



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 844<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(8 February 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)  
(Agenda item 3)

**Mr. Chairman,**

The continuous armed provocations by the hybrid Russian forces, of which the Delegation of Ukraine kept the FSC regularly informed, culminated last week in a sustained military assault on Avdiivka, putting the town and thousands of its residents on the brink of humanitarian catastrophe. Russia and its proxies again flagrantly breached the very first provisions of the Minsk agreements.

In early hours of 29 January, the hybrid Russian forces began massive artillery attacks on Avdiivka and its suburbs from Donetsk and Yasynuvata, which are not under control of the Ukrainian Government, and sent assault units to storm positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. They used MLRS "Grad", battle tanks, 152mm and 122mm artillery, 120mm and 82mm mortars. All these weapons are forbidden under the Minsk Agreement.

Shelling intensified on 30-31 January and damaged civilian infrastructure. As a result, the Donetsk water filtration plant and Avdiivka coke plant, which provides heat for local people, were left without electricity supply. The temperature was minus 18°C. In this weather conditions over 16 thousand people ended up without water, electricity and heating, including 2 thousand kids. The Ukrainian authorities undertook emergency measures to maintain functioning of the town's infrastructure, help the people and avert a humanitarian disaster.

Numerous attempts of the Ukrainian services to repair damaged electricity lines had been consistently blocked by the Russia-led terrorists and by the Russian part of the JCCC which would not extend security guarantees for repair works. When the security guarantees were extended, the repair teams would get shot at by the hybrid Russian forces. The Ukrainian side initiated a regime of "silence" 312 times starting from 29 January. Only 13 cases (4%) were successful. It became possible only on Sunday evening, 5 February, to perform the necessary repairs and restore electricity supply.

Escalating the conflict from 29 January the militants carried out 74 artillery attacks on Avdiivka, used MLRS "Grad" 11 times and tanks 32 times. They used 7148 pieces of ammunition with the total weight of 338 tons. Consequently, as the SMM reported on 6 February, its available aerial imagery

revealed thousands of the craters. 144 residential houses, 7 administrative buildings, 2 schools and railways have been damaged. **3 civilians and 18 Ukrainian servicemen were killed, 9 civilians and 100 soldiers were wounded.**

Military escalation by hybrid Russian Forces is registered at the entire line of contact. On 5 February, for example, they conducted 94 attacks (51 attacks on 4 February) making use of heavy weapons banned under the Minsk agreements. The combined Russian-separatist forces keep targeting Ukrainian towns and civilian objects, first and foremost in Avdiivka. In particular, 12 buildings were damaged over the day. In the meantime, the Ukrainian governmental services work hard to normalise life in Avdiivka. Presently 80% of the town has access to centralized electric power supply. Further works continue, main efforts are focused on recovering damaged critical infrastructure, reconnecting medical and educational facilities to centralized power supply lines. Local schools resumed classes.

Destroying critical infrastructure and thus creating humanitarian disaster is a terrorist tactics targeting primarily civilians. Russia's weapons, fighters and regular troops obliterate the Russian propaganda myth about «peaceful miners and tractor drivers». Those who came to the Ukrainian soil as aggressors to destroy Ukrainian statehood do not hesitate to damage factories, houses, power lines. This tactic is not new for the Russian forces. Ukraine will add evidence related to these offensive and indiscriminate attacks on the civilian infrastructure to our claim against Russia on terrorism to International Court of Justice. It remains imperative to bring Russia to account for its flagrant violations of norms of international law and undertaken commitments, leading to thousands of victims and destruction.

We demand from Russia to cease its offensive plans immediately and to comply strictly with the ceasefire. For the international community it remains imperative to maintain political and diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin to stop dangerous escalation in Donbas and implement the undertaken commitments.

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

Russia has stepped up a propagandistic information campaign to accuse Ukraine of violation of the Minsk agreements. The Russian side double a number of special groups of so-called "journalists" in Donbas, a part of which are officers of the Centre for information warfare of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation from the town of Novocherkassk (Rostov oblast, Russia).

The propaganda needs faked news and the Russian hybrid forces are there to provide them, including by targeting the areas under their control. We draw attention to the SMM report of February, 3 about separate impact sites each assessed as caused by a single MLRS (BM-21) rocket. In this regard, the Delegation of Ukraine reminds the Forum that the weapon system to fire

single MLRS rockets was supplied by Russia to its hybrid forces in spring 2015. In a number of our statements in the FSC in 2015-2016 we informed the delegations on the facts that illegal armed formations actively and provocatively use portable single launch rocket systems «Grad-P». They were also recorded in the SMM reports, the last time in November 2016.

We again reiterate that the Armed Forces of Ukraine do not use any MLRS or other high caliber artillery systems to suppress the shelling of the Russian hybrid forces from residential areas.

**Mr. Chairman,**

It remains unacceptable that the SMM observers continue to encounter serious restrictions to the freedom of movement on the occupied territories of Donbas as well as intimidation. According to the SMM report, on 3 February 2017, as an SMM patrol approached a position of the so-called “LPR” near Kalynove (west of Luhansk), it saw three armed men in military-style uniform about 30m away. One of the men was kneeling and pointing an automatic rifle AK in the direction of the SMM. An infantry fighting vehicle (BMP-1) was parked next to the armed men. As the SMM left the vehicles it heard one shot from a rifle, assessed as coming from the direction of the armed men. The SMM immediately returned to the vehicles and left the area. The reaction of the Russian part of the JCCC to this dangerous incident by calling it an «isolated case» is not satisfactory, because it was preceded by many other cases of intimidation, including recently in Debaltseve and Amvrosiivka. Unwillingness of the Russian side to deal seriously with these incidents generates more risks. Yesterday the Ukrainian officers of the JCCC, while in Lobacheve, were targeted by Russian sniper fire despite clear identification on the outfit and the vehicle.

The restrictions imposed on the SMM allow the Russian Federation to continue on the permanent base its illicit supply of manpower, weapons and ammunition for hybrid forces in Donbas to maintain military tension and escalation. Many times in the previous FSC meetings we have informed our OSCE partners about the evidence of the military equipment and weapons of Russian origin presence in Donbas, confirmed by SMM reports. On 2 February a train echelon of 20 platforms arrived to Donetsk, loaded with approximately 40 pieces of heavy weapons. In the course of January of this year Russia delivered to its hybrid forces across uncontrolled section of the border 2700 tons of fuel and lubricants and nearly 300 tons of ammunition. Russia must stop arming militants and sending its mercenaries and regular militaries to Ukraine.

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

Ukrainian side calls on the Russian Federation not to expand geography and spheres of the escalation. On 1 February the Russian side has

shelled and damaged the Ukrainian military cargo aircraft An-26 while it has conducted the training flight over the Odesa gas deposit region in the Black Sea in the exclusive maritime zone of Ukraine. This time only lucky coincidence saved the crew from being crashed by the Russian shots at the aircraft.

We call on the Russian Federation 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. We urge Russia to pull out its forces from Ukraine, halt its support to the illegal armed formations in Donbas region of Ukraine as well as its military build-up along Ukraine's south-eastern borders.

For its part Ukraine is fully committed to full and faithful implementation of the Minsk agreements. We regret that Russia fails to translate into practical steps its political declarations on peaceful resolution.

As we have stated many times before, the conflict instigated and fuelled by the Russian Federation will not be resolved until the Russian forces get out of the territory of Ukraine. 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.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**