



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR KONGSTAD**

**On the Update by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in -  
Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group - and the  
Report by the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine  
to the Permanent Council**

Vienna, 28 September 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Mr Chair,  
Your Excellencies,**

We continue to fully support the important efforts of the SMM and the Trilateral Contact Group. We commend you on your tireless efforts to broker ceasefires and your endeavors to achieve real political progress. We deeply regret the lack of political will of the parties that too long has prevailed. We reiterate our call to the parties, including the Russian Federation, to respect the ceasefire and comply with the provisions of Minsk-agreements.

Mr Chair,

As discussed yesterday in another forum, we commend the SMM and ambassador Apakan for steps taken to mitigate security risks in light of the tragic event on 23 April. Ambassador Apakan's focus on security is highly appreciated. We need a mission that safeguards our monitors health and safety. And we need to ensure that our duty of care responsibilities are fulfilled. In that respect I would also like to convey our appreciation for the expedient response and availability of ambassador Apakan and his staff pursuant to enquiries Norway has had over the past few months.

Mr Chair,

September 21 marked one year since the signing of the decision related to the disengagement of forces and hardware. During this period, the number of ceasefire violations in the three dedicated areas are more than 1800. Furthermore, SMM in the same period has recorded more than 1200 incidents of restrictions and impediments.

Regrettably, the situation on the ground remains unchanged. Notwithstanding an extended period of reduced ceasefire violations in some areas, the general situation has not improved.

On the contrary, the presence of heavy weapons and movement of military forces creates a highly volatile and unpredictable situation. Such a military posture and level of tension may easily lead to misunderstandings that could escalate the conflict yet again.

We call on all sides to take immediate steps to ensure the withdrawal of all Minsk-proscribed weapons and implement the agreement on disengagement areas in good faith. Furthermore, we call on all sides to facilitate full humanitarian access in line with international humanitarian principles.

Finally, Mr Chair, in this Council we cannot omit reiterating our deep concern with the situation in Crimea. The recent report published by the OHCHR is deeply distressing as it describes the human rights situation as significantly deteriorated since the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Based on the High Commissioner's report, Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians and others who opposed the Russian occupation, have experienced grave violations. We call on the Russian Federation to address the recommendations of the High Commissioner and to grant the High Commissioner full and unhindered access to Crimea.

Norway has not recognized the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. In line with this, we do not recognize the holding of gubernatorial elections in Sevastopol on 10 September. Norway remains unwavering in its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Thank you