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ENGLISH only

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 779-th FSC Plenary Meeting
(11 February 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)**

Mr. Chairman,

Recent attempts by the Russian Federation and the militants it backs to seek revision of the Minsk agreements have led to their military offensive, further violence, further destruction and further suffering in the east of Ukraine. As we meet today at this Forum, Russia-backed militants continue their offensive against the Ukrainian Armed Forces along and far beyond the agreed line of contact in Donbas.

Debaltseve has been under siege for more than one week now. Mariupol is under constant attacks, with new shelling of civilian areas being reported over the last days. The terrorists disregard the deadly consequences of their rocket attack on Mariupol of January 24, which killed 30 innocent civilians, including children, and wounded over 100. There are reports of numerous attacks on places such as Schastya, Avdiivka, Horlivka, Vuglehirsk, Stanytsya Luhanska and many others. These multiple attacks carried out by terrorist groups along the line of contact, the scale of rocket attacks and artillery bombardments point to a well-planned offensive, supported by established channels of military procurement from the Russian territory.

Russian aggression and the intensive offensive of the militants fueled from Russia with arms, fighters, tactical and logistical support is increasing a human cost. According to the UN estimates, only from 31 January to 5 February 2015 **263 civilians were killed and 674 wounded**. Yesterday, the pro-Russian terrorists committed another horrible crime against humanity in Kramatorsk. As a result of the heavy shelling of this peaceful city and the ATO staff by the MLRS "Smerch" with the use of 300 mm cluster munition missiles, 16 civilians were killed and 48 wounded.

The actions of the terrorists show their attempts to enlarge the territory of hostilities. The Ukrainian authorities will make sure that those responsible for this and other killings of peaceful people are brought to justice. We emphasize again the responsibility of the Russian Federation for all crimes committed in Donbas by illegal armed groups with the use of Russian weapons and with participation of Russian citizens.

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference held on 6-8 February 2015, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, while demonstrating the passports and documents of Russian soldiers who came to Ukraine to fight, emphasised: "How many evidences does the world still need to recognize an obvious fact – there is a foreign military equipment, mercenaries, Russian military trainers and regular troops". He also stressed that "from the very beginning Ukraine has been committed to peace and has remained coherent and consistent on the peace process."

In this context, Ukraine is grateful to Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande for coming to Kyiv last week to support our country's and international community's

efforts at restoring peace. We do hope that their proposals based on full implementation of the Minsk agreements will resonate in the efforts of Russia, which committed itself to the framework of peaceful resolution by signing the Minsk agreements. These agreements must be fulfilled in full and in good faith by all sides, including by the Russian Federation and the Russia-backed militants.

Distinguished colleagues,

Despite consistent calls from Ukraine and its international partners, the Russian Federation remains in breach of its commitments pursuant to a number of OSCE instruments in politico-military dimension; no meaningful steps have been made by the Russian side to enable de-escalation and peaceful resolution of the situation in the east of Ukraine.

We would like to take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the participants of this FSC meeting the recent unsatisfactory response of the Russian Federation on 6 February (format F41) to the Ukrainian request to get explanations from the Russian side (submitted by the Vienna Document format F10). Our request stemmed from numerous cases during the last week of January 2015 of illegal movement from Russia to Donbas of large numbers of weapons, military equipment, the Russian servicemen and fighters through parts of the Russian-Ukrainian state border, currently not controlled by Ukrainian borderguards. We deplore that in its reply (format F41) the Russian Federation again refused to provide substantive response to the grounded concerns of the Ukrainian side.

Presently Ukraine looks forward to the results of inspection in the specified area of the Southern Military District of the Russian Federation under section IX of the Vienna Document, which is under way on 10-11 February.

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,**

Since the last FSC meeting the security situation in Donbas remained very tense and tended to further deteriorate. The most difficult situation is in the area of Debaltseve and settlements Schastya, Avdiivka, Horlivka, Vuglehirsk, Stanytsya Luhanska and the city of Mariupol.

The pro-Russian militants, supported by regular Russian forces, continue their concentration and offensive around Debaltseve and try to seize it before the beginning of the meeting of the Normand format which is due today in Minsk. During the last week up to 1,500 servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces, 300 pieces of military equipment, including self-propelled artillery systems, GRADs and heavy trucks encroached into Ukraine at the checkpoint Izvaryno in the directions to Luhansk, Debaltseve and Antrazyt. The reports of the SMM indicate the movement of numbers of combat tanks, artillery systems, and military trucks of Russian origin in the militants-held area of Donbas.

Let me bring to your attention some facts of continuous attacks by the pro-Russian militants in the period from 5 till 10 February:

-on 5 February numerous heavy attacks were registered in the ATO area with the use of fire from tanks and artillery. As a result, 2 Ukrainian soldiers were killed, 26 wounded;

-on 6 February the militants carried out attacks along the entire line of contact and tried to push out the Ukrainian forces from their positions. During the day 5 Ukrainian military were killed, 22 wounded;

-on 7 February the highest activity of the militants was observed in the Debaltseve direction. The terrorists fired 68 times on the Ukrainian forces' positions. The town of Debaltseve was most affected by all types of weapons. The terrorists also fired 5 times at the settlement of Zolote, 3 times at Troitske, Sanzharovka, Popasna, and 2 times at Maloorlovka and Horne. Militants fired 14 times on the positions of the Ukrainian military in the Luhansk direction. The Ukrainian military retain their positions despite the losses;

-on 8 February 111 attacks of militants on 37 settlements were recorded in the ATO area. After the massive attacks by GRADs, artillery, mortars and small arms, the militants have repeatedly tried to attack the bases and checkpoints of the ATO forces nearby the towns of Debaltseve and Chornukhine. The attacks also were carried out at the cities of Donetsk, Horlivka, Makiivka, Dokuchaivsk, Kirovske and Komsomolske, 8 civilians were killed, 14 wounded;

-on 9 February the regular Armed Forces of the Russian Federation resumed practice of shelling Ukraine from its territory. Let me note here that before 9 of February the MRLS "Grad" would move from the Russian territory into Donbas, carry out attacks on the Ukrainian villages and towns, and then move back. On 9 February the village of Komyshe near Stanytsya Luhanska (Ukraine) suffered from "Grad" attacks from Stanitsa Mityakinskaya (Rostov Oblast, Russia), a 19-year old girl was wounded; many homes and gas pipeline were damaged;

-on 10 February as a result of shelling of the Ukrainian positions 7 servicemen lost their lives, 23 were wounded.

Incessant attacks and shellings of residential areas by pro-Russian militants have created a direct threat to the lives of peaceful citizens. More than 4500 civilians have been evacuated from heavily shelled town of Debaltseve to various regions of Ukraine. And I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for its efforts, which helped facilitate the evacuation in the dangerous conditions of nearly 800 peaceful citizens on 6 February.

Mr. Chairman,

While facing this enormous tragedy, Ukraine continues to see a political solution as the only way out of this conflict. We urge Russia to exert its influence over the militants to stop their deadly hostile actions and fulfill their commitments under the Minsk agreements, as the only effective means for a peaceful sustainable solution based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Russia-backed militants together with Russian troops, which continue to remain on our soil, must cease their military actions and stop shelling of civilian areas. We urge immediate cease-fire, withdrawal of heavy weaponry and implementation of all provisions of the Minsk agreements in their entirety. The Russian Federation must cease its illegal supplies of weapons and equipment, and halt the flow of the so called "volunteers" into our sovereign territory through re-establishing effective control at the border under the OSCE monitoring together with the establishment of security zone in areas of Ukraine adjacent to the Ukrainian-Russian border.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.