



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 957th FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine
and illegal occupation of Crimea

(7 October 2020, Vienna, Hofburg, also via video teleconferencing)
(Agenda item 2, 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.

During the last two months, the overall security situation in the conflict area in Donbas remained relatively calm, marked by sporadic untargeted, however provocative, ceasefire violations by the armed formations of the Russian Federation, mainly from small arms. Heavy weapons, forbidden by the Minsk Agreements, were not used. These positive developments, as well as some other improvements on the ground, are promising in view of holding a possible meeting of the leaders of the Normandy 4 countries in order to further proceed with peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Despite this glimpse of progress in adherence to ceasefire, during the week from 28 September through 4 October 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. They violated ceasefire regime on 31 occasions (*near Starohnativka, Avdiivka, Vodiane, Novotroiitske, Mariinka, Maiorsk, Novoselivka Druha settlements in the Donetsk region and Shumy, Novooleksandrivka, Zolote, Hutir Vilnyi, Zaitseve, Myronivske, Novotoshkivske, Stanytsia Luhanska, Orihove, Prychepylivka, Katerynivka settlements in the Luhansk region*), directing fire against the positions of Ukrainian Armed Forces, with the use of different grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms. As a result of these provocations one Ukrainian serviceman was wounded.

The tracer shells, used during these armed provocations, caused heavy fires. There is also evidence that the major fires were intentionally started along the front line by the armed formations (**SLIDE PRESENTATION**). According to the latest estimates of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine as of 7 October the fire covered almost 20 hectares of land. Large numbers of Ukrainian servicemen and military equipment have been used to localize fire and save human lives. More than thousand civilians were evacuated from the affected area. The operation of the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint had to be suspended. According to the preliminary estimates, this disaster caused damage to over 250 civilian houses. In Voronove settlement, Luhansk region, it destroyed houses, damaged water and gas supply systems and other infrastructure sites.

That is exactly why all armed provocations must stop. We call upon Russia to fully abide by ceasefire in order to bring an end to human suffering, further devastation of Ukrainian Donbas as a result of its ruthless and irresponsible behaviour during the last almost 7 years.

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. Armed formations continued concentrating large quantities of heavy weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and outside of designated storage sites on the temporarily occupied areas of both Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Only on 28 September the SMM reported on 119 weapons outside designated storage sites, and, on the other day, of 20 multiple launch rocket systems and a surface-to-air missile system in violation of withdrawal lines.

Despite the challenging circumstances, Ukraine has been restoring civilian infrastructure and improving living conditions in the conflict-affected areas under Government control. Since 28 September, Ukrainian demining teams together with the SMM patrols surveyed the territories in the residential area of Novoluhanske and motorway near the residential area of Roty, Donetsk region, as to explosive devices, which allowed further reconstruction works of the bridge on the motorway. Renovation of other important infrastructure sites in this city as well as the houses in the residential areas of Zaitseve, Travneve, Hladosove, Lebedynske and Opytne is underway.

Demining activities were conducted on the road between the residential areas of Zolote and Pervomaik, Luhansk region. The construction of a new road was launched. We urge the Russian side to abide by the security guarantees in order to ensure safe transportation for people, residing on both side of the contact line. It would enable renewal of economic ties, timely supply of groceries and commodity goods, ensure emergency medical aid and create conditions for safe travel of Ukrainian citizens to other cities of Ukraine.

Distinguished colleagues,

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its resolute protest over the conduct by the Russian Federation of conscription into military service of Ukrainian citizens, which reside on the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

In accordance with the international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, it is forbidden for the Occupying Power to compel protected persons to serve in its armed or auxiliary forces. Neither the exert of pressure or propaganda, which aims at securing voluntary enlistment, is permitted.

The Russian Federation violates the norms of international law by conducting conscription of protected persons into its armed forces, by persecuting under criminal law the persons, who refuse to do military service, and by carrying out large scale military and propaganda campaigns, involving all age groups, including minors. These activities are especially alarming on the background of rapid proliferation of COVID-19.

From the very start of the illegal occupation of the Peninsula, the Russian Federation conducted 11 conscription campaigns, during which approximately 25 thousand persons were illegally called up for military service into the armed forces of the Russian Federation. During the current campaign that started on 1 October 2020, already 500 persons from Crimea are being conscripted into serve in the Russian army.

We urge the Russian Federation to cease these violations and strictly abide by the commitments of the Occupying Power. Ukraine calls upon participating States to react vigorously to such blatant violations of the international humanitarian law, committed on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

The continuing occupation and the grave situation with human rights on of the peninsula make it imperative that the international community stay focused on Crimea. Thus, Ukraine proposes a new consultation and coordination format – the Crimean Platform, which is aimed at consolidating the international policy of non-recognition, increasing effectiveness of the international response to the occupation of Crimea, as well as addressing challenges emanating therefrom, including its militarization and gross violations of human rights.

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.