accuse Ukraine of violating the ceasefire regime.

The adversary continued using infrastructure sites as a shelter to conduct shelling in violation of the international humanitarian law. On 29 April, one Ukrainian serviceman was wounded near Shumy as a result of sniper fire originating from water supply station. In the second half of April, Russian forces were conducting provocative fire from the residential areas of Donetsk city posing direct threat to civilians.

Russian occupation forces breached the ceasefire regime 129 times extensively employing Minsk-proscribed weapons near 14 residential areas (Vodiane, Opytne, Krasnogorivka, Katerynivka, Nevelske, Luhanske, Pavlopil, Shumy, Pivdenne, Pisky, Novozvanivka, Novooleksandrivka, Maiorsk, Novhorodske) as well as using diverse grenade launchers, small arms, including sniper fire, and heavy machine guns.

As a result of the armed provocations within the last two weeks, 8 Ukrainian servicemen were wounded and 2 servicemen were killed.

The Russian armed formations have been systematically interfering with the SMM assets, including targeting its UAVs, masking their malign activity on the ground. This is done to amass prohibited heavy weapons closer to the contact line to shell

Ukrainian positions and residential areas, and facilitate the disinformation campaign against the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The electronic warfare systems used by the Russian occupation forces in Donbas are capable of jamming the Mission's UAVs at a distance of more than 90 km. It allows to impede the UAVs take-off and landing in the government-controlled areas.

Moreover, the Russian armed formations regularly use forbidden UAVs, manufactured in Russia, to cross the line of contact for reconnaissance activities, fire adjustment, remote mining, and to drop shells and other explosives.

On 1 and 6 May, combat UAVs of the Russian armed formation dropped fragmentation shells VOG-17 on the Ukrainian positions near Maiorsk and Talakivka.

On 4 May, the Russian UAV Orlan-10 was observed flying over several settlements in the government-controlled area. On 3 and 6 May, near Novoluhanske and Granitne settlements two forbidden UAVs were shot down by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. One of them was the UAV of Takhion type, manufactured by Russian "Izhmash-UAV systems" plant, and currently in service with the armed forces of Russia.

High level of interference with the SMM assets is amplified by ongoing severe restrictions of the Mission freedom of movement in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Even under such difficult operating conditions, the Mission was still able to observe a large number of heavy weapons in violation of withdrawal lines in the temporarily occupied areas. In particular, the Mission observed 148 of such weapons and 270 weapons outside of designated storage sites during the past two weeks.

The SMM has also observed drastic increase in the use of mines by the Russian armed formations. Only during two days on 28 and 29 April, the Mission observed 2 thousand mines near temporarily occupied residential areas of Sygnalne and Verkhnohyrokiivske.

Blatant disregard by the occupants of humanitarian demining, the absence of warning signs and fences around the mined areas, chaotic mining and absence of maps of minefields near the settlements in the temporarily occupied territories pose a serious threat to civilians. Such situation results in numerous casualties among residents of the temporarily occupied territory, for which the responsibility lies entirely with the Russian occupation administrations.

Trying to justify the crimes against humanity, the occupants resort to baseless and absurd allegations against the Armed Forces of Ukraine of involvement in explosions near settlements in the temporarily occupied territory. This is nothing more than a part of hideous propaganda campaign directed towards the residents of the temporarily occupied territories and those of the Russian Federation.

This campaign is launched against the backdrop of an increase in the number of cases of targeted use by the Russian armed formations of remote mining with POM-2 of land and civilian infrastructure on the government-controlled territory.

Since the beginning of this year, by employing diverse means of delivery (portable mine laying complexes, UAVs, RPG grenades), the adversary has dropped more than 50 such mines with deleted markings, thus, trying to hide the country of origin and manufacture.

Remote mining was carried out against the residential areas of Maiorsk, Zaitzeve, Khutir Vilnyi which constitutes a gross violation of the international humanitarian law. As a result of explosion of one of such mines, one civilian from Khutir Vilnyi was killed.

On 28 April, 6 and 7 May, the adversary used rocket-propelled grenade launcher to remotely deliver POM-2 landmines on the Ukrainian positions near Vodiane and Pivdenne settlements.

The Russian armed formations resort to other methods of mine warfare. This includes the use of explosive devices masked as toys and household items that may be of an interest to civilians. On 2 May, on Easter Day, Ukrainian servicemen revealed such an item (disguised as kid's music player) on an unsurfaced road near the village of Shyroka Balka.

Allow me to draw your attention to the most appalling cases of ceasefire violations by the Russian armed formations with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements.

PRESENTATION

Slide 1. In the period from 25 to 27 April, the residential sector of Vodiane settlement, Volnovakha district of Donetsk region (47 ° 08`55,02N 37 ° 47`28,67E; 47 ° 09`04,51N 37 ° 47`09,36E) was shelled from 122mm artillery systems (19 shots) from the Russian armed formations' positions near occupied Pikuzy, Uzhivka and Sakhanka settlements. One of the projectiles hit the residential house.

