



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

PC.DEL/846/16  
10 June 2016

ENGLISH only

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

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine  
to the 1104<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
09 June 2016

**Mr. Chairman,**

It is with great concern that we assess the situation in the conflict-affected areas of Donbas, where combined Russian-separatist forces have significantly intensified their aggressive activities. Sharp deterioration of security on the ground was in the focus of the phone talks, held by the Presidents of Ukraine and France and the German Chancellor on 6 June. The three leaders agreed that establishing security in Donbas in line with the Minsk Agreements remains a primary task and must be at the core of the international efforts.

The SMM reports and information from Ukraine’s military staff portray an extremely worrying picture with the number of ceasefire violations being on the rise and heavy weapons, in particular mortars and towed high caliber artillery being widely used by the Russia-backed militants. They deliberately provoke violence by intensifying shellings and direct attacks on the Ukrainian positions, sniper fire and activities of their subversive groups. As a result 2 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 44 were wounded during the first week of June.

It is a new dangerous development that the SMM and its monitoring equipment are deliberately targeted by militants’ fire aimed at making effective performance of the Mission’s duties impossible. Over a recent period the SMM lost two long-range UAVs and one mini UAV, all over the occupied territory of Donbas. The fact that both long-range UAVs were equipped with modern anti-jamming systems and flew at high altitude serves to indicate the origin of weaponry and the training of personnel, capable of hitting them. Notably, the last UAV was downed immediately after it had spotted dozens of tanks, MRLSs and heavy artillery in Donetsk and outskirts.

We regret that Moscow has not reacted to these incidents, just as to disconnection by the militants of the SMM cameras near the Donetsk airport, remaining disabled since 20 May. We reiterate our request to the Russian delegation to clarify whether specific measures were taken by the Russian side in the JCCC to resolve the issue of restoring work of the cameras.

It is unacceptable that the SMM continues to experience significant problems with its freedom of movement and access in the occupied areas of Donbas. Over 85% of restriction incidents happen there.

We consider the recent attacks on the SMM as also attacks on its mandate and attempts to conceal ongoing violations of the Minsk agreements. All such attempts are entirely unacceptable. We welcome the release in Donetsk of a captured SMM member and thank the Chairmanship and the SMM's leadership for their immediate efforts to this end. At the same time we condemn the capture of the SMM member as a deliberate act of intimidation. We urge Russia to deliver on its commitments on SMM's unfettered access and full freedom of movement as well as the security of its staff and equipment.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

The past week registered increased shellings of the residential areas, resulting in casualties among the peaceful civilians, and heavy damages of private houses and community facilities. On 6 June the SMM reported that a local resident was killed in Pervomayske, Donetsk oblast, during the militants' shelling. This shelling also destroyed the local kindergarten, which would not be able to receive children in September. Civilians were also wounded by the militants' shelling in Avdiyivka and Krasnohorivka.

The SMM again reported about eye-witness accounts that the illegal armed formations resorted to shellings from the residential areas of occupied Dokuchayevsk. This appalling practice was called as "usual" for provoking the Ukrainian forces to return fire.

Another evidence of utmost disdain for the security and humanitarian needs of the civilians along the contact line remains regular targeted shellings of the entry-exit checkpoints. The Ukrainian authorities were compelled to close two of them – in Zaytseve and Mayorsk – as sniper fire and mortar shellings put the lives of people crossing the contact line under threat.

We are concerned over the SMM report about the situation in Novooleksandrivka, where local residents have been effectively taken hostage by the illegal armed formations, exercising control over the village. As follows from the SMM report, the residents are unable to move freely to and from village despite they suffer from food and medicine shortage.

### **Mr.Chairman,**

Intensified provocations by the combined Russian-separatist forces testify that Moscow maintains its aggressive course against Ukraine with military escalation in Donbas as a main element of its destabilization strategy. Security provisions of the Minsk Package of measures remain unimplemented by Russia and its proxies, which makes it impossible to place de-escalation on a solid basis and to progress on other aspects of the Minsk agreements, including on the political track.

Making public declarations on implementation of the Minsk agreements, which would restore Ukraine's sovereignty over the occupied part of Donbas, Moscow acts in the opposite way and continues to integrate these territories into Russian political, military, financial and ideological space, as well as to eradicate any sign of the Ukrainian identity there. Russian officials resume referring to the occupied areas of Donbas as so-called "republics" as it was done recently by the Russian Foreign Minister.

Pending are clarifications from the Russian delegation concerning the SMM report about its visit to the closed BCP "Uspenka", indicating that people with the so-called "DPR passports" and vehicles with so-called "DPR licence plates" were allowed to enter the territory of Russia. Relevant requests were made at the last two regular meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Ukraine remains committed to sustainable de-escalation on the ground. At the last Normandy Ministerial in Berlin we put forward a comprehensive plan on urgent steps to this aim and expect that our proposals can be swiftly implemented. We urge Russia to abide by its commitments on peaceful resolution of the conflict, giving up its attempts to undermine the Minsk agreements by their selective interpretation and setting out conditions for stopping the shellings. Until now it has not yet happened.

There are a number of immediate steps, which are necessary and require a good-faith approach of Russia to advance the peaceful resolution:

- full and good faith implementation of the initial security provisions of the Minsk package of measures;
- unblocking the process of the release of hostages and illegally detained persons on the basis of "all-for-all" principle, according to the agreed Minsk provision, which applies equally to the Ukrainian citizens, who are held in illegal detention in Russia;
- resolving the problem of control at the Ukrainian-Russian state border, ensuring full and unhindered OSCE border monitoring and establishment of security zones in border areas of Ukraine and Russia, as agreed in Minsk.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

Ukraine notes the 14th Report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Ukraine, which is based on findings of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and covers the period from 16 February to 15 May 2016.

The Mission underlines the critical need to restore control by the Government of Ukraine over the entire border with Russia and to withdraw foreign fighters and all heavy weaponry. The Report once again testified to the large-scale crimes committed against Ukrainian citizens by the Russian occupation authorities in Crimea as well as by the combined Russian-separatist forces in Donbas.

According to the Mission, the human rights situation in Crimea, illegally occupied by Russia, has sharply deteriorated with the ban of Crimean Tatar Mejlis as one of the most recent signs. The majority of victims of the repressive policies by the occupying authorities have been Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians who publicly opposed Russian occupation of Crimea. Two weeks ago we drew attention of the Permanent Council to abduction of Ervin Ibragimov, member of the Executive Committee of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars and member of regional Mejlis. We note with concern that until now his whereabouts remain unknown.

We reiterate our persistent call on Russia as an occupying power, to take responsibility for stopping all human rights violations on the peninsula and to facilitate free and unconditional access of the international monitors to Crimea, which is also one of the Mission's recommendations, contained in the Report.

Ukraine takes the position of zero-tolerance to the human rights violations regardless of personalities and places. In this regard, we take serious note of the Mission's information on alleged abuses and violations committed by the representatives of Ukrainian military or security forces as well as of the recommendations provided. All facts reported will be subject to thorough check and investigation by the Ukrainian law-enforcement.

**Mr.Chairman,**

The worrisome developments in Donbas indicate that Moscow still opts for being a challenge, not a partner in terms of maintaining the international peace and order and countering security threats. It remains critically important that the international community maintains its political and economic sanctions, which were imposed in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, to stimulate Moscow's return to the tenets of international law and full implementation of its Minsk commitments on peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas.

We urge Russia to restore its respect for the norms of international law and the OSCE principles and commitments, to halt its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

**Thank you, Mr.Chairman.**