



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

**Statement on “Russia’s on-going aggression against Ukraine  
and illegal occupation of Crimea”**

As for delivery by the Delegation of Ukraine  
to the 1129<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
26 January 2017

**Mr. Chairman,**

While the Russian high officials continue to use political rhetoric as diplomatic cover for military action, the hybrid Russian forces in Donbas continue to provoke hostilities and armed clashes along the entire line of contact. We condemn that the hybrid Russian forces and their masters are not willing to renounce violence as their preferred option of building pressure on Ukraine, its people and its international partners. After nearly three years into the conflict, Moscow, contrary to the undertaken Minsk commitments, opts for brutal force to impose its terms for containing its aggression against a sovereign state.

Over the past week, the Ukrainian positions and residential areas were targeted by the daily average of 28 shellings, including with the use of mortars and heavy artillery. For instance, on Tuesday, 24 January, the hybrid Russian forces carried out a massive mortar attack on Krasnohorivka – they fired from Staromykhailivka over 80 mortar rounds of different caliber within less than three hours. As reported by the SMM, on 23 January positioned in Debaltseve, controlled by the hybrid Russian forces, the monitors heard 176 explosions assessed as 88 outgoing 152 mm artillery rounds and their subsequent impacts. As a result of the past week’s attacks, 2 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 7 were wounded.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

Despite significant restrictions on freedom of movement of the SMM, imposed in areas under control of the hybrid Russian forces, the monitors provide important pieces of information concerning Russia’s direct military involvement in the conflict in Donbas. This has again been highlighted by the SMM report of 20 January 2017, which informed about seeing the Russian mobile jamming communication system R-330ZH “Zhitel” to the north of Vuhlehirsk (49km north-east of Donetsk). The system was spotted now in the Svitlodarsk-Debaltseve area, where the hybrid Russian forces carry out intensive attacks on Ukrainian positions since December. In June last year the SMM found the system R-330ZH “Zhitel” approximately 11km south of Donetsk city, also in the area of heightened tensions and attacks by the hybrid Russian forces.

We would like to remind that the system R-330ZH “Zhitel” is a modern and advanced Russian reconnaissance and jamming complex, produced in Voronezh and adopted by the Russian Armed Forces in 2008. The operation of the system requires a trained crew of four members. Until now, the Russian delegation has failed to provide explanations in this forum about the presence of exclusive Russian military equipment in Donbas, registered by the SMM, including the mentioned jamming system, TOS-1 “Buratino”, UAV “Orlan-10”. We again urge the Russian Delegation to provide these explanations.

The sustained attacks of the hybrid Russian forces would not be possible without established logistical support and constant replenishment of ammunition. On 22 January the SMM reported about observing near the town of Khrustalnyi (Luhansk oblast) “five stationary trucks carrying boxes of ammunition assessed as matching the shape and size of MLRS (BM-21) rockets and seven other trucks carrying additional boxes. The trucks were guarded by armed men”. It is important to note, in this regard, that Khrustalnyi is located close to Miusynsk where the SMM found and reported on 6 January the presence in violation of withdrawal lines of 48 multiple-launch rocket systems. Since then, the SMM was not able to report about the whereabouts of these proscribed weapons, instead registering the use of such powerful systems by the hybrid Russian forces in different locations along the contact line.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The worrying security situation in the conflict-affected areas of Donbas, the failure by Russia to implement its Minsk commitments and unpredictability of its further intentions underscore the urgent need of full implementation of the security provisions of the Minsk agreements. Implementation of these provisions must also include the establishment of permanent monitoring and verification by the OSCE at the uncontrolled sections of the Ukrainian-Russian state border and the verifiable withdrawal of Russian troops, fighters and weapons from Ukraine’s territory. The current sporadic and short visits by the SMM to the border, considering the poor road conditions, adverse weather, limited daylight hours and long distances, do not meet the needs of permanent and effective monitoring. We urge the Russian Federation to allow the SMM to realize its long-standing plans of establishing Forward patrol bases close to the border.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

The civilian population of the conflict-affected areas of Donbas continues to suffer from restrictions, deprivation and hardships inflicted upon them by the hybrid Russian forces.

