



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 966th FSC Plenary Meeting

(27 January 2021, via video teleconferencing)

(Agenda item 1, General Statements,

on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”)

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the **subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”**.

Let me start by acknowledging the high priority which the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship attaches to the resolution of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine based on the founding OSCE principles and commitments. We are grateful for the strong commitment of Sweden to this critical matter.

As a testament to that, was **the first visit of Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Sweden Ann Linde to Ukraine** where she met the leadership of Ukraine and learnt of the activities of the SMM on the ground. She also bore witness to the dire consequences of Russia’s ongoing aggression during her visit to the conflict-torn areas of Donbas.

The security situation on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, efforts aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict and ways to increase the SMM organizational and technical capacities were at the core of discussions of the President and the Foreign Minister of Ukraine with the Chairperson-in-Office.

In particular, Foreign Minister of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba emphasised that the mandate of the SMM covers the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. It is imperative to ensure unimpeded and full access of the Mission to Crimea. He drawn special attention to the need of

launching remote monitoring mechanism of the situation in the temporarily occupied Crimea by the SMM which is long overdue.

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy made it clear that Ukraine had fulfilled all of the agreements reached at the meeting of the N4 leaders in December 2019.

All checkpoints except one built by the Ukrainian side for humanitarian purposes aimed at providing comfortable services for people remain closed on the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas. Such crucial matters as the reciprocal exchange of detainees, access of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the detainees and unimpeded implementation of the SMM's mandate on the temporarily occupied territories, demining and new disengagement areas are obstructed by the Russian side.

Despite the efforts of Ukraine to establish peace in Donbas, eventually bringing an end to the suffering of people, inflicted by Russia's handmade conflict, the situation remains prone to escalation. From the beginning of this year until the 24th of January, the **Russian forces in Donbas resorted to armed provocations** on 123 occasions, with the use of different grenade launchers, heavy machine guns, small arms and Minsk-proscribed 82 mm mortars (on 12 January, near Vodiane, Pisky; on 18 January, near Bohdanivka; on 21 January, near Pischevyk and Hnutove; on 23 January, near Pivdenne) and 120 mm mortars (on 5 and 8 January, near Vodiane; on 21 January, near Shyrokyne; on 23 January, near Pivdenne). The adversary also used sniper fire on multiple occasions (on 11 January, near the temporarily occupied Donetsk city; on 20 January, near Starohnativka; on 21 January, near Hnutove; on 22 January, near Novoluhansk).

As a result of this armed provocations, 2 Ukrainian servicemen were killed, while 3 Ukrainian servicemen were wounded in action. In 2020 Russia's aggressive actions in Donbas took the lives of 50 Ukrainian defenders and left 339 wounded.

We would like to draw your attention to the **most outrageous ceasefire violations** committed by the Russian armed formations.

On the 8th of January, in defiance of security guarantees provided to the SMM, the Russian armed formations opened fire in the direction of the repair and maintenance team at the water supply station near Pivdenne settlement on two occasions. The works had to be suspended and the team evacuated from the site due to such reckless behaviour. Such actions of the Russian forces are absolutely unacceptable as they impede the efforts to restore water supply to the Toretsk settlement with over 40 thousand residents as well as to the adjacent areas.

Two days in a row, on the 28th and 29th of December 2020, the Russian armed formations severely shelled Ukrainian positions with the use of Minsk-proscribed 82 mm and 120 mm mortars near the residential area of Vodiane. The Ukrainian

side corroborated on the consequences of this shelling. As a result, 5 craters and unexploded 120 mm shell of the artillery system 2B16 Nona-K, which caused damage to the building and the power tower, were revealed.

The Russian forces continued the practice of launching **forbidden UAVs which cross the line of contact**. It was the case on a number of occasions, near Krasnogorivka, Mariinka and temporarily occupied Yakovlivka. The operation of this technical means were interrupted by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In addition to constant impediment of the SMM freedom of movement, interference and targeting of its assets, the **Russian forces continued accumulating large amounts of weapons in the vicinity of the contact line** in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas in violation of withdrawal lines set out by the Minsk agreements.

Notably, on the 21st of January the SMM recorded 18 tanks near Novoselivka, Donetsk region; on the 19th of January - 21 multiple launch rocket systems (BM-21 Grad, 122mm) near Krasnolutskiyi (52km southwest of Luhansk); on the 16th of January – 22 multiple launch rocket system (BM-21 Grad, 122mm) near Krasnolutskiyi and 11 tanks near Novoselivka (37km north-east of Donetsk); on the 12th January – 3 multiple launch rocket systems (BM-21 Grad, 122mm) near Pokrovka (36km east of Donetsk) and many others in the course of this month.

These are some vivid figures illustrating hostile intentions of the Russian forces and failure to comply with the commitments undertaken under the Minsk agreements, endangering the fragile ceasefire regime and the lives of the Ukrainian servicemen and people residing in the conflict area. All of these illicitly transferred by Russia means of warfare must be immediately removed not only beyond the respective withdrawal lines but outside of the territory of Ukraine.

The Russian forces in Donbas have been intensively fortifying their forward positions and building new ones in full disregard of the TCG decision of 22 July 2020 which clearly prohibits such actions. All relevant information on these violations was communicated to the SMM.

Ukrainian side considers such actions of the Russian armed formations as a blatant violation of the Minsk agreements and disregard of the TCG ceasefire arrangement of 22 July 2020, as well as deliberate steps to destabilize the situation in the temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and adjacent territories and further instigation by Russia of the conflict it started.

Notwithstanding the challenging circumstances, Ukraine has been proactively restoring civilian infrastructure either destroyed or damaged as a result of Russia's aggression in the conflict-affected areas under the Government control, with the SMM observing adherence to the localised ceasefires. We are grateful to the Mission for its dedicated and restless work on this track.

Ukrainian side continued demining activities. From the 26th December 2020 through the 22nd January 2021, the Ukrainian teams surveyed almost 75 hectares of land and destroyed 972 explosive devices.

PRESENTATION ON THE SITUATION IN THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TERRITORIES IN THE EAST OF UKRAINE

In conclusion, we once again urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of Donbas, and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including withdrawal of its forces, illegal armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.