



**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 786-th FSC Plenary Meeting
(29 April 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)**

Madam Chair,

I would like to start by reiterating that the Minsk agreements of September 2014 and February 2015 represent an agreed framework for peaceful political resolution of the conflict in Ukraine's Donbas. Bringing peace back to Donbas requires political will and observance of undertaken commitments by all signatories of these agreements. Ukraine, for its part, has consistently demonstrated good-faith and responsibility in fully implementing the Minsk agreements and has strictly observed agreements on cease-fire, withdrawal of heavy weaponry and adopting the legislation on the special order of self-governance in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, thus laying ground to holding free and fair local elections in those areas.

However, in clear breach of the Minsk agreements, the illegal armed groups, with direct support of the Russian regular armed forces, have not yet observed the comprehensive cease-fire as of February 15. Militants continue to use the period to regroup, get reinforced and concentrate on positions to conduct further offensives. According to the ATO Headquarters, since February 15, Russia-backed militants have shelled Ukrainian positions **over 2685 times. 65 Ukrainian military have been killed and 250 wounded** as a result of shelling and attacks since February 15.

On-going intense fighting takes place in Shyrokyne near Mariupol. We strongly condemn the escalation in Shyrokyne and urge the Russian Federation to exert influence on its proxies to halt armed provocations allowing to resume 24/7 OSCE monitoring in the village. In Donetsk region, militants continuously attacked the Donetsk airport, Avdiivka, Svitlodarsk, Pisky, Opytne, Vodyane, Tonenke, Popasna, Krasnohorivka etc. In Luhansk oblast, they targeted Stanytsya Luhanska, Zolote, Schastya etc.

Over the weekend pro-Russian fighters in Donbas shelled positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and civilian areas across the contact line 23 times using heavy armoured vehicles, 120-mm mortars, and heavy artillery of 122-mm and 152-mm calibre that must have been withdrawn under the Minsk agreements.

In the settlement of Pisky two groups of pro-Russian fighters made several attempts to attack the position of Ukrainian troops. The attacks followed the established pattern - one group tried to suppress the ATO block posts with intense fire and the second group attacked the positions of Ukrainian troops. Militants used armored vehicles, 122-mm artillery and anti-aircraft installations in the area.

The pro-Russian militants regularly shelled with heavy infantry arms the Ukrainian positions near the settlements of Opytne, Avdiivka, Kirovske, Schastya, Krymske, Sokolnyky, Myronivske, Mayorske.

It is important to note the observations made in this respect in the last weekly report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission of 22 April. We are deeply concerned with the attempts of the Russia-backed militants to redeploy heavy weapons for 9 May military parade purposes. In particular, the SMM report provides that «“DPR” personnel

on a number of occasions explained the absence of previously-recorded weapons by saying they had been removed in order to take part in 9 May Victory Day celebrations in Donetsk city, which is inside the exclusion zone. The “Luhansk People’s Republic” (“LPR”) has also signaled its intention to parade heavy weapons in Luhansk city, which is also in the exclusion zone». The SMM made it very clear that parading this weaponry in the exclusion zone will violate the Minsk agreements. We therefore again call on the Russian Federation and the militants it backs to strictly respect the ceasefire and complete without delay the withdrawal of heavy weapons in accordance with the Minsk Package of Measures.

**Madam Chair,
Distinguished colleagues,**

I would like to draw your attention to the 17th EU-Ukraine Summit, which took place on 27 April in Kyiv, where leaders of Ukraine and the EU underlined their strong support for the efforts aimed at de-escalation and a political solution based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. They called on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk Agreements and honour their commitments and underlined the Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard.

