



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

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE  
AT THE 1002<sup>nd</sup> FSC PLENARY MEETING**  
(23 February 2022)

**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.

The security situation is deteriorating very fast.

In recent months, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of Russian Armed Forces along the Ukrainian state border. Russia refused to provide any official explanations as to the reasons and grounds for such actions.

No less than 150,000 Russian forces are currently deployed within the close proximity to Ukraine’s border and in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

The Russian Federation continues to reinforce its troops and to hold provocative large-scale military exercises along the border with Ukraine, including in the territory of Belarus, and in the Azov-Black Sea region. On 13–19 February, Russia has blocked major parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov under the pretext of military drills. Some areas remain close until 11 March 2022. Significant number of Russian warships, submarines and vessels is concentrated now in the region.

Russia’s decision not to return its forces to their peacetime locations after the «Union Resolve 2022» exercise was sadly predictable. We do not know for sure, how many Russian troops and for how long will stay in Belarus, and what their real intentions are.

The situation in the Donbas conflict zone has got much worse. In recent days, Russia has significantly increased the intensity of shelling of Ukrainian positions and

civilian infrastructure in eastern Ukraine. It deliberately exacerbates the security situation, resorting to provocative measures and intensifying the massive disinformation campaign.

Since 17 February 2022, the Russian occupation forces have conducted 539 shellings, including 444 with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk Agreements, in particular 152 mm and 122 mm calibre artillery systems, 125 mm tank cannons, 120 mm and 82 mm calibre mortars, as well as small arms and light weapons. UAVs are widely used to collect intelligence data and adjust artillery fire. These acts of armed aggression of the Russian Federation and its occupation forces claimed the lives of 5 Ukrainian servicemen, left 19 wounded and 13 injured.

On 20 February 2022, the Russian Federation “marked” the grim 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of its armed aggression against Ukraine by violating the ceasefire agreement 80 times and shelling 39 settlements in Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Fully ignoring all norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law, the Russian Federation deliberately attacked residential areas and civilian infrastructure sites, such as schools, kindergartens, entry-exit checkpoints, communication facilities, power plants, gas and water pipelines. On 21 February 2022, due to the shelling by the Russian occupation forces an innocent civilian was killed in the Novoluhanske settlement in Donetsk region.

Russian propaganda continues to spread fakes, accusing the Armed Forces of Ukraine and escalating the situation. Some of the narratives disseminated are an almost word-for-word repeat of the Russian propaganda back in 2014. While groundlessly shifting blame on the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Russia has been particularly persistent in trying to create a casus belli for a large-scale intervention.

For example, the reports of 19 February about the explosion of an allegedly Ukrainian rocket from Grad MLRS and 122 mm projectile in the Rostov region are fake. It should be noted that the artillery units of the Joint Forces are stationed in the areas of withdrawal at a distance of more than 21 km from the line of contact, which exceeds the maximum striking range of the GRAD MLRS and 122-mm guns that are in service with the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

We strongly reject such accusations of the Russian side as completely groundless. The Joint Forces remain on their positions, they continue to strictly abide by the Minsk Agreements and the International Humanitarian Law. Therefore, the claims about shelling of the civilian settlements by the Armed Forces of Ukraine are completely false and provocative, and the only party responsible for those incidents is the occupying state – the Russian Federation.

Mr Chairperson,

In the recent days, the Russian Federation took a number of decisions that undermined all efforts of Ukraine and its international partners aimed at the peaceful resolution of the international Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict.

On 21 February, the Russian President signed decrees recognizing the so-called «independence» of the self-proclaimed entities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which actually are temporarily occupied by Russia territories of Ukraine.

On 22 February, the Russian Parliament ratified respective bilateral treaties on friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance with puppet occupation administrations in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Moreover, on the same day, the Federation Council of the Russian Federal Assembly approved a resolution that allows Vladimir Putin to "use the Russian Armed Forces outside the country." The Chairperson of the Federation Council has already announced that the Russian military will enter the occupied Donbas as "peacekeepers". The size of the group to enter the occupied Donbas and the duration of its use will be determined by Putin alone.

The Russian Federation justified its decisions by unwillingness of Ukraine to implement the Minsk Agreements. However, the facts speak to the contrary.

It is the Russian Federation that refused to establish full and comprehensive ceasefire, it is the Russian Federation that used heavy weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements, it is the Russian Federation that continues to supply its occupation forces with new manpower, weapons and ammunition, it is the Russian Federation that tried to link the implementation of the basic security provision of the Minsk Agreements with the political issues, such as the so-called «direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk». However, Ukraine cannot agree with such a logic and cannot regard members of the Russian occupation administrations, who hold Russian passports, as legitimate representative of the local population.

