



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine at the 986th FSC Plenary Meeting

(22 September 2021)

(Agenda item 2, General Statements, on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”)

Mr. 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”.

During the last week, the situation in the conflict area in Donbas was marked by increased shelling and armed provocations by the Russian occupation forces.

Armed Forces of Ukraine positions came under fire from diverse weapons 48 times, including with the use of Minsk-proscribed 120mm mortars (Verhniotoretske, Shumy, Avdiivka, Taramchuk, Pisky, Novoselivka-2) and 122mm artillery systems (Niu-York, Shumy, Taramchuk, Novoselivka-2).

These reckless acts of armed aggression of the Russian Federation claimed the lives of one Ukrainian serviceman and left four servicemen wounded in action.

The Russian armed formation kept employing drones to deliver landmines POM-2 and drop grenade shells on the Ukrainian positions on several occasions. Russian UAVs, mostly of Orlan-10 type, were used to adjust fire and conduct reconnaissance activities.

On 14 September, the Russian armed formations shelled a vehicle of the Ukrainian side of the JCCC, which had visible markings, near Shumy settlement. 122mm artillery and 120mm mortars employed during the shelling caused damage to the vehicle and the adjacent territory. This is a vivid illustration of deliberate escalation of armed confrontation.

The vehicle in question is part of one of the observation groups established by the Ukrainian side of the JCCC along the entire line of contact to uphold the measures to strengthen the ceasefire regime agreed upon in July 2020. As of now, the network of observation groups comprises 13 posts, which include white vehicles bearing special markings visibly located in the front of each one of them. The network allows to ensure effective control and coordination of the ceasefire and a swift reaction to any attempts of its violation by the Russian armed formations, as well as the coordination of activities with the SMM on the line of contact.

On 16 September, the peaceful settlement of Schastia was under a barrage of Russian fire from Minsk-proscribed 120mm and 82mm mortars damaging administrative and private buildings, private vehicles, and inflicting injuries to a civilian. The shelling was adjusted with the use of UAV of quadcopter type. On the same day, the Russian armed formations bombarded another peaceful settlement of Taramchuk from the Minsk-proscribed 122mm artillery system. As a result, walls and windows of a private house with its adjacent territory were damaged.

The shelling by the Russian occupation forces of residential areas along the line of contact with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons poses direct threat to the lives of civilians and causes damage to civilian infrastructure.

The Russian armed formation continued deploying weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and outside of designated storage sites. Notably, between 14 and 16 September, the SMM reported over 240 such weapons, namely 135 tanks, over 65 howitzers, 2 anti-tank guns, 30 multiple-launch rocket systems, 3 surface-to-air missile complexes at the training areas near the temporarily occupied settlements of Buhaivka, Kruhlyk, Myrne, Ternove, Pokrovka, Miusynsk. These violations were likely linked to the establishment of manoeuvre groups to check the combat readiness of the reserves and preparation of the occupation forces to the drills "ZAPAD-2021".

Groups responsible for maintenance and repair works of the Ukrainian side to the JCCC together with the units of military and civilian cooperation of the Joint Forces Operation continued to exert every effort to ensure the functioning of critical infrastructure sites both in the government-controlled areas and in the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas.

During the last week, the Ukrainian side in cooperation with the SMM ensured repair and maintenance works at seven infrastructure sites damaged as a result of Russia's armed

aggression, notably, the slag collection complex in the residential area Nelepivka, Donetsk filtration station, power supply system to Novoselivka-2 settlement.

It is frustrating that 15 requests for maintenance and repair works still remain unaddressed due to the systematic ceasefire violations, conduct of engineering works at the positions and reluctance to provide security guarantees by the Russian armed formations.

Mr. Chairperson,

We remain gravely concerned over the large-scale military build-up by Russia along Ukrainian borders and in the temporarily occupied Crimea. Up to 95 thousand troops deployed there supplemented by Russian occupation forces in Donbas is a dangerous striking force, which affects the security of Ukraine and has a destabilizing effect on regional security. Despite the announced intention of Russia to withdraw its additional troops and military equipment following the drills held this past spring, a large portion of them is still present near the border with Ukraine and in the temporarily occupied Crimea.

The recent large-scale exercise ZAPAD-2021 conducted without due verification and inspection under the Vienna Document 2011 was used to strengthen the preparedness of the Russian army to act on the European theatre of military operations. This was testified by a large concentration of forces and military equipment near the areas bordering NATO Member States, Ukraine and Georgia during the exercise.

The scope of ZAPAD-2021 is staggering. According to official data, almost 200 thousand staff, 80 planes and helicopters, 16 ships, 290 main battle tanks, multiple launch rocket artillery systems, etc. took part in the manoeuvres.

Simultaneously with ZAPAD-2021, strategic command-staff exercises were held in the entire European part of Russia, almost in all Russia's military districts and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and Georgia. According to open sources, the total number of troops employed during these exercises was between 150 and 240 thousand.

Against this background, it is of key importance that Russia fully withdraws its troops and military equipment after the completion of ZAPAD-2021 exercise according to the assurances of the Russian defence ministry.

We urge Russia to match its declaration with actions and finally withdraw all additional troops redeployed near the border with Ukraine after the large-scale no-notice exercises held this spring.

In conclusion, we 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 the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations, and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.