



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1343rd meeting of the Permanent Council
04 November 2021

Madam Chairperson,

We are concerned about the intensification of hostilities along the line of contact in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

In the past week, the Mission registered a 162 per cent increase of ceasefire violations compared with the previous week. In numbers, it means 571 violations per day on average.

Just imagine – violations of ceasefire happen every two and half minutes. Day and night. All the week.

It is worrying as we are very close to a number we had before the application of the strengthened ceasefire, when the daily average was 620 ceasefire violations.

Especially, we are concerned at the increased use of Minsk-proscribed heavy weapons. Aggregated data of the SMM reports from 22 July 2020 shows that the Russian armed formations are responsible for about 90 per cent of violation of withdrawal lines.

In this regard, the last week shelling of the Hranitne settlement with the howitzers D-30 is an emblematic one. This weaponry should have been withdrawn according to the Minsk Memorandum and Package of measures. As a result, the SMM confirmed damage, caused by probable 120mm mortar and 122mm artillery rounds, to ten civilian properties and one operating kindergarten in Hranitne.

How did the Russian side react? Regretfully, however, quite predictable.

The international community was once again showered with a portion of misinformation in order to blur the Russian responsibility, and Ukraine was reminded of the true goal of the ongoing passportization – to justify Russia's any new offensive.

In the meantime, the shelling continues. Over these days Ukrainian armed forces also were fired upon near Luhanske, Svitlodarsk, Novooleksandrivka, Mar'inka, Shumy, Hranitne, Pivdenne, Prychepylivka, Pavlopol, Zaitseve, Starohnativka, Novotoshkivske, Krymske, Krasnohorivka, Novozvanivsk.

Russia continues to widely use drones to drop grenade shells on the Ukrainian positions as well as Russian-produced UAV ORLAN-10 are being spotted crossing the contact line.

From October 25 to October 31, the Ukrainian Joint Forces recorded 14 cases of the use of enemy UAVs, compared with only four cases during the previous week.

Eight times the Russian armed formations used drones to drop VOG-17 grenade shells, including near Pavlopol, Stanytsia Luhanska and Lebedynske. And six times UAVs, including Orlan-10, crossed the contact line for reconnaissance.

Let me remind that Orlan-10 is a modern UAV produced by the Russian Federation and it can be operated only by well-trained Russian servicemen. These UAVs are routinely crossing the contact line in violation of all agreements in order to conduct reconnaissance as well as to adjust the artillery fire by the Russian armed formations.

Despite the tasks mandated by the Permanent Council, the SMM is still facing restrictions, including while following up on reports of alleged damage to civilian infrastructure in the occupied territories. This time, it happened in Holmivskiyi. So, my question is: why are the Russian armed formations so cautious to show the damages to the SMM?

At the same time, as of the beginning of November, about 90 thousand of the Russian regular troops continue to be stationed along the Ukrainian border and in the temporarily occupied areas.

This includes the 8th and 20th armies of the Southern and Western military districts, separate units and squadrons of the 4th and 6th armies of the Russian air and air defense forces as well as the forces of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

Furthermore, after summer large scale drills some units of 41st army of the Central military district still remain in the European part of the Russian Federation – about 260 km from the border with Ukraine and about 4000 km from its home base.

Also, two so-called army corps are deployed and operate in the temporarily occupied territories.

The intentions of the Russian Federation are crystal clear. Together with controlled escalation in the occupied territories, Moscow is heating up tension as a leverage of political pressure.

However, this further highlights the need for special attention of the OSCE and Permanent Council to the implementation of para 4 of the Minsk protocol providing for the permanent monitoring and verification of the Ukrainian-Russian state border together with the creation of a security area in the border regions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. We also call upon the Russian Federation to stop opposing the opening of new SMM forward patrol bases in the occupied territories.

While the SMM is effectively restricted in performing its operation in the occupied territories and Russia masses its troops on the border with Ukraine, Russia is actively spreading fakes about Ukraine allegedly preparing an offensive in Donbas.

However, the truth is that it is Ukraine that proposes new steps in order to revitalize the peace process and provide relief to people who have endured enough sufferings, grief and sorrow over these long seven years of aggression.

And it is the Russian Federation that invents all kind of conditions not to meet as well as excuses not to deliver on the previous agreed commitments, especially on humanitarian.

Why has the International Committee of the Red Cross not been granted full and unconditional access to the detainees?

Why have new EECs in Zolote and Shchastia not been opened yet on the non-government-controlled side of the line of contact? Why has the movement through other EECs been further restricted?

Why does the SMM continue facing significant and increasing restrictions, while operating in the occupied territories?

Why is the demining plan still pending its finalization?

All these steps were agreed by president Putin in Paris two years ago, back in December 2019.

So, is there any justification why it has taken Russia two years not to implement these humanitarian steps and to keep them as bargaining chip and people in the occupied territories as hostages?

Excellencies,

We also express the strongest protest against today's unauthorised visit by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, temporarily occupied by Russia.

This is yet another gross violation of Ukraine's sovereignty in contravention of international law, the United Nations Charter, OSCE principles and commitments.

So was the recent conduct of illegal elections in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories. Following the results announced, Aleksei Cherniak, Konstantin Bakharev Leonid Babashov, and Tatiana Lobach were elected to the Russian State Duma.

We call on the OSCE once again to take all necessary measures to prevent the registration as participants or accreditation as members of delegation of any mentioned person at any event under the OSCE auspices

Regretfully, the legitimization efforts of attempted annexation of Crimea, like those elections, as well as the preparation for today's unauthorised visit are accompanied with gross human rights abuses and violations of the IHL. Just a few of them.

On the 28th October so-called "Kyiv District Court of Simferopol" predictably extended the detention of Nariman Dzhelial, and of brothers Asan and Aziz Akhtemov until the 23rd January 2022.

On the 29th October, the Southern District Military Court of the Russian Federation convicted four citizens of Ukraine Seitumer Seitumerov, Osman Seitumerov, Rustem Seitmetemov and Amet Suleymanov in the so-called "Third Bakhchisaray Hizb ut-Tahrir Group" case.

According to the so-called "judgment", Seitumer Seitumerov has been sentenced to 17 years in prison, Osman Seitumerov - 14 years, Amet Suleymanov - 12 years, Rustem Seitmemetov - 13 years.

On the 1st November, the Russian occupants detained 19 Crimean Tatars. Among them were 7 women and 1 journalist. They came to the building of so-called "court" in Simferopol, waiting for results of trial in so-called Krasnogvardeysk group "Hizb ut-Tahrir case".

No doubts that the visit of president Putin to the occupied Crimea on the day of Russia's national unity pursues merely propagandistic goals.

However, systematic policy of oppression, intimidation and suppression in the temporarily occupied Crimea clearly proves once again old historic observation that this unity is only about the unity in a prison of nations.

Therefore, we again urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, 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, Madam Chairperson.