



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
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Statement on “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”

As delivered by Ihor Lossovskiy,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1194th meeting of the Permanent Council,
30 August 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

Six weeks, which passed since the last meeting of the Permanent Council, were marked by gradual erosion of the re-commitment to ceasefire in Donbas: the level of violence has returned to the pre-recommitment numbers already in the beginning of August, as reported by the SMM. Within this period of six weeks, the Russian armed formations have violated ceasefire regime almost 1300 times, 12% of which were carried out by the Minsk-proscribed weapons, leaving 18 Ukrainian servicemen killed and 74 wounded. The most flagrant violations of ceasefire took place on 28 July and 23 August near Krymske, when the Russian armed formations carried out two attacks on Ukrainian military positions with support of heavy artillery and tanks, leaving overall 6 servicemen dead and 9 wounded.

Residential areas continue to be specifically targeted by Russian proxies: on 24 August, on the Independence Day of Ukraine, they shelled from 152mm artillery the village of Vrubivka located 17 km from the contact line, leaving one civilian killed. The day before, the entry-exit checkpoint in Maiorsk was closed after being fired from a southerly direction (as confirmed by the SMM), where the Russian military positions are located. On 25 July, the Ukrainian part of the JCCC spotted an explosion of the artillery shell fired by the Russian armed formations into the waste pond of chemical production of Toretsk phenolic factory, which can cause a large-scale ecologic disaster in the whole Donetsk region.

Those incidents represent only a fraction of the dire security and humanitarian challenges brought by the ongoing Russian aggression since the last PC meeting. The aggressor country continues to fuel violence. As reiterated by the MFA of Ukraine in its comment on the occasion of International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on 21 August, Ukraine is a country suffering from the state-sponsored terrorism by the Russian Federation.

We strongly condemn Russia’s persistent unwillingness to stop its armed aggression against Ukraine and urge the Russian side to abide by the commitments it has undertaken as a party to the conflict within the framework of the Minsk agreements. Following the most recent TCG re-commitment to ceasefire, which came

into force yesterday, we call upon Moscow to fully adhere to the TCG statement and to take all necessary steps to ensure that the ceasefire is sustainable, including ensuring safe and secure access of the SMM throughout the whole territory of Ukraine. We share the SMM views that systematic restrictions imposed by the Russian armed formations “considerably hinder the SMM’s monitoring activities, including its monitoring of the security aspects of the Minsk agreements”. Unless monitored by the international community, improvement of the security situation in Donbas would be challenging.

The meaningful international presence is a key to resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. As Russia remains unwilling to stop fuelling this conflict, our common focus should be concentrated on launching a full-fledged peacekeeping operation in Donbas aimed at facilitating implementation of the Minsk Agreements and restoring Ukraine’s sovereignty in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. We welcome the relevant substantive discussions launched within the Normandy format, including the most recent meeting of MFA Political directors on 26 July in Berlin, and look forward to finding necessary solutions.

Distinguished colleagues,

In the last few weeks, the SMM reported on a number of important findings, to which I would like to draw particular attention of the Permanent Council.

First, it registered during a night-time flight of long-range UAV the convoys of cargo trucks illegally crossing the segment of the Ukrainian-Russian state border currently controlled by the Russian side. The convoy which entered Ukraine from the Russian Federation drove, as informed by the SMM, to Khrustalnyi, a well-known storage of Russian heavy weapons in the occupied territories of Donbas. Later, in the same Khrustalnyi, an SMM mini-UAV spotted hundreds of “ammunition crates (some of which were assessed as new), as well as 118 crates of MLRS rockets”.

Second, the SMM spotted “four distinct electronic warfare systems (a Leer-3 RB-341V, a 1L269 Krasukha-2, a RB-109A Bylina and an anti-UAV system, Repellent-1) near non-government-controlled Chornukhyne, all seen for the first time by the SMM”. The fact that those modern sophisticated warfare systems were adopted exclusively by the Russian Army, has testified again to the Russian military presence in Donbas. We reiterate our request to the Russian delegation to provide clear explanations on how the sophisticated Russian systems are delivered to Donbas and who operates them.

Third, the SMM reported on “an improvised camp consisting of six armoured reconnaissance vehicles and 15 military-type trucks”, near which “the SMM saw an unguarded road leading to the Russian Federation”.

New ammunition for heavy weapons delivered to occupied Khrustalnyi from the territory of the Russian Federation, new Russian electronic warfare systems deployed near Chornukhyne, new improvised camp with military vehicles near the border: all those facts established by the SMM underline the necessity to implement the Minsk provision on permanent monitoring and verification by the SMM at the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Until Russia stops sending new weapons,

ammunition and fighters to the territories it occupied in Ukraine, reaching comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire would not be feasible.

Mr. Chairperson,

We strongly condemn the ongoing restrictions, attacks and threats directed at the SMM monitors in Russia-occupied territories of Donbas. The link between this deliberate intimidation campaign led by the Russian armed formations and Russia's unwillingness to unveil its massive military presence in the sovereign territory of Ukraine was established long ago and confirmed by the SMM itself. We urge the Russian side to stop endangering the lives of monitors who face restrictions of access, rifles pointed at them, threats to shoot down the SMM's UAV, as well as new so-called "instructions" by the Russian armed formations contravening SMM mandate. In some cases, such threats are carried out by the Russian fighters: after the SMM lost contact with the UAV flying near occupied Shyroka Balka, it managed to recover it only without a secure digital card, which was missing when the members of the Russian armed formations returned the UAV to the Mission. We remind the Russian delegation that the SMM assets belong to all participating States and urge the Russian side to refrain from damaging them, even when it wishes to conceal video data collected by the UAV.

Mr. Chairperson,

We witness no progress in addressing a number of security and humanitarian challenges brought by the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, as the Russian side continues denying its role and responsibility as a party to the conflict.

One of the most pressing issues, which should remain of continuing concern within the OSCE and its executive structures, is the situation with human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea. The Russian occupation administration keeps persecuting, detaining and torturing the dissenting voices, national minorities, and human rights defenders. The occupants search their houses, intimidate their families, and ban public gatherings. Only in the first half of this year, 66 searches of houses, 73 detentions and 89 interrogations were held in the temporarily occupied Crimea. As the Russian Federation keeps denying access of the international humanitarian organizations and NGOs to the occupied territories of Ukraine, this is obviously only a fraction of systematic human rights violations taking place on the daily basis. In this regards, I would draw attention of the Permanent Council to the recent monitoring review prepared by the Crimean Human Rights Group on the basis of data collected in July 2018, which was published last Tuesday.

The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine must be restored fully within its internationally recognized borders. It is the only viable way of resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and mitigating its dire humanitarian impact. We again urge the Russian Federation to reverse the illegal occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and to stop its aggression, including by withdrawing its armed formations from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.