



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 849th FSC Plenary Meeting

(29 March 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)

(Agenda item 2)

Mr. Chairperson,

Two days ago, 27 March 2017 marked the third anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly resolution "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine" (68/262). It reaffirmed the need for strict compliance by States with their obligations under international law, and its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Despite the clear demand of the international community, over the past three years the Russian Federation has not abandoned its aggressive actions and gross violations of the UN Charter and fundamental norms and principles of international law, and continued temporarily occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, blatant infringements on human rights and open military aggression in Donbas region of Ukraine.

It is absolutely clear that the past 25 years of Russia's membership in the UN as well as in the Security Council have been tarnished by its permanent disregard for the UN Charter, culminating in Russia's aggression and occupation of part of the territory of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, as well as ongoing aggression in the east of Ukrainian.

The situation in the Donbas region of Ukraine remains today very alarming and tense. Russia and its proxies neglected all previous decisions within the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) or Normandy-4 format to introduce comprehensive ceasefire (starting from 24 December 2016, 9 February and 20 February 2017).

All these tendencies along with the ongoing efforts of Russia to build up the military infrastructure along Ukraine's eastern state border and in the temporarily occupied Crimea create new risks of full-scale resumption of hostilities and may serve as a cover for preparation of a possible full-scale invasion of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine.

Currently Russian hybrid forces in Donbas have **406 MBT, 848 APC, 208 MLRS, 732** artillery systems (including self-propelled ones), **413** air defense units. A general number of illegal armed formations – up to **36 261** militants apart from **4 200** servicemen from Russian regular Armed Forces.

Moreover, **22 900** military, **30** main battle tanks (MBT), **106** artillery systems, **56** MLRS, **120** air defense units (including **32** S-300 missile systems), **583** armored personnel carriers (APC), **101** warplanes, **56** combat helicopters, up to **30 UAVs** (Orlan-10) as well as **24** combat ships and **3** submarine ships have been deployed in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian Crimea.

Since the start of ATO in April 2014 – up to 40 000 shelling attacks by the Russian hybrid forces took place at the Ukrainian AF positions. In 2016 – 16 186 shelling attacks (*5 017 of them – with the use of heavy weapons, which must have been withdrawn*). In contrast,

in 2016 UA Armed Forces had to open the return fire 4 921 times only (3,3 *times fewer cases*), primarily using small arms (*responding only for each third shelling attack*).

For the period from 1 February until 27 March 2017, there were 574 shelling attacks of the inhabited locations while 4 cases of critical civilian infrastructure objects' damages were registered. Along with that, 232 civilian houses were damaged, 6 civilians were killed and 24 – wounded by the terrorists' fire.

During the past two weeks there have been all together 1034 shelling attacks by Russian hybrid forces of the Ukrainian AF positions, one third of them – from heavy weapons. A slight decrease in quantity of ceasefire violations that the Donbas region of Ukraine has been facing during the past two weeks should not be perceived as a positive improvement of a whole situation in the region.

According to the SMM reports, the security situation in eastern Ukraine remained volatile. For the second consecutive week the SMM observed a decrease in the number of ceasefire violations, by some 35 per cent compared with the previous week. The Mission recorded, however, an escalation in the use of large-caliber weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements. The use of weapons that should have been withdrawn in accordance with the Minsk agreements – tanks, mortars and artillery, including MLRS – increased by 75 per cent (1,600 explosions compared with 911 the week before). This was the highest number of explosions attributed to fire from such weapons recorded in the last twelve months.

The past two weeks of attacks by hybrid Russian forces in Donbas took lives of 15 Ukrainian servicemen and 56 soldiers were wounded. We have also to note with regret that again the list of wounded civilians was added by 2 persons.

According to the SMM Weekly Report 11\2017 of 22 March 2017, at times, the SMM efforts to corroborate reports of civilian casualties were hindered by unwillingness of interlocutors to talk to the SMM. Most of them said they had been instructed not to do so without permission from the «DLPR authorities». At a hospital in the occupied Horlivka, for example, medical staff refused to talk to the SMM referring it to “DPR” members.

**Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,**

The OSCE SMM still has not confirmed the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the respective zones of the terrorists-controlled territory. Ukrainian Armed Forces on a daily basis register the hidden Russian weaponry within the restricted areas. In Feb-Mar 2017, 670 units of heavy weapons (156 MLRS “Grad”, including 2 Russian MLRS “Uragan”, 164 tanks, 167 self-propelled artillery guns, 143 towed artillery and 40 mortars) were detected by UA intelligence.

Russian side of the JCCC refuses to grant the necessary security guaranties for demining and restoration work near the line of contact. In 2017, altogether Ukrainian side granted 278 guaranties (*from 329 requests received*) while the Russian part – 71 only. At the same time, the SMM reported in its Weekly Report of 22 March 2017 as a positive note, on 14 March, the SMM observed four unarmed members of a Ukrainian Armed Forces demining unit clear mines and unexploded ordnance from a railway line north-east of Popasna.

Russian hybrid forces continue to illegally use of UAVs, including those used from the Russia's territory. This March more than 50 cases of their illegal use by the pro-Russian militants were registered (*in Jan 2017 – 85, Feb – 46*). Russia itself has performed areal intelligence of the territory of Ukraine 14 times (*in Feb 2017 – 11 times*). At the same time, Russian hybrid forces continue of its practice of blinding the SMM. In February 2017 the SMM lost two UAVs (one was shot down by the militants while another one – seized by

them), in addition to 8 long-ranged UAVs downed by Russia-backed militants previously in 2014-2016.

Distinguished colleagues,

This year the SMM has reported about at least 10 major incidents of intimidation of its monitors by Russian hybrid forces. In our two previous statements to the FSC meetings of this month we informed the delegation about such cases. The similar case was registered on 17 March 15km north of Donetsk when SMM monitors heard the sound of a bullet above their heads, and a shot of small-arms fire 100-200m of their position.

According to the last SMM Weekly report, during the past week beyond the disengagement areas and in addition to the restrictions of the SMM's freedom of movement due to the presence of mines and other explosive devices, the sides directly restricted the SMM's freedom of movement on 6 occasions in government-controlled areas and on 10 occasions in areas not controlled by the Ukrainian Government – compared with 9 and 15, respectively in the previous week. Therewith the “DPR” reported no measures taken with regards to those involved in the previous incidents, including those that occurred in Yasynuvata and Pikuzy on 24 February.

On 14 March, at the site of an SMM camera positioned in a tower near the “DPR”-controlled Oktiabr mine, an armed man told the Mission members they would be detained. The SMM was indeed detained for 11 minutes, before being allowed to depart. On the same day, at another location, four armed “DPR” members threatened to shoot the next SMM patrol that entered the Verkhnioshyrokiyske village.

As we have informed the delegations several times before Ukraine highly values the everyday work and efforts of the SMM. The Ukrainian side pays full attention to the incidents that may occasionally happen in Government-controlled areas, conducts their investigation and takes due measures of response. This approach on the part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces contrasts sharply with the attitudes of the hybrid Russian forces.

In this regard, let me again assure the delegations that Ukraine will continue to do everything in its power to ensure safety of the SMM observers and to assist the Mission in the full-scale fulfilment of its Mandate. This is an absolute priority for the Ukraine's Government.

**Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,**

As we have stated many times before Ukraine for its part is fully committed to full and faithful implementation of the Minsk agreements. In this respect we call on the Russian Federation to exercise its responsibility in its implementing, in particular their security provisions on comprehensive cease-fire, withdrawal of forces and full access of the SMM for objective and unhindered monitoring. We urge Russia to pull out its troops from Ukrainian territory, halt its support to the IAFs in Donbas region of Ukraine as well as its military build-up along Ukraine's south-eastern borders.

The conflict instigated and fuelled by the RF will not be resolved until the Russian forces get out 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 ARC and the city of Sevastopol. Ukraine will continue to take all steps under international law to counter Russian aggression, restore its territorial integrity and ensure that Russia makes full reparation for the injury caused by its internationally wrongful acts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.