



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 854<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(24 May 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)  
(Agenda item 2)

**Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished Colleagues,**

According to the last SMM Weekly Report of 17 May, the security situation in eastern Ukraine deteriorated during the previous week with the number of ceasefire violations recorded by the SMM increasing by 75% more than the week before. Recorded levels of violence increased at all five major hotspots along the contact line. The SMM recorded a marked increase in the use of weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements, in particular, artillery systems, including MLRS.

The situation, in particular, escalated west and south-west of Horlivka («DPR»-controlled), where the SMM recorded a 50 per cent increase in violations. On 13 May the SMM both heard and saw 80 outgoing MLRS rockets fired from the south-eastern edge of Horlivka. Notably, the use of MLRS in this area had not been recorded since the beginning of March.

If we refer to SMM reports they can easily dispel doubts who actually starts shooting first. On the night of 15-16 May, the SMM camera in Shyrokyne (east of Mariupol) recorded 74 tracer rounds in flight (in following sequence, 21 from east to west, 19 from west to east, seven from east to west, 18 from south-east to north-west, and nine from east to west).

On the evening and night of 16-17 May, the SMM camera in Shyrokyne recorded, in sequence, 12 tracer rounds in flight from east to west, eight tracer rounds in flight from west to east, followed by aggregated totals of 340 tracer rounds in flight.

On the evening of 17 May the SMM camera in government-controlled Avdiivka recorded, in sequence, 28 explosions assessed as impacts, five projectiles in flight from south-east to north-west, 45 tracer rounds in flight from north-west to south-east. During the day on 18 May, positioned in Avdiivka, the SMM heard multiple bursts of heavy-machine-gun and small arms fire 1-4km east-south-east and south-east.

On the evening and night of 17-18 May the SMM camera in Shyrokyne recorded, in sequence, 19 tracer rounds in flight from east to west, 16 tracer rounds in flight from west to east, followed by aggregate totals of 330 tracer rounds in flight in both directions. On the evening of 18 May the camera recorded two houses on fire in government-controlled Berdianske (east of Mariupol). On the

evening of 18 May, while in “DPR”-controlled Horlivka (north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard about 40 explosions assessed as outgoing artillery rounds.

All these cases with legibly described sequences of shelling clearly shows that the pro-Russian militants, provoking the UAF, are the first to begin shelling, thus constantly violating the reached agreements on armistice.

We cannot but draw attention of the Forum that the Russian hybrid forces continue to conduct fire at the residential areas. According to the information of the Donetsk region`s police, over 500 homes – private houses and flats belonging to civilian residents in the Government-controlled Avdiivka have been damaged by attacks by HRF since the beginning of this year. As a result of an attack on 17 May three more residential houses had been damaged. After yesterday`s attack 4 more houses in Avdiivka were destroyed by the militants.

On 18 May, as a result of a mortar shelling, two private houses in the village of Berdianske were completely destroyed and several others sustained serious damages. Later that day militants shelled at the residential sector in the village of Shyrokyne.

During the previous week on at least one occasion, the SMM assessed that a “DPR” position was in proximity of residential areas that had been shelled 50-100m of a house damaged by a 122mm shell in Bezimenne.

On 13 and 14 May the SMM confirmed reports of nine civilian casualties – the highest recorded number in a two-day period – including in government-controlled Avdiivka on 13 May the deaths of three women and one man as a result of shelling. The SMM has confirmed 205 civilian casualties in 2017 – more than 120 per cent more casualties than during the same period in 2016.

During the week the hybrid Russian forces have violated ceasefire **357** times, around one third of which was carried out by the Minsk-proscribed weapons, mostly mortars. *27 Ukrainian soldiers were wounded in the past week.*

### **Distinguished Colleagues,**

Under the excuse of an alleged preparation for an offensive operation of the UAF in Donbas, a Command of the Russian hybrid forces takes measures, including with the aim to increase combat preparedness of the so called mobile firing teams. There were cases of covert reinforcement of some segments along the line of contact by anti-tank missile weapons and 100 mm anti-tank guns MT-12 “Rapira”. A number of reserve HRF units are being deployed closer to the line of contact.

