



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine at the 978th FSC Plenary Meeting

(2 June 2021, via video teleconferencing)

(Agenda item 1, General Statements, on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”)

Mr. 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”.

The withdrawal of some troops by Russia from the border with Ukraine might have reduced the level of tensions to some extent but it didn’t lead to de-escalation. Moreover, this Monday’s reports on the plans announced by the Russian defence minister to form 20 new formations and military units in the Western Military District and to supply additional two thousand weapons to this District both raise our legitimate concern about Russia’s real intentions behind these actions and call into question its willingness to contribute to reducing tensions.

The ongoing shelling of Ukrainian positions from the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas confirm that the threat of further aggressive actions of the Russian Federation maintains.

Over the last week of 24-30 May, the armed formations of the Russian Federation shelled Ukrainian defender’s positions 56 times, including with the use of Minsk-proscribed 82-, 120mm mortars and antitank missile systems near 11 settlements (Nevelske, Shumy, Krymske, Pisky, Avdiivka, Novhorodske, Prychepylivka, Opytne, Marianka, Novozvanivka, Mayorsk). Diverse grenade launchers, small arms, including sniper fire, heavy machine guns, and infantry fighting vehicles were extensively used as well.

As a result of these acts of armed aggression by Russia, 1 Ukrainian serviceman was wounded and 1 was killed.

The Russian forces in Donbas kept amassing large numbers of heavy weapons close to the line of contact in the temporarily occupied areas, thus, endangering the lives of civilians and putting at the risk civilian infrastructure sites.

Allow me to draw your attention in my presentation to the cases of shelling of civilian infrastructure by the Russian armed formations and development of their positions in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas.

PRESENTATION

Slide 1. On 24 May (18.25-18.45), the Russian armed formations used antitank missile system (2 projectiles) against civilian infrastructure in Pivnichne settlement, where security guarantees for repair and maintenance works on both side of the contact line have been in place since mid-May this year. These actions were aimed at provoking the Armed Forces of Ukraine to open fire in response and thereafter putting blame on the Ukrainian side for violating ceasefire regime.

The shelling was conducted from the outskirts of the temporarily occupied Horlivka (mines 6 and 7). The anti-tank guided missiles hit a garage and a residential building. The markings on the remnants of munition indicate that it was made in Russia. Thus, it proves the direct participation of the Russian Federation in the armed conflict, which it inspired, unleashed, and continues to sustain and exacerbate by supplying munition to the occupied territories in the east of Ukraine.

Slide 2. On 26 May (11.35), the Ukrainian side observed activities of the Russian armed formations aimed at developing their positions towards the line of contact near the temporarily occupied Molochny settlement (48°22'27,23"N 38°14'58,14"E).

Slide 3. On 27 May (17.00), another case of development of positions by the Russian armed formations near the temporarily occupied Holubivske settlement (48°40'45,07"N, 38°38'15,59"E) was observed.

Slide 4. On 28 May (18.25-18.30), the critical civilian infrastructure of Pivnichne settlement was put at risk again by the shelling with the use of anti-tank missile launcher (one projectile) from the temporarily occupied mine named after Gagarin. The exploded rocket fell near the mine "Pivnichna". The marking on the munition points to the Russian footprint.

Slide 5. On 30 May, the Russian occupation forces conducted remote mining of the Ukrainian positions near Mayorsk with landmines POM-2 employing RPG from the direction of the temporarily occupied residential areas near mines 6 and 7.

END of PRESENTATION

On 29 May, the Russian armed formations also unleashed fire from the anti-tank missile system against civilian infrastructure in the residential area of Shumy. Luckily, no civilians were injured.

Amid ongoing armed provocations, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission continues to face significant restrictions to its freedom of movement and interference with its assets on the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas. Only during three days between 21 and 23 May, Mission's UAVs were subject to jamming on 14 occasions. On 23 May, severe interference from Russian radio electronic warfare systems led to the loss of an SMM UAV near the temporarily occupied Nova Marivka (64km south of Donetsk). These actions are aimed at keeping tensions high at the line of contact, impeding Mission's access to the areas where the Russian armed formations conduct live fire exercises and prepare fakes to plot false accusations of ceasefire violations by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Adding to the ongoing severe restrictions to the implementation of the SMM mandate, the Russian Federation is now undermining the OSCE Observer Mission in Gukovo and Donetsk monitoring capabilities, which are already hampered by unjustified restrictions by Russia.

We consider the position of the Russian Federation to reduce the term of the mandate of the Observer Mission unconstructive. This decision significantly increases the administrative burden on international observers.

By creating obstacles to the Observer Mission's work, Russia seeks to continue the unhindered supply of its arms, military equipment, ammunition, regular troops and mercenaries to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

The Russian armed formations continued the practice of using prohibited UAVs which cross the line of contact for reconnaissance and combat operations. One of them (Mavik type) was shot down with the use of small arms by Ukrainian servicemen near Berezove, on 25 May. Another one dropped two VOG-17 grenades on the Ukrainian positions near Hranitne, on 28 May.

According to the SMM reports, the Russian armed formations continued to violate the disengagement of forces and hardware conditions. These actions are accompanied by interference with the SMM UAV flights which are scheduled and notified in advance. The Mission has been reporting on the presence of the Russian armed formations as well as movement of vehicles in the disengagement areas. Since the beginning of May this year, 304 persons were observed in a five-kilometre zone around disengagement areas at different times, including 188 of them inside the disengagement areas.

According to the reports of the Mission, since the beginning of January this year, the containers of unknown purpose have been installed by the Russian armed formations inside the Zolote disengagement area. In this regard, we would like to stress that placing any foreign objects in the disengagement areas without prior agreement of the Ukrainian side and the SMM is unacceptable.

In an attempt to justify the refusal to open the Zolote entry-exit checkpoint, the Russian armed formations artificially escalate tensions in the vicinity of the

disengagement area and resort to armed provocations. Moreover, all initiatives of Ukraine as to the opening of Zolote and Shchastia entry-exit checkpoints encounter deliberate actions of the other side aimed at further impediment of their functioning.

The Russian armed formations also continue to develop their positions and conduct mining activities in the vicinity of the disengagement areas.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian side has been proactively restoring civilian infrastructure either destroyed or damaged as a result of Russia's armed aggression in the conflict affected areas under the Government control, with the SMM and the Ukrainian side of the JCCC observing adherence to the localised ceasefires. We are grateful to the SMM for its dedicated and restless work on this track. During the last week, Ukrainian demining teams surveyed over 52.07 hectares of land and destroyed 473 explosive devices. Since the beginning of April this year, 280 residential houses located near the line of contact were renovated.

Mr. Chairperson,

In view of the ongoing escalation of tensions incited by the Russian occupation forces in Donbas we remain especially concerned over the remaining significant numbers of additional units and military equipment deployed near Ukraine's border and in the temporarily occupied Crimea.

At this point in time, the Russian side has disregarded all concerns expressed by the participating States with regard to its untransparent and provocative military build-up in the course of the past two month. We have not received any substantial information on its military activities conducted in April this year and on the withdrawal of its troops and military equipment, including those remaining at Ukraine's border.

We strongly encourage Russia to match its declarations of faithful implementation of the Vienna Document 2011 with its actions and to provide necessary measures of transparency and de-escalation in line with the recommendations expressed at the joint PC-FSC meeting on 14 April 2021 and those raised during the follow-up meetings of the PC and FSC.

In conclusion, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of Donbas, and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations, and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.