



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 811th FSC Plenary Meeting
(10 February 2016 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 2)

Madam Chairperson,

Ukraine continues to seek a political solution to the conflict in Donbas and remains committed to full and good-faith implementation of the Minsk agreements as the framework for peaceful resolution. Ukraine has shown political will and consistency in implementation since the signing of the first Minsk agreements of September 2014 and the Package of measures of 12 February 2015.

Unfortunately, the immediate first steps, stipulated by the Minsk Package, notably the comprehensive ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and ensuring OSCE monitoring and verification, release of hostages remain unimplemented by Russia and its proxies. All of these steps are crucial for placing the de-escalation process on a sustainable basis.

Russia continues to maintain military command and control militants in eastern Ukraine, to coordinate joint military operations with the illegal armed groups, to support and train pro-Russian terrorists. The militants continue to be procured with weapons and ammunition from Russia.

We find deeply worrying the continued build-up of forces and heavy weapons of the militants on the contact line, as reported by the SMM, and militants' attempts to redeploy heavy weapons within the exclusion zone for alleged training. Such actions violate the provisions of Minsk agreements.

The Delegation of Ukraine previously noted our concern over Russia's recent practice of launching large-scale military exercises with little or no advance warning to the OSCE participating States, which further increases tension and presents additional challenges to security and stability in the whole OSCE region. In this connection we draw attention of the Forum that the «sudden combat readiness inspection» has been

launched by the order of Supreme Military Commander of the Russian Armed Forces on 8 February for troops of the Central and South Military Districts of the Russian Federation near the Ukrainian border with aim to «test the combat readiness of air defence forces to repel air attacks of an enemy and protect important military and governmental facilities». As part of the mentioned combat readiness inspection of the Russia's Southern Military District another combat mission\task has been ordered to ensure a favourable operational regime in the maritime areas of the Black and Caspian Seas. In addition, an air defence missile regiment and some units of radio-technical troops from Sevastopol received new coordinates for relocation and made the march inside Crimea peninsula to the given area. Personnel of anti-aircraft missile systems S-300 and missile-gun complexes "Panzyr" have deployed the complexes to serve for protection of air boundaries of the Crimea.

Moreover, at the same time of the mentioned comprehensive combat readiness inspection of the Russian armed forces, military exercises of the so-called 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the illegal military formations were launched at the temporarily occupied territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. We do not see it as mere coincidence, having enough proof that the occupational troops in Donbas are integrated in the Russian armed forces and its command structures.

**Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,**

Attempts by combined Russian-separatists forces to escalate the situation on the ground in Donbas continue. Only over the last week Ukrainian positions and the nearby residential areas were shelled **302** times along the contact line with the use of infantry fighting vehicles, 120mm and 82mm mortars, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms. In particular, during last week attacks were undertaken against the settlements of Verhnetoretske, Troitske, Pisky, Marinka, Krasnohorivske, and Novohorodske in the Donetsk direction; Zaitseve, Mayorske, Lozove and Luhanske in the Artemivsk direction; Novotoshkivske in the Luhansk direction; Shyrokin in the Mariupol direction. **1 Ukrainian serviceman was killed and 15 were wounded.** These escalating attacks, also registered by the SMM, provide continuous evidence that the combined Russian-separatist forces in Donbas have not withdrawn all heavy weapons from the contact line to the appropriate distances and widely use them for provocations.

The SMM continued to monitor the implementation of the Addendum to the Package of Measures. On 7 February, the SMM visited a

compound in Luhansk city. There, the SMM observed – in violation of respective withdrawal lines - three tanks (one T-72 and two T-64), one vehicle for transporting tanks, as well as five tanks and approximately 40 armoured vehicles of different types, which as a so-called “LPR” armed member claimed were being used for spare parts. Beyond the withdrawal lines but outside storage sites, the SMM also observed a significant concentration of weapons: 24 tanks (T-64) in an “LPR” training area near Kruhlyk (31km south-west of Luhansk) and one tank (T-64) along a nearby road.

We cannot regard as acceptable the situation that the OSCE Mission is restrained in fulfilling its monitoring functions by restrictions imposed by Russia-backed illegal armed formations. So-called “LPR” and “DPR” militants continue to prevent the SMM from monitoring many areas alongside the border in parts of Donbas not controlled by the Ukrainian Government. All denials are registered in the occupied areas, in particular:

-on 3 February, so-called “DPR” armed militants at two different checkpoints in Lukove (41km north-east of Mariupol) denied the SMM access to the centre of the village. Also the so-called “LPR” armed militants denied the SMM access to an “LPR” camp in Almazna (55km west of Luhansk). Armed “LPR” members at a checkpoint in Sokilnyky (38km north-west of Luhansk) denied the SMM access to the village. Armed “LPR” militants denied the SMM access to a site in Luhansk city where weapons were allegedly stored;

-on 4 February, an armed “DPR” militant in charge of a heavy weapons holding area allowed only two monitors and one language assistant to enter the site. Armed “DPR” members delayed the SMM for 33 minutes at a checkpoint near Zaichenko;

-on 5 February, “LPR” militants denied the SMM access to a permanent heavy weapons storage site;

-on 6 February, armed “DPR” militants denied the SMM passage through a checkpoint east of Petrivske (“DPR”-controlled, 45km north-east of Mariupol);

-on 7 February, - armed “DPR” militants denied the SMM passage through a checkpoint in Kominternove towards “DPR”-controlled Oktiabr (29km north-east of Mariupol). Near a “DPR” position south of Kirove (government-controlled, 42km north of Donetsk) armed “DPR” members threatened to shoot down the SMM short-range unmanned aerial vehicle.

The developments over the past months and reports of the SMM show that Russia and its proxies are still very far from fulfilling the three initial provisions of the Minsk agreements, which are crucial for progress on implementation of other aspects of the documents. The comprehensive and long lasting ceasefire, withdrawal of all heavy weapons and free and

unfettered access of the OSCE SMM throughout the militant-controlled area, must be secured as agreed basis for implementation of other provisions.

Madam Chairperson,

In accordance with the agreements Ukraine again calls on Russia to take the necessary steps and to exert its influence on the militants it backs to make sure that the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is able to operate and perform its mandate enjoying full freedom of movement, safety and security in the occupied areas. We urge to halt military provocations, to withdraw heavy weapons from the contact line in a verifiable manner, to stop provision of ammunition and logistical support to the militants.

We wish to emphasise the undiminished imperative for the OSCE community to continue to focus on seeking practical ways to address the on-going violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to resolve the conflict by peaceful means with full respect to the OSCE core principles and commitments.

We continue to 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.