



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

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine at the 977<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**

(26 May 2021, via video teleconferencing)

(Agenda item 2, 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”.

Despite all Ukrainian initiatives and calls of international community, the Russian Federation continues to undermine the negotiations and jeopardise the fragile situation on the ground in the conflict area in Donbas.

Russia continues to recruit new people for its forces in Donbas, engaging in this process recruiting offices of its Ministry of Defence and special services; the occupation administration keeps issuing Russian passports and encouraging local population to obtain them. Russia has already issued more than 538,000 passports to the Ukrainians in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The occupation forces continue to violate the ceasefire regime. For the past week of 17-23 May, positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and residential areas were shelled 52 times, including with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons, namely 82-, 120mm mortars, 122mm artillery systems near 10 settlements (Pivdenne, Katerynivka, Vodiane, Novoselivka, Pisky, Avdiivka, Novhorodske, Novoluhanske, Zaitseve, Maryinka). 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, 7 Ukrainian servicemen were wounded.

Allow me to draw your attention to the most recent ceasefire violations committed by the Russian armed formations with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements.

## PRESENTATION

**Slide 1.** On 20 May (17:04-17:12) the residential area of Maryinka settlement was under fire from SPG-9 (6 projectiles) from the direction of occupied Trudivska Mine. The impacts from exploded ammunition were observed in gardens of residential houses. This is the second time when Maryinka was shelled. On 8 May (at 19:05), the Russian armed formations unleashed fire against the settlement from 100mm anti-tank gun Rapira MT-12.

**Slide 2.** On 21 May (21:00-21:45), the shelling was conducted from the direction of occupied Molodizhne towards Katerynivka settlement, Luhansk region (coordinates of the site of explosion of ammunition 48°39'44,10N, 38°26'51,47E), with the use of 122mm towed howitzer (3 projectiles), SPG (11 shots) and RPG (12 shots).

**Slide 3.** On 22 May (6:55-7:40), the residential area of Pisky settlement (48°03'39.08"N 37°40'30.75"E) was shelled with the use of 120mm mortar (7 projectiles) from the direction of occupied Vesele (48°03'46.20"N 37°43'19.88"E). As a result of the shelling, the construction of a residential house, its front, garage and fencing were damaged.

## END of PRESENTATION

Russia's forces kept shelling Ukrainian positions directly from the residential areas of the temporarily occupied settlements of Donbas. Such actions constitute a blatant violation of the international humanitarian law, endangering the lives of civilians and posing grave risks to critical infrastructure sites.

Most notably, on 17 May, the Russian armed formations shelled Ukrainian position near Pisky with the use of Minsk-proscribed 82- and 120mm mortars directly from the residential area of the temporarily occupied Donetsk city and its outskirts. The firing positions were located in areas and yards in close vicinity to residential houses and even the Donetsk municipal clinical hospital. The aim of such deliberate actions was to provoke fire in response with simultaneous dissemination of false information of alleged shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The SMM reported on heavy weapons deployed in violation of withdrawal lines in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas. Among them are 9 self-propelled howitzers (2S1 Gvozdika, 122mm), 5 tanks (probable T-72), 7 MLRS (9K51, BM - 21 Grad , 122mm) as well as 41 pieces of artillery systems and 12 tanks outside of designated storage sites observed by the Mission on 14 and 19 May.

Such significant concentration of artillery systems and other heavy weapons, prohibited by the Minsk agreements, indicates intention of the Russian armed formations to hold high escalatory potential along the line of contact.

This intention is also confirmed by persistent interference with the SMM assets by the Russian armed formations. An appalling case took place on 18 May when 36 bursts

and shots from small arms were targeted towards the SMM UAV near the temporarily occupied Oleksandrivka. The Mission had to land the UAV and leave the area immediately. A similar case occurred near the temporarily occupied Dachne (47km west of Luhansk).

The crash of the SMM long-range UAV on 17 May was a result of a deliberate impediment to the flights of the Mission's UAVs by the Russian armed formations. On that day, severe interference with the control systems of the aerial device was recorded throughout the day, starting at 4:30. The interference came from the Russian Zhitel radio electronic warfare systems (type R-330). The range of these systems is 60-90 km. The stationing of such systems in the temporarily occupied residential areas of Kadiivka, Horlivka, Donetsk and Novoazovsk allows interfering with the SMM UAVs along the entire line of contact.

During April-May, almost every scheduled flight of the long range SMM UAV S-100, since its take-off in the village of Stepanivka, was impeded due to jamming. It is not surprising as this type of UAV is actively employed to monitor both the line of contact and the State border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. It makes this asset particularly valuable in preventing Russia from freely supplying armaments and military equipment to its forces and observing such violations when they occur.

At the same time, the cases of the use by the Russian armed formations of prohibited UAVs are registered regularly. These prohibited means are employed simultaneously with the SMM aerial vehicles flights in order to observe positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

These impediments to the work of the SMM assets are aggravated by persistent restrictions to the Mission's freedom of movement in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas. They are clearly intended to hide different violations of Minsk agreements and point to reluctance of the Russian Federation to take necessary steps and proceed with peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Given these obstacles, the Mission is not able to fully monitor the security situation in the temporarily occupied territories, in particular, with regard to forbidden engineering activities related to development of positions, the use of prohibited types of weapons and launch of the UAVs by the Russian armed formations for reconnaissance activities, fire adjustment, remote mining, and to drop shells and other explosives on the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and civilian infrastructure sites.

Mr. Chairperson,

We appreciate the staunch position of the participating States on the escalation caused by the Russian military build-up in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories as well as along the state border of Ukraine in March-April.

Nevertheless, the situation in the zone of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict remains tense.

The overall strength of the Russian forces deployed at Ukraine's border and in Crimea includes up to 110,000 servicemen; up to 1,300 tanks; up to 3,700 armoured vehicles; up to 1,300 artillery systems; up to 380 rocket systems.

Moreover, Russian occupation forces in Donbas consist of more than 35,000 servicemen, including more than 2,800 regular representatives of the Russian Armed Forces.

Russian forces in Donbas, the so-called 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps, are fully integrated with the Russian military command and control system. The group of forces is subordinated to the Staff of the Southern military district (HQ in Rostov-on-Don).

The order of Russian Defence Minister Shoigu on the withdrawal of troops from the Russian-Ukrainian border while being a step in the right direction stops short of a real de-escalation since most of the weapon systems and the military equipment remain deployed close to the Ukrainian border.

According to the available information, only 3,500-4,000 troops have been withdrawn from the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea, while all other forces (including along the Ukrainian-Russian state border in the east), their equipment and armaments remained at the previous positions. Thus, currently there are approximately 40,000 Russian soldiers in Crimea (compared to 32,500 at the beginning of March).

Therefore, we reiterate our call upon the Russian side to address the recommendations expressed at the joint PC-FSC meeting on 14 April 2021, convened under Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011, and concerns raised during the follow-up meetings of the PC and FSC.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to use military exercises as a disguise for its hostile actions. The closure of the parts of the Black Sea in the direction of the Kerch Strait until the end of October under the pretext of naval exercises clearly points to that.

Given Russia's reluctance to provide any substantial transparency measures regarding its large-scale military activities, we cannot exclude that another spiral of escalation may occur soon in preparations to the Russian military exercise ZAPAD-2021 planned for this September.

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.