



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna11

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 948<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against**  
**Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea**  
(03 June 2020, via video teleconference)  
(Agenda item 1, General Statements)

**Mr. Chairperson,**

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine, in a national capacity, let me deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's on-going aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea.

**A regular meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) was held on 27 May 2020 in the format of a video conference.** At the beginning of the meeting, the Ukrainian delegation stressed the need to establish permanent, unconditional and sustainable observance of the ceasefire regime.

Ukraine insisted on the need for the Russian side to ensure unconditional and unhindered access for the SMM to monitor, in particular, violations of the ceasefire regime, ensure the movement of humanitarian missions.

The representatives of the OSCE SMM reported that their patrols had recorded traces of heavy weapons on the occupied territory of Donbas.

The Ukrainian delegation stressed that during the extraordinary meeting of the TCG on May 22, 2020, the OSCE representatives had not confirmed the facts of shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In the framework of the security subgroup, the discussion on the issue of new disengagement areas continued. A common understanding has been reached between Ukraine and the OSCE on security issues, which is based on the unconditional and full implementation of the SMM mandate.

Consultations are under way on additional measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the ceasefire regime and the updated demining plan as prerequisites for continuing the process of disengagement of forces and hardware under the SMM verification and control.

The OSCE also noted the work of Ukraine in implementing the updated demining plan, as provided for in the communiqué following the Normandy Four meeting in Paris. In the framework of the work of the humanitarian subgroup, an agreement was reached to discuss the lists for the mutual release of detainees at the next meeting.

The sides continued discussions on the opening of new checkpoints on the contact line, in particular in Zolote as well as the issue of ensuring the unimpeded passage through the checkpoints.

During the discussion in the political subgroup of the possibility of holding elections on the occupied territory of Donbas, the Ukrainian side reiterated that elections in the temporarily occupied territories can take place only after the implementation of the security requirements, including withdrawal of foreign troops from Ukraine and disarmament of military formations, obtaining control over the border by Ukraine. It can take place exclusively under Ukrainian law, provided that the activities of Ukrainian media, political parties and international observers are ensured.

**Ukraine continues to seek for viable options to resolve the conflict within TCG and N4.** We demonstrate readiness for compromises and initiate new steps to silence weapons and alleviate suffering of the people.

**Ukraine remains committed to a constructive approach** and we expect the same from the Russian Federation. We have demonstrated this commitment, in particular **by agreeing on the Steinmeier formula in September 2019 and re-launching the disengagement process** to pave the way for the N4 Paris Summit in December 2019. In this regard, we deem it necessary to give a boost for implementation of the **Paris Summit Conclusions** and to intensify the TCG activities in the general context of **peaceful resolution**.

**Unfortunately, all agreements aimed at improving the security on the ground,** reached at the recent N4 Summit, still await their implementation by Russia. Recent ministerial VTC in the N4 format once again proved to our commitment to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas. Taking into account „**the security first**” principle Ukraine promotes the next deliverables:

- **A new ceasefire regime. Proper security conditions are extremely important now, when COVID-19 multiplies the threats** from the ceasefire violations and increases vulnerability of the local population. Against this backdrop Ukraine drew a special attention during the Ministerial N4 talks to **the call by the UN Secretary General for the full and comprehensive ceasefire during the pandemic**. We expect Russia to demonstrate constructive approach while discussing within the TCG the modalities of the **new ceasefire regime**, as agreed by the Ministers;

- **Additional disengagement areas.** We are ready to discuss a **compromise** on a package solution concerning 3 new areas;

- **New crossing points on the contact line.** Russia must implement its commitment from Berlin 2016 to open Zolote crossing point. As initiated within the TCG earlier, Ukraine proposes a draft roadmap to use **mirror approach** and to open new crossing points in **Zolote (earlier agreed) and Schastia (not yet agreed)** simultaneously;

- **Updated demining plan.** The decision of N4 leaders to support the development and implementation of an updated **mine clearance plan** (based on the decision on mine clearance of the TCG, March 3, 2016) remains unimplemented. Regrettably, Ukraine has 3 times proposed to discuss the demining issue within the TCG and the Russian side blocked our initiatives. The SMM registered the progress in demining by the UAF, while the reciprocal steps by Russia have not been taken;

- **Restoring border control** remains a key element of the conflict resolution process. Establishment of **security zones in the border areas** of both states with the OSCE permanent monitoring and verification on the border, as prescribed by the Minsk Protocol, would be a move in the right direction. Ukraine proposes to establish a TCG working group on the border issues.

As it has been repeatedly stated by the President of Ukraine, **all security preconditions, including control over the border**, must be met and full compliance with Ukrainian legislation must be ensured in order to launch the electoral process. Access of candidates, media, IDPs and observers; their **safety and security**; equal opportunities for campaigning,

political, security and legal frameworks, election administration and possible external influence must be **crucial elements**, along with the situation on election day, for assessing the local elections in Donbas.

**The dialogue** of the ministers within the N4 format on security and political aspects **will be continued**. Following the N4 ministerial talks Ukraine proceeds from the need **to boost the dialogue within the TCG** and to make the TCG capable **to take long awaited decisions, aimed at de-escalation and improving the humanitarian situation** on the ground. To this end Ukraine has decided to **increase the level of Ukrainian delegation** by including top officials of the Government and heads of parliamentary committees.

