



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1237th meeting of the Permanent Council,
25 July 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

All delegations who had taken the floor during the last PC meeting welcomed the most recent arrangement on ceasefire in Donbas. This achievement, however, will be meaningful only if the ceasefire remains sustainable and leads to further progress in implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Since the previous ceasefire regime started in Donbas in the beginning of March this year, the Ukrainian servicemen suffered 356 casualties, including 49 militaries killed. This is the price we paid last time for Russia's violation of the arrangements reached with Ukraine through the OSCE mediation within the Trilateral Contact Group. While we note low number of ceasefire violations along the contact line following the most recent recommitment to ceasefire starting from 21 July, those numbers of casualties remind us on what happens when it is broken. It is in this vein that we remain committed to the cessation of fire and saving lives of the Ukrainian citizens.

To make the ceasefire comprehensive, sustainable and unlimited, as agreed in Minsk on 17 July, we need to move forward with implementing other security provisions of the Minsk agreements, most notably withdrawal of the heavy weapons, foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine. The situation of the previous weeks, when the SMM had regularly reported on a vast majority of the Minsk-proscribed weapons being spotted in the Russia-occupied parts of Donbas even with the Mission's severely restricted monitoring capacities, must not remain in place.

We urge the Russian side to fulfil the commitments it has undertaken under the Minsk agreements and to withdraw from the sovereign territory of Ukraine instead of sending additional trucks and trains through the uncontrolled segment of the border. On 17 July, the SMM registered a cargo train departing the train station in Russia-occupied Khartsyzk and heading south-east, to the Russian Federation. The next day, it saw another train arriving from Russia and heading to the train station in Rovenky. I would remind that this station, to which we often referred in this hall, is regularly used by the Russian side for resupply of fuel and lubricants for its illegal armed formations in Donbas.

Verification of implementation of the security provisions of the Minsk agreements rests with the OSCE SMM. At the TCG meeting on 17 July, the sides to the conflict, that is Russia and Ukraine, undertook "to ensure safe and secure access for the SMM

throughout Ukraine in accordance with its mandate for monitoring and verification, including by using its technical means". This monitoring, in particular, must be implemented at the Ukrainian-Russian state border, where the ground patrols continue to face systematic restrictions and denials of access, and the long-range UAVs are jammed. Russia's readiness to lift these restrictions will serve as the best litmus test of Kremlin's decision to start de-escalation of the conflict.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of Ukraine continues its efforts to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation in the conflict-affected parts of Donbas caused by Russia's ongoing aggression. Last week, new regulations on the crossing of the contact line were adopted, which in particular replace the list of permitted goods with the list of prohibited goods for transportation across the contact line. Thus, the persons crossing the contact line will be able to transport any goods from or to the temporarily occupied parts of Donbas, except for those that are prohibited. The exact list of such goods will be elaborated by the Ministry of the temporarily occupied territories and IDPs of Ukraine in the nearest future.

We remain seriously concerned on the humanitarian situation in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which the Russian Federation continues to conceal from the Ukrainian authorities and international community. On 22 July, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission reported that it had been again denied access to Crimea, despite the relevant UN GA Resolutions. The Mission continued its remote monitoring of the human rights situation in the occupied peninsula by visiting administrative borderline with Crimea and speaking to people who cross the line.

We remind the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission that the delegation of Ukraine has repeatedly requested launching similar remote monitoring by the SMM. Despite the absence of direct access to Crimea, facts can be established and verified, in full accordance with the SMM's mandate covering the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Serious grounds for concern on the situation in Crimea can be found in the monitoring review for June 2019 prepared by the NGO "Crimean Human Rights Group". It reports on searches and detentions of Crimean Tatars and members of "Jehovah's Witnesses" religious organization, politically motivated criminal prosecution, inadequate medical treatment of the illegally detained Ukrainian citizens, systematic restrictions of fundamental freedoms and violations of international humanitarian law by the Russian occupation authorities.

The Russian Federation continues using Ukrainian citizens captured under trumped-up charges as hostages. On 23 July, the Russian court rejected the latest appeal of Pavlo Hryb and sent a young dangerously ill person to serve 6 years of sentence in penal colony. We condemn this fake justice. The MFA of Ukraine expressed its strong protest in this regard.

We again urge the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea and to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.