Now it is obvious that the current escalation was organised by the Russian Federation with the aim to cover the next stage of its aggression against Ukraine using the so-called «recognition of independence» of the quasi-entities created in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Ukraine strongly condemns the decision of the Russian President and considers all legal acts approved in this regard as null and void. We demand from the Russian Federation to revoke them and to change current aggressive approach.

The decisions taken by the Russian Federation constitute a blatant violation of fundamental norms and principles of international law, enshrined in the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act, as well as provisions of numerous other bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Russia's decision sharply escalates the situation. This decision means the Russian Federation's unilateral withdrawal from the Minsk agreements and is a clear violation of international law, the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the most serious blow to the

political and diplomatic settlement, which Ukraine and its partners are actively working to promote.

We condemn in the strongest possible words the decision to deploy the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the occupied territories of Ukraine under the false pretext of the necessity of their defence.

Yesterday, President Putin made it a condition for “rectifying the situation” that Ukraine must renounce its aspirations for NATO membership and recognize Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as Russian, with the main point of his demands being the “demilitarization” of Ukraine. His ultimatum is unacceptable for Ukraine. Putin knows that his ultimatum is not realistic. But he does not need the ultimatum to be accepted. Putin needs war and the USSR 2.0. And he will not stop at these claims.

The tactics of creating conflicts in neighbouring countries in order to weaken these countries is traditional for Moscow. And it is not a priori directed at reaching peace.

Recognition of the so-called «independence» of entities forcefully formed within the neighbouring countries and subsequent deployment of the so-called «peacekeepers» remain an instrument of choice of the Russian Federation. A dangerous scenario that is being implemented by Russia in Ukraine is a big copy-paste of the one already tested in the occupied territories of Georgia.

Against this background, a full-scale military invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine with the aim of occupying the entire territory of Ukraine or a separate part of it cannot be ruled out.

This becomes even more probable given the claims of the Russian occupation administrations to expand the self-proclaimed entities to the entire administrative territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. These unlawful claims might be used as justification for the further offensive into Ukraine’s sovereign territory.

Such actions of the Russian Federation will constitute a gross and serious violation of the fundamental norms and principles of international law that are important for maintaining international peace and security, and will also lead to the complete destruction of the system of international security on the European continent that developed after the World War II.

It is obvious now that the Russian Federation strives to achieve its ultimate goal of restoring the spheres of influence in Europe.

In this regard, we emphasise that in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter, Ukraine has the inherent right to individual and collective self-defence and the Armed Forces of Ukraine are ready for all possible scenarios.

Mr Chairperson,

Distinguished colleagues,

Since the very beginning of the conflict in Donbas, Ukraine adopted pragmatic and constructive approach, based on international law and Minsk agreements, aimed at restoring country's full sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Regrettably, the Russian Federation decided to neglect all peaceful efforts and to undermine the very foundations of European security architecture.

As a responsible member of international community, Ukraine activated the Vienna Document 2011 in order to decrease tensions. However, it is hardly possible to reach a result if the other side does not want to act constructively. We regret that the Russian Federation decided not to engage in the dialogue and refused to provide Ukraine and other participating States with credible information on its real intentions that stand behind the continued military build-up.

On 17 January 2022, Ukraine notified the participating states about the resumption of verification activities in its territory under the Vienna Document. On 21 February, at the special PC meeting, Ukraine declared its readiness to host additional inspection and evaluation visits under Chapter X of the Vienna Document. In this connection I would like to mention that since the beginning of the Russian aggression, Ukraine hosted 36 inspections in the zone of the Anti-Terrorist Operation and, later on, of the Joint Forces Operation.

We stand ready to demonstrate the highest possible level of military transparency.

We remain committed to the political and diplomatic settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict and will continue to take all possible steps to deescalate the situation.

We are set to enter into the diplomatic process if Russia decides to reverse its decisions.

We strongly believe that the principled position of international community, backed by additional sanctions and reinforced politico-diplomatic pressure against the aggressor state will help stop the conflict and bring peace back. Ukraine is grateful to all our partners for the support and practical assistance in these challenging times for Ukraine.

In conclusion, we call on the Russian Federation to reverse its decision on the so-called «recognition», withdraw its troops and weapons from Ukraine's territory and its border in a verifiable and transparent manner, take measures to de-escalate tensions and improve the security situation in the region, and stop the ongoing military build-up along Ukrainian border. We also reiterate our call on the Russian side to de-occupy the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, stop the ongoing militarisation of the Azov-Black Sea region and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.