



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

## **Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1328<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
5 August 2021

### **Madame Chairperson,**

The security situation in Donbas remains tense and unpredictable. The flagrant violation of the OSCE basic principles and commitments by the Russian Federation remains the source of continuing loss of life, human suffering and destruction. All these take place despite the additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire, which were agreed one year ago.

In the past week, the SMM recorded 1,440 ceasefire violations, including 214 explosions, a 125 per cent increase compared to the previous week.

We deeply regret that the work of the SMM is still being obstructed on a daily basis. Two SMM mini-UAVs were targeted by small-arms fire: one over areas near non-government-controlled Syhnalne and one (during two separate flights) over areas near non-government controlled Lebiazhe in temporarily occupied Donetsk region.

In its spot report as of 31 July the SMM fixed yet another incident when a member of the illegal armed formations threatened to shoot down one of the SMM's mini-UAVs near Staromykhailivka.

The Mission's freedom of movement was restricted on 22 occasions, 21 of which occurred in non-government-controlled areas. It is really worrying that the SMM remains unable to fully conduct its monitoring activities across the contact line and between non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, being forced to continue acting as three separate operational entities. We share the Mission's conclusion that these restrictions and measures continue to directly interfere with the SMM's ability to implement its mandate.

During several previous meetings we have brought attention of the Permanent Council to the Russian policy of illegal massive issuance of Russian passports to the citizens of Ukraine, so-called "passportization", in the context of the decision to allow the owners of such passports to vote at the parliamentary elections in the Russian Federation. We have urged the ODIHR and OSCE participating States to assess the consequences of this decision for the legitimacy of parliamentary elections in Russia.

However, as we learned yesterday from the Note Verbale of ODIHR, due to the decision by the Russian authorities to introduce limitations to the election observation, it will be impossible for ODIHR to conduct credible independent observation. While expressing our deep regret with regard to this situation, which certainly deserves separate discussion, we reiterate our call to the OSCE participating States and to the Chairpersonship to react to this flagrant violation of the OSCE core principles.

### **Madam Chairperson,**

Following Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea, the situation on the peninsula deteriorated in every sphere. We are seriously concerned by the negative trends observed in the occupied Crimea, from militarization to changing demographic structure of the population of Crimea, from political persecution to irresponsible environmental policies, from systemic ethnic and religious discrimination to expulsion of independent media from the peninsula.

Ukraine deploras these blatant violations of human rights and norms of international humanitarian law. Deoccupation of Crimea is obviously a prerequisite to reducing the human suffering and bringing Crimea back to pan-European system of human rights protection. The return of Crimea to Ukraine will also solve a number of security issues, including threats to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and freedom of navigation.

Being guided by this understanding, we believe that Russia's illegal temporary occupation of Crimea must remain in the spotlight of the international community. Therefore, we place a special focus in our today's statement to the issue of de-occupation of the Crimean Peninsula through the peaceful political and diplomatic means.

We should strive to ensure that the response of the international community to the Russia's occupation of Crimea and related crimes is consistent and sustained. Without this response and coordinated reaction on these wrongdoings Russia will further undermine the norms and principles of the international law and democratic values, including its OSCE commitments.

As it was announced earlier an inaugural Crimean Platform summit will be held on 23 August in Kyiv. The event will launch International Platform which is expected to become a key foreign-policy tool in advancing the process of de-occupation of Crimea.

Despite Russia's efforts to derail the Crimea Platform and prevent states from joining it, including through blackmailing and direct threats, the core of the international coalition for liberation of Crimea has been formed and this coalition constantly grows.

The Joint declaration to be adopted at the Summit will reconfirm the participants' support for Ukraine's independence, its territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and is expected to define the common framework of further international non-recognition policy.

By strengthening the international coalition for liberation of Crimea and at the same time providing the adequate response to Russia the Platform will focus on five priority tracks: 1) protection of human rights and international humanitarian law; 2) consolidation of non-recognition policy; 3) effectiveness of sanctions against the aggressor state and their extension; 4) security, including freedom of navigation; 5) mitigation of adverse economic and environmental impact of the occupation of Crimea on the region.

But the Crimean Platform is not only about the Ukrainian territorial integrity and de-occupation of Crimea. Its concept encompasses much wider aspects. By supporting the Platform, the international community sends a powerful message on the need to protect international law, inviolability of internationally recognized borders and our common values – human rights and fundamental freedoms – the principles which are fundamental to the OSCE.

The activities of the Crimea Platform will not end after the Summit, either it should not be considered as a peak of de-occupation efforts. It is rather a starting point for further day-by-day efforts on all tracks leading to the final goal – return of Crimea to Ukraine by peaceful means. "Crimea is Ukraine" formula remains invariable.

**Madam Chairperson,**

We believe that success of the Crimea Platform will be measured not only by de-occupation of Crimea, but also by contribution to strengthening the European and global security. Thus, the implementation of Crimean Platform initiative will complement the OSCE efforts in facilitating lasting comprehensive political settlements to the conflicts existing in the OSCE region.

The activities of the Crimea Platform will form an essential part of the global deterrence of the Russian aggressive policies in military and hybrid domains which undermine European security and stability.

We, again, urge the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, militarization of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations, mercenaries and their hardware from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

**Thank you, Madame Chairperson.**