Distinguished colleagues,

The Delegation of Ukraine already referred to the ongoing violations of the ceasefire by the pro-Russian militants. Let me bring to your attention some facts of continuous violations by the pro-Russian militants, which were registered in the period of 23-28 April:

-on 23 April the Russia-backed terrorists used MLRS Grad (one time), bombardment artillery (7 times) and tanks (13 times) against the Ukrainian Armed Forces. As a result, eight Ukrainian military were wounded;

-on 24 April illegal armed groups carried out 7 attacks on the Ukrainian forces using mortars, tanks, self-propelled artillery caliber 122-mm, automatic grenade launchers and small arms near the settlements of Shyrokyne, Opytne, Pisky, Avdiivka, Leninske, Kirove and Mar’inka. In total, the militants opened fire 19 times on the Ukrainian positions in these areas. The Ukrainian troops responded to the attacks with 82-mm mortars and small arms;

-on 25 April during the whole day militants were shelling the ATO forces in the area of Shyrokyne. Under the cover of mortar fire a tank kept firing at the Ukrainian positions. Militants also opened fire with rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns. After the Ukrainian army opened the fire in response, the intensity of militants' attacks sharply decreased;

-on 26 April militants used all their entire arsenal of arms against the Ukrainian military in the village of Shyrokyne and put “the anti-record” in the number and intensity of attacks on settlements near Mariupol. The most intense battles in the last three months took place in Shyrokyne, where 17 attacks by militants with the use of tanks, artillery, mortars, machine guns and sniper rifles were registered. As a result, one Ukrainian serviceman was killed, 14 wounded;

-on 27 April, for the second times in two days, militants have bombarded by artillery fire the civilians in the settlement of Chermalyk, Donetsk region. Overall, there were 11 shellings, mostly with mortars, of the Ukrainian positions along the contact

line. Militants used 120-mm calibre mortars 6 times, thereby grossly violating the Minsk agreements;

-on 28 April Illegal armed groups fired 22 times on the Ukrainian positions along the contact line. The militants again used heavy artillery and multiple launcher rocket systems (MLRS) on civilians. In particular, militants opened the fire on the ATO positions and settlement of Novolaspa by MLRS BM-21 "Grad" near the town of Avdiivka. In addition, illegal armed groups fired twice with 120-mm mortars, automatic grenade launchers and small arms at the Ukrainian positions near settlements of Pisky and Opytne, one time near Avdiivka, Chermalyk and the town of Schastya.

In addition, there were 90 cases of aerial reconnaissance registered last week on the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the ATO area by the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) of the Russian Armed Forces, including the direct invasion into the airspace of Ukraine by UAV from Russia near the settlement of Markyne, Donetsk region. We reiterate our call to the Russian Federation to immediately halt its violations of the airspace of Ukraine and guarantee no repetition of the above-mentioned unlawful activities.

The above highlights of serious violations of the agreements, in particular again by use of heavy artillery above 120mm, which proves that as yet the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it supports have not backed up their declarations by practical steps on good-faith and comprehensive implementation of the Minsk agreements. We call on all signatories of the Minsk agreements to immediately take responsibility for their full implementation as an agreed framework for restoring peace in Donbas.

Distinguished colleagues,

Recently, the Russian officials have expressed their concern on the multinational military exercises that are taking place on the territory of Ukraine, including with the assistance of the military personnel from the United States of America. We would like to underscore that the aforementioned military exercises are being conducted in accordance with the Annual Programme of the International Military Cooperation and Partnership for Peace and is adopted by the relevant decision of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The Russian officials are well aware of this practice of joint military exercises, which have been conducted in Ukraine for more than 15 years. And this year, in light of the Russia's on-going aggression against Ukraine, they are particularly important for the safety and security of my country.

Madam Chair,

I will conclude by reiterating our commitment to and call for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all signatories, including Russia, as the only way forward towards a sustainable political solution. Full respect for the ceasefire regime and a verified withdrawal of heavy weapons are essential steps in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We once again call for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under OSCE monitoring as well as disarmament of all illegal armed groups. We call on Russia to immediately halt exporting terrorism to Ukraine and stop interference into internal affairs of my country.

Thank you, Madam Chair.