



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
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Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 72nd Joint FSC-PC Meeting on Lessons Learned from Conflict
Resolution

(20 February 2019, Hofburg)

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine joins other delegations in warmly welcoming today's distinguished speaker, the former Taoiseach of Ireland Bertie Ahern, and thanks him for his valuable observations and insights concerning “Lessons Learned from Conflict Resolution”. We thank the Chairs of the PC and the FSC for choosing this important topic for today’s joint meeting.

Ukraine is convinced that prevention and resolution of conflicts belong to the core mandate of the OSCE and form a *raison d'être* of its activities. We would note, that it is part of the DNA of the CSCE as the process from the time of its inception, promoting a unique comprehensive approach to security and linking politico-military aspects of security with respect for human rights. The principles and norms, enshrined in particular in the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, establish clear standards of behaviour of the participating States towards its citizens and towards each other, thus constituting a solid framework for preventing and resolving conflicts by respecting, in good faith, of the consensually undertaken commitments.

The OSCE documents acknowledge that there may be conflicts within states and between states. Over the years the OSCE has developed a toolbox of instruments and mechanisms to be used in addressing crisis situations to prevent their escalation into conflict. They may prove to be useful in a variety of situations, but they may not be applicable or are not effective in a situation when one country resorts to an armed aggression against a neighbouring state and denies it. This is what we term as “hybrid” warfare and have encountered in the last five years of Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine. It gave rise to the worst security crisis in Europe and continues to multiply the casualties among Ukrainian people and increase the scope of destruction. As wilful and flagrant violation by Russia of founding OSCE principles, including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers, is the root-cause of the conflict, its resolution requires restoration of full respect for these principles as the essence of rule-based security order. It requires solidarity and constantly increasing politico-diplomatic pressure

on Russia to make it abide by its international obligations and political commitments.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today, we are entering the sixth year of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine. It started with illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and then grew to a direct military invasion and illegal occupation of parts of the Donbas region of Ukraine. A number of formats and mechanisms were established and employed to facilitate resolution of the conflict started by Russia. They include the Normandy Four, TCG tasked with facilitating implementation of the Minsk agreements, OSCE SMM and others. Meaningful progress is blocked by Russia's continuing denial of its role and responsibility as a party to the conflict it initiated, fuelled and supported militarily, logistically, financially, politically. Russia evades discussion on de-occupation of Crimea and continues to perpetrate grave violations of human rights in the peninsula. For five consecutive years, we witness Russia's misuse and abuse of consensus-based decision-making process in the OSCE, thus undercutting the effectiveness of our conflict-related responses.

We take this opportunity to recall that at the OSCE Istanbul Summit the participating States undertook to explore ways to increase the OSCE's effectiveness in dealing with cases of clear, gross and continuing violations of OSCE principles and commitments. Unfortunately, there has been no progress in reaching this objective since then. Sharing today our views on the "Lessons Learned from Conflict Resolution", we encourage all participants of this discussion to reflect thoroughly on the mentioned pending task from Istanbul, as it was also based on the experience of "lessons learned". It is clear to Ukraine, which is a victim of external aggression and faces existential threats from Russia: resolution of an interstate conflict requires political will of the parties involved, including an aggressor-state which must leave the sovereign territory of another state.

Distinguished colleagues,

In view of the scale of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Ukraine has been advocating since 2015 for deployment of a full-fledged multinational peacekeeping force throughout conflict-affected part of Donbas to enable the necessary security environment, facilitate full implementation of the Minsk agreements, end the conflict and restore the sovereignty of Ukraine in the region. We believe that such a mission would effectively contribute to ensuring peace and security in eastern Ukraine. The general formula is that Russian troops, mercenaries, their weaponry and equipment must move out from Ukraine and peacekeepers move in. In the presently Russia-occupied areas, illegal structures must be disbanded and illegal armed formations – disarmed. Restoration of control at the border, including through reliable international monitoring of the entire section of the border in the conflict zone is the key element for progress in conflict resolution. We welcome the readiness of the OSCE to engage in supporting the deployment.

We have yet to develop clear OSCE responses to another area of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict associated with Russia's militarisation of Crimea, armed attack on Ukraine's Naval Forces vessels near the Kerch Strait, disruption of freedom of navigation in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. We reaffirm our proposal to deploy the OSCE SMM in Kerch to address the tensions. It must be of paramount importance to secure immediate and unconditional release of Ukrainian sailors who are prisoners of war in Russia's captivity since 25 November 2018.

In Ukraine's view, for the OSCE to retain credibility on matters of conflict prevention and resolution it is necessary to carry out a constant critical review of the developments and offer updated options for action, based on OSCE principles and commitments, and not merely a platform for dialogue. As pointed out by the Delegation of Ukraine in the last few months, when a military convoy is spotted by the SMM crossing the international border from Russia into Ukraine in the middle of the night, it is not only to be raised in the Permanent Council debate, but must determine the course of further collective OSCE action. This is the approach that we encourage the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and the Conflict Prevention Centre to pursue in increasing effectiveness of the OSCE conflict-related activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.