Movements of military convoys were registered during the last weekend. In Donetsk region, a company of surface-to-air missile systems “Osa” was seen in the north of the city of Makiivka moving towards the settlement of Krynichna. In Luhansk region, two convoys of military type tracks and armoured vehicles full of Russian soldiers dressed in military uniform with insignia of local militants were on the way through Khrustalnyi towards Pereval’sk.

On numerous occasions militants attempted to launch Russia-made UAVs, which had been modified in local artisan workshops to carry hand grenades attached to the drones.

Construction of defensive positions for two companies are about to be completed at the Azov sea direction near the settlements of Azov and Uzhovka. Fortification works have lasted for the whole week.

The Headquarters of 1st AC of the HRF has informed about a preparation of the new high-precision artillery munitions to be tested in a combat conditions in one of the segments of the ATO zone. They are planning to shoot by a new corrected artillery shell (152 mm caliber) and guided mortar mines (120 mm caliber). The task is to be carried out by artillery units of the regular Russian armed forces.

The Commanders of the 2nd AC of the HRF have plans to augment two additional separate motorized infantry battalions to the military formation in June-July this year. At the current stage, drafting of structures of the battalions have already finished. Territorial Troops Centre of the Southern Military District of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are preparing requests for a weapon supply. A decision on the location of these battalions hasn't been taken so far.

With regard to the risk of the uncontrolled spread of SALW and conventional ammunition we would like to point out that a significant quantity of firearms gets to the black market thanks to illegal activities of militants on the territories not controlled by the Government of Ukraine. A so-called «Ministry of State Security» of the «DPR» has come to such a conclusion. This pseudo «Security Service» recently reported that units of the 1st AC wrote off a suspiciously great number of cartridges, grenades, anti-tank missiles and other kinds of ammunition while some units of the formation hadn't taken part in intensive combat activities.

### **Distinguished Colleagues,**

The key priority for OSCE is to insure safe and secure conditions for SMM monitors. Therefore, we cannot but quote information from SMM reports concerning restrictions of the SMM monitors' freedom of movement that envisaged by the SMM Mandate. The SMM continues to encounter significant limitations in the occupied areas that impede proper monitoring and distort the real situation on the ground. Access of SMM observers is denied or hindered, its teams encounter threats and intimidations, are imposed escorts and restrictions on their visits. Such limitations and restrictions violate the mandate of the SMM, its ability to report objectively on the situation on the ground as well as Russian commitments in accordance with the Minsk agreements and OSCE basic principles.

The series of incidents endangering Mission patrol members continued, all of them in the territory not controlled by the Government of Ukraine. The Delegation of Ukraine as well as Delegations of EU, USA and Canada have informed about those incidents during three previous FSC meetings. In relation to the 5 May incident, when a «DPR» member armed with an assault rifle intimidated a female member of an SMM patrol by making comments and threats of a sexual nature, a «DPR» member described the incident as «a conflict of cultures» – apparently between the culture of participating States, which strongly condemn all forms of violence against women, and refrain from justifying it, and the culture of

his armed group. Another senior member of the “DPR” provided a document to the SMM, in which they referred to the incident as a “bad joke”. It is clear that no steps the “DPR” has taken to hold the perpetrator to account.

On the 16 May SMM patrol arrived at an entry-exit checkpoint in “DPR”-controlled Verkhnohyrokiivske (north-east of Mariupol), where an armed “DPR” member told the Mission to pass through the checkpoint. The SMM travelled forward and stopped 20m west of the checkpoint, at that time it heard a shot of small-arms fire 20m east, assessed as an attempt by the “DPR” member to hasten the patrol’s departure from the area. The SMM departed due to security concerns.