Slide 2, 3. On 4 May (at 22:25), the main regional hospital in Krasnohorivka settlement, Donetsk region, was shelled from 120mm mortars and 122mm artillery systems from the direction of occupied Staromykhailivka. It is especially worrying since the building of the hospital affected by the shelling is functional and provides in-patient treatment. Fortunately, no casualties were reported.

Slide 4. On 5 May, a Ukrainian position near Popasnawere was shelled from the direction of occupied Kalynove (48033`54,60N, 38030`57,90E). According to the preliminary assessment, SPG-9 (5 shots), 82mm mortars (3 shells) and antitank guided missile launcher (1 shot) were used.

Slide 5. On the same day, the Ukrainian position near Pivdenne was under fire from the direction of the occupied Mine named after Izotov (48023`07,42N, 37059`48,70E).

According to the preliminary assessment, 122mm artillery system (5 projectiles) and 120mm mortars (17 projectiles) were used.

Slide 6. On 8 May, the Russian armed formations unleashed fire against a residential area in Mariinka settlement (47°57'07.31"N 37°30'42.25"E) employing 100mm antitank gun T-12 Rapira (6 high explosive fragmentation projectiles) from the direction of occupied Trudivska Mine. The shelling caused damage to the power line, leaving the nearby residents without electricity. A car parked in a private residential house, the road and the front of the houses, garages and fences were also damaged.

Slide 7. In accordance with the agreement on additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire regime of July 2020, the Ukrainian side made several steps to facilitate the fulfillment of this goal.

One of such activities, carried out in July-August last year, was the deployment along the line of contact of the network of observation groups of the Ukrainian side of the JCCC, with the simultaneous deployment of white ZIL-131 trucks with appropriate markings in those spots where the largest number of ceasefire violations take place. The locations of these vehicles are selected under the condition that they can be visually observed.

Slide 8. At present, eleven observation groups are located along the line of contact, tasked to control and coordinate the ceasefire regime, as well as to ensure security guarantees during repair and maintenance works and secure humanitarian missions' activities. All relevant data about the location of these groups were regularly provided by the Ukrainian side to the JCCC. The locations of the vehicles and modalities of their operation in fulfilling the tasks of control and coordination of ceasefire regime are well known to the SMM as well as to the Russian armed formations.

Despite that, on May 3 and 5, the Russian armed formations carried out provocative shelling of the vehicle of the observation group "Mariupol" near Vodiane settlement. 120mm mortars, 122- and 152mm artillery systems were used.

Slide 9. As a result of this shelling four servicemen were wounded, including the driver of the vehicle.

The Russian armed formation disregarded the coordination mechanism (including telephone communications) applied in full by the head of Ukrainian side to the JCCC aimed at achieving immediate cease of fire.

In this regard, we consider it necessary to pay special attention to ensuring ceasefire on the Mariupol, Donetsk and Gorlivka directions, in the areas where the observation groups are deployed, by arranging mirror monitoring by the SMM patrols.

Slide 10. We also draw your attention to the reckless armed provocation committed by the Russian armed formation on the morning of May 5, when the Ukrainian position near Vodiane was shelled from the direction of occupied Uzhivka with the use of 152-

(26 projectiles) and 122mm (10 projectiles) artillery systems and 120mm mortars (10 projectiles). As a result of this armed attack 4 Ukrainian servicemen were wounded.

END of PRESENTATION

Such actions of the Russian armed formations are in clear violation of the Minsk agreements and disregard of the TCG agreement on additional measures to strengthen ceasefire of 22 July 2020. We regard these acts as deliberate steps to destabilize the situation in the temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions and adjacent territories, and further escalation of the conflict.

Mr. Chairperson,

Amid the ongoing armed provocations of the Russian forces in Donbas, Russia's military build-up along the borders with Ukraine and illegal large-scale concentration of its troops and conduct of military activities in the temporarily occupied Crimea and around the peninsula remain of grave concern to Ukraine.

According to the President of Ukraine, Russia has withdrawn only 3,500 of its troops from the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea, and therefore the threat of escalation persists. In particular, the Ukrainian President said: "After all, the number of military personnel and equipment has been increased on the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea, temporarily occupied parts of Donbas and along our borders. And as for the contingent and equipment on the border of Ukraine and Russia - we do not see a decrease there. We also do not see an increase. They are retreating very slowly".

It is still unclear how Russia's claims of merely routine readiness checks of its troops correspond to the statement by the Chief of the Russian General Staff Army wherein he informed that more than 300,000 personnel and 35,000 items of armament were involved in these checks. How come that such number of troops do not fall under the thresholds for notification and observation under the Vienna Document 2011?

We urge the Russian side to live up to its commitments under this politico-military instrument and take into full account the recommendations put forward at the joint PC-FSC meeting on 14 April, as well as to provide meaningful answers to the questions raised by the delegations.

It is of particular importance that the withdrawal of Russian troops from the border with Ukraine is verified and confirmed.

In conclusion, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of 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 the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations, and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.