



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement on “Russia’s on-going aggression against Ukraine
and illegal occupation of Crimea”**

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1117th meeting of the Permanent Council,
3 November 2016

Mr. Chairman,

We regret that we are compelled to start by stating the worrisome fact that two weeks after the Normandy Summit was held in Berlin, where most attention was devoted to security, the situation in conflict-affected areas of Donbas remains violent and highly volatile. The ceasefire violations by the combined Russian-separatist forces happen on a daily basis along different sections of the contact line.

We expected that Russia, after agreement in Berlin that immediate ceasefire must be achieved for de-escalation, would take urgent steps to bring attacks and shellings by its hybrid forces to a halt. Regrettably, it has not yet happened and the toll of casualties in Donbas continues to steadily grow. During 25 October – 1 November 5 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 36 were wounded.

Civilian population remains most vulnerable amidst the hostile actions of the Russian hybrid forces. Not only they shell the villages and towns in government-controlled areas, but they again resorted to the cynical practice of shelling the territories, they occupy, to discredit the Ukrainian forces, to create pictures for Russian propaganda and to incite fear and hatred among the local population. On 27 October the residential areas of occupied Makiyivka sustained artillery shelling that left several people killed and injured. We strongly condemn this attack which was launched from the positions of the Russian hybrid forces located near Yasynuvata, Yakovlivka and Mineralne. We deeply sympathize with the victims and all the people in the occupied areas, who continue to greatly suffer from the presence of combined Russian-separatist forces.

The shellings, including with the use of heavy weapons, are again registered at the entry-exit checkpoints, further worsening the humanitarian situation. Following the shelling of the checkpoint “Mayorsk” on 26 October 1 civilian was seriously wounded.

We register violations of the ceasefire at a time when its sustainability and comprehensiveness must be ensured as a crucial prerequisite for moving further in

implementation of the Minsk agreements and viable peaceful resolution in Donbas. The Normandy Format tasked the foreign ministers in Berlin to work on a Roadmap with a set of consequent steps towards this aim. We call on Russia to cease fire and immediately silence its proxy forces in Donbas, as this has been agreed as number one provision in all Minsk documents.

We reiterate that security is the basic requirement for the peaceful process and the key prerequisite for progress on other tracks of the Minsk agreements. Attempts by Russia to make security on the ground conditional on implementation of its political demands breach the Minsk agreements and further exacerbate the dire situation of residents of Donbas, enduring deprivations for over two years of Russia-fueled conflict.

We are concerned that the on-going hostilities on the ground can devalue the disengagement initiative, which was aimed at turning the developments in Donbas in the right direction of sustainable de-escalation. The Russian hybrid forces resort to shellings of the territories around the disengagement areas of Zolote and Petrivske. The third area of Stanytsya Luhanska was again targeted on Monday and again yesterday with the use of grenade launchers and mortar. Ukraine remains ready to proceed to withdrawing forces and hardware in Stanytsya Lyhanska as soon as ceasefire and other provisions of the Framework Decision of 21 September are met. We reiterate our call on Russia to implement the undertaken commitments on disengagement in good faith.

Distinguished colleagues,

The package of basic security provisions includes ensuring permanent monitoring and verification by the OSCE SMM throughout occupied areas of Donbas, in particular at the Ukrainian-Russian state border, and withdrawal of all Russian troops, weapons, fighters and mercenaries from Ukraine's territory. Replacing the source of instability and violence on the ground with strengthened international presence constitutes the only possible means of securing sustainable peaceful resolution with full respect to Ukraine sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Permanent OSCE monitoring and verification at the border and establishment of a security zone in border areas of Ukraine and Russia are the necessary measures to respond to the threats, stemming from the absence of control at a 400-km section of the Ukrainian-Russian border. It requires, in particular, establishment SMM Forward Patrol Bases and patrol hubs close to the border, permanent monitoring at the BCPs, areas between them and transport routes, installation of equipment for remote monitoring of the border areas.