We also continue efforts **to stop the self-proclaimed monopoly of Russian occupation administration** to speak on behalf of the local population of the occupied territories. Ukraine looks for options **to engage IDPs from Donbas**, who were forced to leave their homes since 2014, as well as **peaceful residents of the occupied areas**, who have not been involved in the illegal armed formations and do not hold Russian passports (**we demonstrated the Russian passports` holders at the last FSC meeting**), into the settlement process.

**That our initiative does not in any way change the configuration of the Trilateral contact group and idea behind this framework – Ukraine and Russia** as parties to the conflict and the **OSCE** as mediator. **Ukraine`s position** with regard to Russian claims on the necessity to ensure “direct dialogue between Kyiv and Donetsk/Luhansk” **remains unchanged**. **We will continue to negotiate with Russia as a party to the conflict and its initiator.**

**Russian occupational forces (ROF) continued to restrict the SMM`s passage at checkpoints in Donetsk and Luhansk regions and to deny the SMM passage at checkpoints along official crossing routes** – mostly towards temporarily occupied areas – referring to the closure of the checkpoints due to COVID-19. According to the SMM Weekly Report of 26 May, these repeated restrictions, which had begun at checkpoints of the armed formations in Donetsk region on 21 March and in Luhansk region on 23 March, again impeded the implementation of the Mission`s mandate. At a checkpoint south of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, on the only official crossing route in Luhansk region, ROF prevented the Mission from travelling towards government-controlled and occupied areas each time it attempted to do so. In Donetsk region, on two occasions, ROF denied the SMM passage towards government-controlled areas and, on two other occasions, towards occupied areas, each time at a checkpoint near Olenivka. They also denied the SMM passage towards temporary occupied areas on five occasions in total at checkpoints near Oleksandrivka, Verkhnochyrovsk and Horlivka, as well as towards government-controlled areas at a checkpoint near Kremynets.

The SMM continued to observe the presence of obstacles and mines on roads leading to some of the checkpoints of ROF, which impeded the Mission`s passage through them. For instance, on 20 and 24 May, at a checkpoint near Horlivka, the SMM continued to observe the presence of metal spikes across the road and of a mine hazard sign in the middle of it.

Throughout the week, the Mission continued to observe the presence of ROF (with “JCCC” marks) inside the disengagement area (between the new span of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge and their checkpoint south of it). On 20 May, the Mission saw a van and four persons near booths near said checkpoint. Throughout the week, the SMM continued seeing during the day time the presence of members of the ROF near the disengagement area`s southern edge and inside.

In addition to restrictions posed by mines, **the SMM faced restrictions to its freedom of movement on 34 occasions, all in occupied areas**. Twenty-four of these were restrictions

recorded at checkpoints of the ROF along the contact line and one at a border crossing point, while three were refusals to provide information regarding a civilian casualty.

Conducting remote monitoring through UAVs often continues to pose risks for SMM patrols. On 15 May, while conducting a mini-UAV flight in Horlivka, a member of the ROF after consulting his superiors on the phone, told an SMM patrol that if it flew over their positions, the UAV would be shot down. During the reporting period, members of the ROF threatened to shoot or target SMM UAVs. Such threats impede the implementation of the SMM mandate and contradict provisions in the Minsk agreements, which foresee the SMM's uninhibited monitoring and verification of the ceasefire regime through all technical equipment necessary. On 20 May, two members of the ROF allowed the SMM to conduct a mini-UAV flight only while in their presence and only over a certain area. On three occasions, SMM UAVs were targeted by small-arms fire, including twice near the Petrivske disengagement area.

Due to security considerations, the SMM **cannot access its camera in the occupied Petrivske, which has remained nonoperational since 4 May**. On two occasions, small-arms fire targeted an SMM mini-UAV flying near the disengagement area. On one occasion, an SMM mini-UAV experienced signal interference, assessed as caused by jamming, while flying near the area.

The Mission observed the ongoing fortification of positions belonging to the armed formations inside the disengagement area and north of its northern edge. Inside the disengagement area, an SMM mini-UAV spotted a 10m-long extension to a wooden structure covering part of an existing trench and new panels on the roof of a covered vehicle position, as well as for the first time a 3m-long trench extension stretching in a westerly direction. Outside the area, near a position of the armed formations cutting through the road between Bohdanivka and Petrivske, the same UAV spotted for the first time a bunker made of logs, walls and a roof structure, as well as a pile of logs lying nearby. – **SEE 2 SLIDES**.

Hereby, the ROF imitated dismantling and continues to actively use engineering positions in the area of the western outskirts of Petrivske, which are located in the disengagement area №3. They systematically, mainly at night, conduct observation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from those positions using special observation equipment and open provocative fire. The purpose of such provocations is to call fire in response and to accuse the AFU of not fulfilling their obligations to comply with the ceasefire within the disengagement area.

ROF also build deep-layered positions that border the engagement area. To avoid monitoring of this area by the SMM, ROF, in addition to jamming and firing at SMM's UAVs and using mines, build new engineering positions across the road between Petrivske and Viktorivka to prevent its use by the SMM patrols.

**In conclusion**, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of the Donbas region of Ukraine, and restore freedom of navigation 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, Mr. Chairperson.**