



**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 1324<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
15 July 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

Last Monday, on 12 July, President Putin published a long article with a whole range of Russia's fake narratives on Ukraine. I believe some of my colleagues are already familiar with it. I would quote only one sentence from it, "I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia", end of quote.

Quite an interesting concept of sovereignty, isn't it?

The Kremlin's leadership remains frustrated that independent Ukraine does not seek Russia's so-called "partnership" after it initiated an armed attack against Ukraine in 2014, which brought temporary occupation and attempted annexation of parts of its territory. So, Russia simply continues its aggression, hoping that so-called "peace enforcement", another concept it distorted, falsified and grossly abused for its own bellicose purposes, cases of which we have observed in many countries, most recently in Georgia and Ukraine, will work.

Next week, we will mark one year since additional measures aimed to put an end to the armed hostilities along the line of contact in Donbas entered into force. In this period (until 14 July this year), which was supposed to be a peaceful one and a strong basis for further progress on security, the Russian armed formations violated ceasefire 1938 times, 464 of which with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. Residential areas were shelled 27 times, while 100 cases of use of UAVs and 44 cases of remote planting of mines, including the banned anti-personnel ones, took place. 45 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 145 of them wounded.

Those are numbers provided by Ukrainian servicemen. Those are not empty words. All cases were reported to the OSCE SMM with a request to verify them. We thank the Mission for its efforts to implement this part of its mandate, although we understand that its capacities are drastically restricted by Russia's illegal and illegitimate impediments.

The violations of the Minsk agreements by Russia continue unabated. In one single day of 13 July, 1 Ukrainian serviceman was killed and 6 wounded, most of

them after the shelling by the Russian armed formations from 152mm and 120mm artillery. On the same day, the Taramchuk village was shelled from the Russia-occupied Syhnalne village with the use of 122mm artillery, a vicious tactics we have been observing from the Russian side from the very beginning of the conflict. A day before, the SMM observed an armed member of the Russian armed formations flying a non-SMM UAV (a white quadcopter) about 15m north-west of the SMM's position near Molodizhne, despite the ban on the operation of any aerial vehicles.

Another three Ukrainian servicemen were wounded today, on 15 July.

Last week, we had a lengthy discussion on the restrictions of SMM's freedom of movement, based on the Report presented by Chief Monitor to the Permanent Council. We regret that the Russian Federation has again chosen to ignore numerous calls by participating States and continued to prevent the Mission from doing its job.

The SMM long-range UAV flights remain to be temporarily suspended pending assessments following the crash of an SMM long-range UAV on 29 June. The Mission could not access last week three heavy weapons holding areas and a permanent storage site in the occupied parts of Donetsk region.

The most striking example of Russia's attitude towards the SMM took place on 7 July near the occupied village of Vilkhivka, when an SMM patrol was denied passage towards it due to the so-called "orders from superiors", and then, when the SMM tried to conduct a mini-UAV flight in the same area, two armed members of the Russian armed formations, approached the SMM and requested the Mission to land the UAV, delete its imagery and leave the area or the aircraft would be shot down.

Severe restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement remain in place in the border areas adjacent to the uncontrolled segment of the border. For instance, since the beginning of 2021, the SMM has faced 12 restrictions near the Chervona Mohyla railway station in Voznesenivka. It is notable that when on 12 July an SMM patrol managed to reach it, it has spotted about 100 freight carriages (contents not visible), eight tank carriages and one locomotive.

Regretfully, the Russian armed formations keep in force similar massive restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians. Their checkpoints near Zolote and Shchastia are still closed for civilian traffic despite N4 arrangements and TCG decision. Civilians, as reported by the SMM, are forced to wait for weeks to obtain permission to visit the government-controlled areas.

To the contrary, the Government of Ukraine has no restrictions on crossings of the line of contact: in its weekly report of 13 July, the SMM confirmed, with the reference to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, that people may enter and leave government-controlled areas regardless of where they live. As informed earlier by the delegation of Ukraine, civilians are no longer required to prove that they have the "Act at Home" application installed on their smartphone when travelling towards government-controlled areas. On 29 June, Ukrainian parliament adopted the law lifting the fines, which were earlier issued to the citizens of Ukraine re-entering Ukraine from the occupied areas through the Russian Federation.

While the Russian delegation continues delivering distorted and fake narratives on the disruption of social and economic ties across the line of contact by Ukraine, the Russian occupation administrations in Donbas are doing precisely

that. In its Report presented last week to the PC, the SMM informed that the members of the Russian armed formations in Donetsk region issued a so-called “measure” on the identification and accounting of “ownerless real estate”, according to which property of owners who had left their homes and not paid utility bills could become subject to seizure, potentially putting IDPs at risk of losing their properties. Now we observe the media reports that the first auction sale of such house, illegally confiscated from the IDPs in the village of Vasylivka, will take place on 19 July. We ask the SMM to verify this information. Illegal seizure of property would be another serious crime and violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Russian occupation administration. Such acts have no legal power, and all property will be returned to their legal owners after deoccupation.

The Russian Federation continues violating its obligations as an occupying power. In Crimea, it keeps persecuting those local residents who deny forced military conscription to the Russian Armed Forces, illegal under international humanitarian law. In June 2021, the “Crimean Human Rights Group” NGO recorded 9 new criminal cases.

An analysis of the human rights violations in the occupied Crimea in June 2021, prepared by another authoritative NGO, “Crimean Tatar Resource Center”, was published on 10 July. It informs on a wide range of such violations: illegal arrests, interrogations, violations of the right to a fair trial and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and many others.

Exchange of information provided by the NGOs and preparation of expert studies will be a key task of the non-governmental level of the “Crimea Platform”. Next week, on 22-23 July, the first international event of the newly formed Expert Network – the Expert Forum, will take place in Kyiv.

The experts will also cover the issues related to the ongoing militarization and illegal impediments to the freedom of navigation by Russia in the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. We need to have a comprehensive assessment of consequences of Russia’s illegal actions, such as the most recent decree signed by President Putin on 1 July, allowing the Russian National Guard to block the territories and waters around protected facilities including waters of the Kerch Strait and the Kerch Bridge over it. We encourage all participating States to invite their expert communities to take part in this dimension of the “Crimea Platform”.

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

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**