As of now, the flows of military personnel and weaponry to the occupied part of Donbas continue. Over the recent week the echelons with ammunition and fuel from Russia were observed in the railway stations of Khartsyzsk, Illovaysk, Kuteynykove and Rovenky. The Russian Federation continues to cover up the reinforcement of its proxies in Donbas as "humanitarian aid". On 27 October the Russian Federation again sent the so-called "humanitarian convoy" without consent and inspection by the Ukrainian authorities and ignoring the leading role of the ICRC and the principles of international

humanitarian law. We condemn persistent violation by Russia of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In the last weekly update of 1 November the OSCE observers at two Russian checkpoints again informed about crossings of cars with so-called “LPR” registration plates at both of them in both directions. Such findings are also reported by the SMM despite restrictions on its visits to the border. Our earlier request to the Russian representative for explanation of this unacceptable situation remains without answer. We again reiterate this request for explanations, as Russia’s declarations register a huge gulf with the real situation on the ground.

Deployment of an armed police mission, including in the border areas, is necessary for establishment of safe and secure environment in Donbas, including with a view to a prospect of holding local elections, which are to be conducted in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and under the OSCE/ODIHR monitoring. We expect the readiness to work on this issue, expressed at the Normandy Summit, to be promptly translated into concrete follow-up steps.

Mr.Chairman,

Humanitarian aspects of the Russian aggression against Ukraine remain a matter of our primary concern. We note with deep regret that no progress has been reached so far in releasing the hostages and illegally detained persons on the basis of “all-for-all” principle, as agreed in Minsk. Despite agreement at the Normandy Summit in Berlin, the ICRC was denied access to the hostages and illegally detained persons in the occupied areas of Donbas on 26 October.

We call on Russia to comply with its commitments, to allow access of the ICRC to the hostages and illegally detained persons and to unblock the process of their release. We also underline that the relevant provision of the Minsk Package of measures applies equally to the Ukrainian citizens, including Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko and others, who are held in illegal detention in Russia.

Environmental implications of the conflict in Donbas must remain in the focus. We found it extremely worrying that on 30 October the combined Russian-separatist forces refused to provide security guarantees for repair works affecting a number of environmentally sensitive industrial facilities including the Avdiyivka coke plant, gas distribution station in Krasnohorivka and chemical plant in Novhorodske. Such irresponsible behaviour that can bring the region on the brink of ecological disaster must be immediately stopped.

We have repeatedly drawn attention of the Permanent Council to deprivation by Russia and its hybrid forces of the economic future of Donbas by disabling its industrial facilities, their disassembly for scrap and equipment and their transportation to Russia. It is now reported that a modern chemical plant “Styrol”, which employed 14 thousand people in 2013 and now only 2 thousand, has also been designated for disassembly. We expect that the SMM will be in a position to examine this and many other reports. It

would contribute to having a picture of the scale of plundering, perpetrated by Russia, and the volume of investment that will be necessary for future rehabilitation of the region.

Distinguished colleagues,

We condemn the continuation by the Russian occupation authorities of repressions in the Crimean peninsula against those, who oppose its illegal occupation. A number of Crimean Tatar activists, including Deputy Chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis Ahtem Ciygoz, and other Ukrainian citizens, remain in detention under politically-motivated pretexts. We urge their immediate release.

We again urge the Russian Federation, as an occupying power, to take responsibility for halting repressions and all human rights violations on the peninsula and to allow free and unconditional access for permanent international monitoring in Crimea.

Distinguished colleagues,

The Russian Federation maintains its aggression against Ukraine, following the patterns established for over two years. The sanctions against Russia imposed in response to its aggression must remain in place until full implementation of the Minsk agreements and de-occupation of the Crimean peninsula. We do hope that Russia will stop imitating its interest in peaceful resolution and start implementing the undertaken commitments in good faith.

The interests of peace and security require that Russia restores its respect for international law and the OSCE principles and commitments. We urge Russia to put an end to its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman.