



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 955<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against**  
**Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea**

(23 September 2020, 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 **45<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September in Geneva**, the international community in a **Joint statement on the human rights situation in the temporarily occupied Crimea and unrestricted access for human rights monitoring mechanisms reaffirmed its unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine's borders, and condemned Russia's violation of human rights and international humanitarian law on the occupied peninsula.**

41 UN Member States condemned Russia's violation of human rights in the occupied Crimea and demanded that the occupying power ensure full access to the peninsula for international monitoring missions. In the Joint Statement on Crimea they called on Russia as the occupying power to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, guarantee human rights and freedoms and strictly comply with UN General Assembly resolutions on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol.

The Member States stressed the need for the Russian Federation to comply with the order of the International Court of Justice and lift the ban on the Mejlis as a representative body of the Crimean Tatar people. UN Member States also called upon the occupying state to immediately ensure full and unhindered access to the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol for international monitoring missions, as stated in UN GA resolutions 71/205, 72/190, 73/263 and 74/168 on the human rights situation in the temporary occupied Crimea.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Andrii Yermak on 19 September emphasized that **holding local elections in the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas would be possible only after their full de-occupation, settlement of all security issues and organization of the electoral process in accordance with ODIHR standards.** He reminded that Ukraine is negotiating with Russia in two formats: Minsk and Normandy.

Indeed, the most recent meeting of political advisors to the leaders of the "Normandy Four" in Berlin was hardly a breakthrough. Mr. Yermak said after the meeting: "We were in difficult negotiations, yet, a call to continue the ceasefire was supported by all participants and, as a result, we are now in the seventh week of the regime of silence." He agreed that the ceasefire is not ideal, there are numerous provocations from the Russian side, which led to the death of a Ukrainian serviceman. But the silence regime along the contact line allows the negotiations to continue. "Negotiations are underway, we are working 24/7, and I believe that the Ukrainian government, the President and the whole team - are doing everything to make the dream of all Ukrainians that peace come to our land come true," he said.

Despite the Agreement of the TCG on additional measures to strengthen ceasefire reached on 22 July (hereinafter Agreement), **the armed formations of the Russian Federation continued violating ceasefire regime on a daily basis during the week of 14 through 20 September.** Fire was directed against Ukrainian Armed Forces positions on 13 occasions with the use of rocket propelled grenade launchers, under-barrel grenade launchers and small arms near the settlements of Avdiivka, Mariinka, Vodiane, Novohrygorivka, Pisky, Pavlopil in the Donetsk region, and Katerynivka, Prychepylivka, Novooleksandrivka in the Luhansk region.

**Four Ukrainian servicemen were wounded** as a result of **small arms fire** near Pisky and **explosions of booby traps and improvised explosive devices**, planted by the armed formations near Shumy and Vodiane settlements. In this regard, we reiterate our call upon the Russian Federation to cease the practice of contaminating Ukrainian soil with APLs, booby traps, improvised explosive devices, which are forbidden by international law. These indiscriminate means of warfare pose particular threat to civilians, especially children.

**Armed formations of the Russian Federation continue to plant mines, deploy ammunition in residential areas of Donbas, endangering the lives of civilians.**

On 13 September, the SMM UAV spotted 5 anti-tank mines laid across the road near the temporarily occupied settlement of Sakhanka (*Donetsk region*), eight anti-tank mines laid in a single row near the temporarily occupied Vesela Hora (16km north of Luhansk) and **20 anti-tank mines** in loose clusters on the eastern and western lanes of the same road, all assessed as belonging to the armed formations.

On 16 September, in the temporarily occupied Vesele (9km north-west of Donetsk), the Mission saw for the first time six remnants of ammunition, four of which were

assessed as metal tubes from rounds of multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) (BM-21, Grad, 122mm) and two assessed as tailfins of 120mm mortar rounds.

On a number of occasions, **the use by the armed formation of the UAVs**, which crossed the line of contact, was detected (*near Vodiane, Pischevyk*). The Ukrainian Armed Forces had to use electronic warfare systems in order to disrupt these forbidden activities. Some of these flights were probably intended to film the response fire from the Ukrainian Armed Forces to armed provocations. However, they failed to achieve this goal. Ukrainian servicemen demonstrated restraint and adherence to the ceasefire regime.

Russia continues to **build up weapons and military equipment in the conflict area in Donbas**. The SMM UAV revealed weapons beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas, in particular, 7 tanks (*five probable T-72 and two type undetermined*) near Novoselivka and 3 multiple launch rocket systems (*BM-21 Grad, 122mm*), 3 self-propelled howitzer (*2S1 Gvozdika, 122mm*), 10 tanks, 3 towed howitzers (*probable D-30 Lyagushka, 122mm*) in the training range near Porkovka (*36km east of Donetsk*).

The SMM confirmed **ongoing engineering works on creating new and reinforcing old positions by the armed formations** in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas (**SLIDE PRESENTATION**), notably, the 40m-long trench running from the backyard of a civilian house in Zaitseve (*50km north-east of Donetsk*), spotted on 11 September, a 5-m long trench near Molodizhne (*63km north-west of Luhansk*), 250m near Zolote disengagement area (*60km west of Luhansk*), a 10-m trench and a bunker set up behind the checkpoint of the armed formations near Dokuchaievsk (*30km south-west of Donetsk*). These contravene specifically paragraph 1 of the Agreement reached on 22 July on prohibiting offensive, subversive and reconnaissance activities.

**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.**

We consider these actions by the armed formations of the Russian Federation as grave violation of the Minsk agreements, disregard of the Agreement reached on 22 July and deliberate steps to destabilize the situation in the Russia-occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and adjacent areas.

Meanwhile, the **Ukrainian side exerts every effort to restore the civilian infrastructure and improve living conditions in the conflict-affected areas under Government control**. During the period from 12 through 18 September Ukrainian demining teams destroyed 487 explosive devices on 48 hectares of land, including civilian infrastructure sites, and renovated 63 civilian houses.

The Ukrainian side of JCCC and the SMM facilitated maintenance and construction works at the phenol sludge reservoir near Novhorodske, other infrastructure sites near Toretsk and carried out repairs to damaged civilian houses in a number of residential areas (*Zaitseve, Travneve, Hladosove, Vodiane and Opytne*). **We urge**

**the Russian Federation to provide security guarantees to carry out repair and maintenance works at the gas distribution station in Mariinka.** The proper functioning of this site is vitally important for the settlements of Mariinka and Krasnohorivka. Its renovation would enable gas supply for over 26 thousand residents, provide heating for schools, pre-school establishments, hospitals and enterprises in the run-up to the winter season.

**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 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!**