As an example, yesterday the SMM reported about a long queue of up to 1200 people willing to cross into the government-controlled territory and held up at a check-point of the hybrid Russian forces at the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge – the only place to cross the contact line in Luhansk oblast. At the same time, despite the humanitarian needs of the population of the oblast, Russia’s proxies do not respond to the proposal

of the Ukrainian authorities to open an entry-exit checkpoint in Zolote, which was ready since March of last year. As reported by the SMM, Russia's proxies undermined the initiative of the Ukrainian authorities to raise the limit of cargo allowed per one person when crossing the contact line. The limitation prevents people from bringing into the occupied areas more foodstuffs and other products they need and which are far more expensive in Donetsk and Luhansk. The entry-exit checkpoints along the contact line are regularly subjected to cease-fire violations of the hybrid Russian forces, intimidating people and posing real risks to their safety and security. Severe restrictions on operation of humanitarian organizations in the areas, not controlled by the Government, have not been lifted, but, on the contrary, further tightened. As was reported by the SMM, the only international NGO "People in need" operating in Donetsk had been banned. Instead, Moscow and its proxies in Donbas, having cut off Ukrainian television and radio broadcasting, maintain their propaganda campaign blaming hardships on the Ukrainian authorities.

We witness the selective approach of the hybrid Russian forces as concerns repairing the essential infrastructure near the contact line. The SMM report of 23 January includes a telling example that the local gas distribution station in Marinka had not been restored since June 2016 as numerous request of security guarantees for repair works were so far dismissed by the hybrid Russian forces. The same report indicates the need of repair works at a chemical waste reservoir of phenol factory in Novhorodske, again requiring security guarantees. We call for Moscow's responsibility in averting ecological disasters in Donbas.

For its part, the Ukrainian authorities will continue to strengthen their efforts in alleviating the plight of the people living in non-government controlled areas. Last week the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved a regulation with a specific Action Plan that envisages, in particular, facilitation of procedures for crossing the contact line, simplifying tax and accounting reporting for local enterprises; improvement of provision of legal and administrative services near the contact line; provision of access to the Ukrainian television and radio broadcasting and printed media, fostering access of international humanitarian organizations to the areas currently not controlled by the Ukrainian authorities, expansion of medical assistance.

We call on the OSCE community to keep a sustained focus on the issue of release of hostages and illegally detained persons, where progress is blocked by Russia and its proxies. Yesterday a Moscow court extended for another three months the illegal detention of the Ukrainian journalist Roman Sushchenko, who was placed in Russia's captivity last October on fabricated charges of "espionage". We urge Russia to immediately release all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens, who are political prisoners in Russia.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We again express our deep concern over persecutions, repressions and intimidation which prevail in Crimea under Russia's illegal occupation. On 20 January, the Russian occupation authorities presented a criminal indictment to the Ukrainian journalist Mykola Semena charging him with "calls for undermining Russian territorial integrity via mass media". Russia blatantly violated international law and OSCE principles by its military invasion in Crimea and now it throws people into jail for being faithful to the principle of territorial integrity and not accepting Russia's internationally wrongful actions. Yesterday in Simferopol the Russian occupation authorities detained Nikolay Polozov, the lawyer of the Deputy Chairman of the Crimean Tartar Mejlis Ilmi Umerov who is also facing charges of the Russian occupation authorities. N.Polozov was detained after his return from Strasbourg where he spoke to members of PACE about persecution of Crimean Tatars in the illegally occupied Crimea. This morning again searches of Crimean Tatars took place.

We urge Russia to exercise responsibility and put an end to systematic grave violation of human rights of the people in the illegally occupied Crimea.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We have not left unnoticed the recent remarks made at high levels in Moscow that Russia is not the country to implement the Minsk agreements. Indeed, until now Russia has defied implementation of the commitments it has undertaken by consistently pursuing the course of aggression. It therefore remains imperative to maintain the firm international position in holding Russia accountable for its aggression against Ukraine and in stimulating its implementation of undertaken commitments on peaceful resolution of the conflict. The sanctions imposed in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine must remain in place until full implementation of the Minsk agreements and de-occupation of Crimea.

We reiterate our strong call on the Russian Federation to implement in good faith the undertaken commitments on peaceful resolution of the conflict and return to the tenets of international law.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**