



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 846<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(22 February 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)  
(Agenda item 2)

**Mr. Chairman,**

During this month the town of Avdiivka in the Donetsk oblast of Ukraine remains the primary target of attacks by the hybrid Russian forces. On the last weekend, because of a damaged high-voltage electric power line, a part of Avdiivka was again left without electricity that added more sufferings for the local population. On 19 February Ukrainian emergency teams inspected power lines and fixed 5 ruptures. At the same time further repairs were impeded by the absence of security guarantees from the Russian side.

During the past week the average numbers of fire attacks conducted by the Russian hybrid forces along the whole line of contact in the ATO zone was ranging from 35 to above 100. The broad range of proscribed weapons such as MLRS “Grad”, 120-mm mortars, 122-mm caliber artillery and 125-mm tank guns have been actively used by Russian-backed militants. Most frequently, the following settlements became targets of the militants’ fire attacks: Novozvanivka, Novooleksandrivka, Stanytsa Luhanska - in the Luhansk direction; Avdiivka, Pisky, Kamianka, Zaitseve - in the Donetsk direction; Pavlopil, Vodiane, Shyrokyne, Hnutove - in the Mariupol direction. On 15 February when massive artillery, mortar and tank fire was aimed at the Avdiivka industrial zone the residential areas of the town came under fire as well. As a result, one private house was completely burned out and eight other houses were damaged. On 16 February in the aftermath of another shelling in Avdiivka 1 civilian person was killed, 2 were wounded and 3 private houses were damaged.

Shelling at the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which is regularly reflected in reports of both the SMM and competent bodies of Ukraine, indicates that ceasefire is persistently violated by the hybrid Russian forces. Such behaviour by the Russian side is contrary to a call of the last TCG meeting in Minsk on 15 February and the Normandy Four Ministerial to start silence regime on 20 February.

During the day yesterday, 21 February, the hybrid Russian forces carried out 35 attacks on the Ukrainian positions, including with heavy weapons. One soldier was wounded.

The Ukrainian military submitted to the SMM the inventory lists of weapons on 8 February 2017 and proposal for withdrawal of weapons. The information and approval of the Russian side are still pending.

Over the past week the Ukrainian positions were shelled 429 times. ***7 Ukrainians, including 2 civilians, were killed and 29 military servicemen were wounded. Two civilians received light wounds.***

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

As we have stated many times before, the volatility of the security situation is strongly influenced by Russia's continuing direct involvement in the conflict and constant military resupplies and reinforcements. We have provided to the participating States in this Forum many evidence of the direct Russia's supplies of weapons and ammunition to its hybrid forces in eastern Ukraine. In this context we note the information published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in its report «Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2016» issued on 20 February 2017. According to the SIPRI report, during the last years «Russia delivered weapons to rebel forces in Ukraine... Rebels in eastern Ukraine received tanks and other armored vehicles as well as anti-tank and portable surface-to-air (SAM) missiles from Russia».

The continuing illegal military flows into the occupied areas of Donbas underline the critical need to restore control at the uncontrolled sections of the Ukraine-Russia border and implement without delay an agreed Minsk provision on establishment of a security zone in border areas of both Ukraine and Russia, with the OSCE permanent (24/7) monitoring and verification.

Yesterday, on 21 February, another Russia's so-called "humanitarian convoy" breached the Ukrainian-Russian state border, violating the norms of international law, Ukraine's legislation and modalities for delivery of humanitarian assistance agreed with the ICRC. In particular, a column of 15 vehicles crossed through the Russian border check-point "Matveyev Kurgan" from 5.50 to 6.30 in the morning. The column included a specialized vehicle of radio-active and chemical defence. We condemn Russia's practice of sending these so-called "humanitarian convoys" and urge Russia to restore respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and inviolability of its frontiers.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As witnessed in the past months, the hybrid Russian forces generate and maintain hostilities to blackmail the Ukrainian authorities. Last week the leader of the so called "DPR" O.Zakharchenko spoke again about the readiness of the illegal armed formations to resolve the issue of Donbas by military offensive in case it not be resolved politically. The explanatory cover provided to these claims of Russia's proxies by Kremlin cannot disguise the deliberate

violations of security agreements by Russian hybrid forces for achieving their political ends.

**Mr. Chairman,**

While since 2014 Russia has failed to implement the commitment to resolve the conflict, it started, on 18 February Kremlin published a Decree on recognition of so-called “documents” issued by Russia-created and financed illegal structures in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. Ukraine strongly condemns and does not recognize this decision. It clearly violates the fundamental OSCE principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final act, in particular on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and fundamentally breaches the Minsk agreements as a basis for peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas started by the Russian Federation in 2014.

As President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has underlined, this decision is yet another evidence of Russia’s occupation and violation of international law.

Notably, this latest escalatory move by the Russian Federation was preceded by the recent military offensive operation of the hybrid Russian forces in Donbas near Avdiivka and intensified shelling along the entire line of contact, which also constituted a flagrant breach of the Minsk agreements and were aimed at blackmailing Ukraine with further serious aggravation of the humanitarian Situation in Donbas.

We welcome that the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship reacted as a guardian of OSCE principals pointing out that the Moscow’s decree «is in contradiction to the objectives of the settlement process in eastern Ukraine» and that all «efforts to normalize the situation of people living in Donbas and to encourage freedom of movement should be done in full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments as well as the Minsk agreements. Unilateral actions jeopardize efforts to resolve the crisis in and around Ukraine». It is important that the OSCE community adequately responds to this yet another flagrant violation of undertaken commitments by Russia.

The Ministerial meeting in the “Normandy” format in Munich last week highlighted the key importance of security, the cease fire and withdrawal of weapons. To successfully accomplish this task the SMM must have unfettered access to all territories, especially not controlled by the Government of Ukraine. However, the hybrid Russian forces continue to place significant restrictions on SMM’s freedom of movement or impediments to fulfilment of its mandate. In particular, as registered in the last SMM’s daily reports:

- armed men in the Kyivskiyi district of “DPR”-controlled Donetsk city waved the SMM away. The SMM tried to engage in conversation with one of them, but they refused to speak gesturing the SMM to turn and leave;
- armed men at an “LPR” checkpoint at the edge of the Zolote disengagement area told the SMM that its safety could not be guaranteed in fields and side roads due to the possible presence of mines and UXO;

- the SMM was unable to travel west from “DPR”-controlled Petrivske towards Viktorivka (42km south-west of Donetsk) due to a lack of security guarantees and the possible presence of mines;

- the SMM was restricted by armed so-called “LPR” members from accessing areas north of Luhansk and to Kalynove;

- an armed man, citing orders from a senior “DPR” member, did not allow the SMM to pass through a checkpoint into “DPR”-controlled Yasynuvata.

These are just a few, but telling examples.

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

The daily SMM reports depict a worrisome situation along the whole line of contact.

The Ukrainian forces are ready to fully abide by undertaken commitments, however progress depends on the readiness of Russia and its proxies to stop attacks and withdraw in a verifiable manner.

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 faith implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The conflict instigated and fuelled by the Russian Federation will not be resolved until the Russian forces get out of the territory of Ukraine. Therefore 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.**