



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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Statement on “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”

As delivered by Ihor Lossovskiy,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1196th meeting of the Permanent Council,
4 October 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

This morning, the Ukrainian Parliament has prolonged the term of applicability of the “Law on the peculiarities of local self-government in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions” till 31 December 2019. Ukraine has yet again reaffirmed its commitment to fulfilling the Minsk agreements in their entirety as a way to peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict with full respect to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. We remain devoted to implementing our commitments under the Minsk agreements and urge Russia as a party to the conflict to honour its own commitments, including on sustainable cease-fire, withdrawal of Russian troops, fighters, mercenaries and weaponry from the Ukrainian territory.

Last week, in the meeting of the Permanent Council, we discussed the comprehensive updates on the ongoing Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for the population living in a conflict zone, which were provided by Ambassador Sajdik and Ambassador Apakan. We join other delegations in emphasizing the top priority of ensuring safety and security of civilians and civilian infrastructure targeted by the Russian military activities in the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine must remain in the spotlight of international community, as Russia continues to deny its responsibility as an occupying Power and blocks access of humanitarian organizations to the areas it controls. In this regard, we are grateful to all OSCE participating States, which supported inclusion of a new item “Situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine” into the agenda of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. The blatant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Russian occupation administration in Donbas and Crimea must not be overlooked. Russia must not neglect its responsibilities as an occupying Power and to prevent humanitarian crises in the territories it controls, as it took place last week

in the occupied Makiivka, where dozens of people were poisoned by contaminated tap water.

As the security situation in Donbas remains volatile, highly tense and unpredictable, the lives of Ukrainian citizens are jeopardized daily. In September, the Russian armed formations delivered almost 800 shellings, including 80 from the Minsk-proscribed weapons. Any time, residents of the towns and villages located along the contact line can become victims of Russian weapons, militants or mines. Last Sunday, three children were killed and one injured in Russia-occupied Horlivka by explosion from an anti-personnel mine, which are prohibited in Ukraine and were disposed yet in 2012. This Monday, the residential area of the village of Vodiane was shelled by the Russian armed formations from heavy artillery: 31 artillery shells and 16 mines landed onto the village. The Russian proxies continue to deploy heavy weapons in residential areas to provoke a response fire and to use it in Kremlin's propaganda war against Ukraine. The SMM registered in particular "two towed howitzers in firing positions near Dokuchaievsk" and "five armoured vehicles in close vicinity to inhabited civilian houses in Pikuzy".

In the area around the Donetsk Filtration Station, which has been in the focus of the Permanent Council in the last months, the SMM "spotted a new 200m trench and a recently upgraded firing position south of the DFS, as well as an extension of trenches south-west of the DFS, all assessed as belonging to the armed formations". Last Friday, 50 civilians crossing "Hnutove" entry-exit checkpoint were caught by fire from 120mm mortars from the Russia-occupied territories. Instead of implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements on withdrawal of armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine, the Russian Federation continues fueling violence in Donbas while pursuing its political aims of undermining Ukraine's sovereignty.

The government of Ukraine remains persistent in its efforts to alleviate the suffering of Ukrainian citizens affected by the Russian aggression. Repairs to essential infrastructure to the phenol sludge reservoir near Zalizne, demining in Pishchane, and reconstruction works at the entry-exit checkpoint near Novotroitske: those are only some of the steps registered by the SMM. Following the reconstruction works conducted at the Ukrainian part of Stanytsya Luhanska entry-exit checkpoint, on which we informed in the last PC meeting, the SMM now reports on "about 1,200 people queuing to travel towards government-controlled areas" and only "about 50 people queuing in the opposite direction". While Stanytsya Luhanska remains the only EECP in Luhansk region, we would remind that the Zolote EECP remains ready to be opened since March 2016, and the only impediment to its functioning is Russia's unwillingness to allow this to happen. It is not Russian citizens who have to wait in long queues to cross the artificial contact line caused by the Russian military aggression against its neighbor state: that's why the Russian side pays no attention to the hardships for civilians it created.

Distinguished colleagues,

In countering the dire humanitarian consequences of Russia's occupation, we continue to rely upon the SMM reports on the recent developments in the temporarily

occupied territories of Ukraine. We appreciate the Mission's attempts to "gather information on access to education issues in eastern Ukraine to better assess the effect of the conflict on children's daily life", to establish contacts with local population, and to observe so-called "humanitarian convoy" once again delivered from the territory of the Russian Federation in violation of Ukraine's legislation, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We condemn the efforts of the Russian occupation administration to limit activities of the SMM, to intimidate the monitors and their interlocutors in schools and hospitals, and to demand SMM's patrol plans in violation of the Mission's mandate, which envisages safe and secure access of the monitors throughout Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

This Monday, Ukrainian journalist, writer and blogger Stanislav Aseiev spent his second birthday in detention of the Russian armed formations in Donetsk. Like Mr Aseiev, dozens of Ukrainian citizens continue to be illegally held by Russia and its occupation administration in Donbas and Crimea on fabricated charges. We regret that Kremlin continues to evade meaningful discussions on our proposal to release them in exchange for the release of Russian citizens convicted for committing crimes against the Ukrainian state. The last TCG meeting this Tuesday was not an exception. We reiterate our call to the participating States to keep consolidated pressure on Russia to push it to the constructive negotiations aimed at resolving this long-stalled issue.

We again urge the Russian Federation to reverse the illegal occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and to stop its aggression, including by withdrawing its armed formations from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.