



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 837th FSC Plenary Meeting
(30 November 2016 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 1)

Madam Chairperson,

Three years ago, hundreds of thousand courageous Ukrainians gathered on Kyiv's "Maidan of Dignity and Freedom" to peacefully voice their support for Ukraine's European aspirations and started nationwide movement in support of the democratic values and against dictatorship. It has been the resolute choice of Ukrainians to build a prosperous and rule of law based European state, where human rights as well as fundamental freedoms are fully respected.

One could hardly anticipate that Russia's response to the democratic aspirations of Ukrainians would be putting into action its plans of multifaceted aggression against the neighbouring State. Illegal occupation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and the city of Sevastopol and followed bloody conflict in Donbas were a result of Russia's military intervention and its expansionist claims for the entire south-east of Ukraine. With these Russia chose to deal a destructive blow to the comprehensive vision of Europe whole, free and at peace. So far the OSCE fundamental principles, in particular those on respect to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers, continue to be grossly violated by the Russian Federation.

Madam Chairperson,

We are continuing to witness alarming deterioration of the security situation along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine. Intense use of heavy weapons has resulted in a deeply worrying increase in military and civilian casualties. These violations and their further aggravation stem from ongoing unwillingness of the combined Russian-separatist forces to renounce violence.

Ukraine is deeply concerned by the rise in fighting near the Mariupol city, which further heightens the risk to civilians. We again call on the combined Russian-separatist forces to show restraint, respect the ceasefire, fully and verifiably withdraw all Minsk-proscribed weapons, disengage, ensure humanitarian access and full, safe and unhindered SMM access throughout Ukraine, including along the Ukrainian-Russian State border.

These steps are necessary in order to move toward a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE fundamental principles and commitments.

We are grateful for efforts of the German and French Foreign Ministers in the Normandy meeting yesterday to impress upon the Russian side the urgent need for halting violence and implementing the security provisions of the Minsk agreements. It is clear to us that their full implementation is the basic prerequisite for further progress in resolution. Other priority areas are:

- speedy release of the first 57 hostages that they held in the occupied areas of Donbas and also release of hostages kept in Russia;
- immediate admission of the ICRC to look for missing 495 persons;
- avoiding the environmental disaster in Donbas region, primarily related to water supply for the town Toretsk, that has been without water for more than a week.

**Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,**

The security situation in Donbas was the main subject of discussion during the Trilateral Contact Group meeting, which was held on 24 November in Minsk. The Ukrainian side reiterated that full implementation of the security provisions of the Minsk agreements remains an urgent need and basic requirement for progress on other aspects of the Minsk agreements. This logic and sequence is registered in the Minsk agreements and must be implemented. We regret that prospects for peaceful resolution in Donbas, charted by the Minsk documents, remain vague due to Moscow's unwillingness to abandon military force and violence as its main tool of blackmail and advancing its political demands. This approach is greatly detrimental for both the security situation in Donbas and pace of implementation of the agreed steps towards peaceful resolution. It also obstructs progress on preparation of the Roadmap for the Minsk implementation, on which expectations were placed at the Normandy Summit of 19 October 2016.

We encourage Russia to further progress on the disengagement initiative. We deeply regret that Ukraine's efforts to open an entry-exit checkpoint in Zolote, long-awaited by the local population, are not reciprocated by the Russian hybrid forces. We hope that the movement through the checkpoint will start as soon as possible. Ukrainian side prepared everything needed for this to happen back in March this year.

Regular ceasefire violations by the Russian hybrid forces in Stanytsia Luhanska do not allow launching disengagement process in this area. The disengagement of forces and hardware in Stanytsia Luhanska has been postponed several times because the combined Russian-separatist forces repeatedly violated the necessary conditions, in particular the ceasefire within 7 days. The violation of ceasefire again took place on 24 and 27 November. We call on Russia to implement the undertaken commitments in good faith. For its part, Ukraine remains ready to proceed to withdrawing forces and hardware

in this area as soon as ceasefire and other provisions of the Framework decision are met.

Over past week the combined Russian-separatist forces have opened fire on the positions of Ukrainian military with an average intensity of **26 times per day**. The militants continue to use heavy weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements, including heavy artillery systems, mortars, battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles. In total, over past month the combined Russian-separatist forces fired at the Ukrainian positions 132 tons of ammunition. **2 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 11 wounded** during the last week.

Distinguished colleagues,

In its last weekly report of 23 November the SMM registered the presence of so-called “DPR” weaponry in residential areas. As one example, in “DPR”-controlled Sakhanka (north-east of Mariupol) the SMM found empty casings from 12.7mm heavy-machine-gun ammunition on the ground about 50m from the impact site of a 122mm artillery round (the impact site itself was located near a public building). In so-called “DPR”-controlled Pikuzy (formerly Kominternove) the SMM observed an infantry fighting vehicle BMP-1 parked near a house.

We find it unacceptable that SMM continues to experience problems with its freedom of movement and access in the occupied areas of Donbas, which are mostly associated with attempts to conceal armed provocations against the Ukrainian forces, concentration of weaponry and military movements in the vicinity of the contact line and in the border areas. Russia and its proxies do not allow freedom of the SMM’s movement in large part of the territory under their control, including along Ukraine-Russia state border.

These restrictions breach the agreed mandate of the SMM and its ability to report objectively on the situation on the ground. It remains absolutely essential to seek that Russia delivers on its commitment on the SMM’s full freedom of movement.

Madam Chairperson,

We expect from the Russian Federation to implement without delay the necessary initial steps of the Minsk agreements: securing ceasefire, withdrawal of weapons, and full freedom of movement for the SMM for effective monitoring. These important steps are an exact reflection of immediate measures as agreed by Russia in the Minsk package of measures. We urge Russia to return to the tenets of the international law, to cease its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.