On 17 May an SMM patrol consisting of five members in two armored vehicles was in the north-eastern outskirts of “DPR”-controlled Dokuchaievsk (south-west of Donetsk) heading west behind a military truck (KamAZ-4350). When the first SMM vehicle was at a distance of 50 m. from the truck, one of the men on board wearing military-style clothes throw a smoke grenade, which landed some ten meters in front of the first SMM vehicle; the device was burning and generating white smoke.

While patrolling “DPR”-controlled Bezimenne, on 17 May the SMM observed rocks on the road, four men in military-style uniforms standing nearby, and another man, wearing a military-style jacket, shouting and waving a stone and a piece of metal towards the SMM. When a civilian vehicle approached, one of the men remove the rocks to let it pass.

One more case of intimidation, on 18 May the SMM was approaching a checkpoint near a compound in the western outskirts of Debaltseve (DPR controlled), when it saw a civilian vehicle painted in green blocking the road. An armed man exited the vehicle and shouted they had received orders not to let the SMM pass and that it should leave the area.

### **Distinguished Colleagues,**

The SMM observed demining activity and mine hazard signs but only in the Government controlled areas. On 18 May the SMM saw a man wearing protection gear conducting a de-mining operation in a field marked with mine warning signs near government-controlled Ozerne (100km north of Donetsk). Positioned at a UAF checkpoint near the government-controlled Popasna, the SMM monitored and facilitated the controlled detonation by UAF demining unit of two rocket-propelled-grenades and two mortars (120mm). The SMM observed the same unit re-installing safety pins on fuses of seven anti-tank mines nailed on a wooden plank at the checkpoint.

On 18 May the SMM observed the presence of mines while passing a checkpoint on the western edge of “DPR”-controlled Verkhnohyrokiivske (north-east of Mariupol), eight mines on a wooden pallet 2m from the road, less than 50m east of the checkpoint. On 21 May, the SMM again observed eight anti-vehicle mines placed on a wooden pallet next to the road in the area of the checkpoint in “DPR”-controlled Verkhnohyrokiivske.

The SMM assessed that the violations near the disengagement zone in «DPR»-controlled Petrivske were consistent with live-fire exercises less than 2km

east of the disengagement area in “DPR”-controlled areas. The use of a possible firing range also violates the TCG’s 3 March 2016 Decision on full cessation of live-fire exercises, which prohibits live firing exercises within the security zone defined by the Addendum to the Package of Measures.

During the previous week the SMM continued to observe weapons in violation of respective withdrawal lines agreed upon in Minsk, especially in populated areas, on 199 occasions (157 in non-government-controlled areas and 42 in government-controlled areas). In nongovernment-controlled areas, the SMM observed weapons in violation in 146 instances, including tanks, howitzers, MLRS, and surface-to-air missile systems both in and near “LPR”-controlled Luhansk city and “DPR”-controlled Donetsk city.

In violation of the respective withdrawal lines an SMM mini UAV spotted on 16 May in non-government-controlled areas 13 multiple launch rocket systems (BM-21 Grad 122mm) near Khrustalnyi (south-west of Luhansk).

In non-government-controlled areas, the SMM visited a holding area which continued to be abandoned, with eight anti-tank guns (MT-12 Rapira, 100mm) missing. The SMM observed multiple fresh tracks assessed as those of tanks in the security zones near DPR-controlled Makiivka, Khartsyzk, Illovaisk and Debaltseve.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

As we have stated many times before Ukraine is fully committed to full and faith implementation of the Minsk agreements. In this regard we call on Russia to exercise its responsibility in implementing the Minsk agreements, in particular their security provisions on comprehensive cease-fire, withdrawal of forces and full access of the SMM for monitoring.

The conflict instigated and fuelled by Russia will not be resolved until the Russian forces get out of the territory of Ukraine. Therefore we urge Russia to return to the tenets of the international law, to cease its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

**I thank you.**