



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 841st FSC Plenary Meeting
(18 January 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 2)

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first regular plenary meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation in 2017 let me first of all express sincere appreciation to the Portuguese Chairmanship for the work done in the third trimester of 2016 as well as for its professionalism and dedication shown in the challenging circumstances dominated by continued Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

In the course of the Portuguese Chairmanship the Forum has been actively engaged in reviewing the military aspects of the crisis in and around Ukraine. Our deliberations and evidence presented in the FSC have factually proved that the crisis stems from the Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and flagrant violations of the OSCE fundamental principles and commitments. We are grateful to the OSCE participating States for their solidarity and firmness in upholding Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express also our gratitude to the delegation of Poland, the outgoing FSC Troika member, for effectively steering the Forum's work in this difficult and turbulent time. We hope that the delegation of Russia as a new member of the FSC Troika in 2017 will finally begin to constructively treat and discuss the current security situation in and around Ukraine.

Today we warmly welcome the new FSC Chairmanship of Romania and wish them every success in guiding our work in the first trimester of 2017. We are grateful to H.E. Mr. George Ciamba, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania for his opening statement outlining the main priorities and planned activities of the new FSC Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, during the month past after the OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg we continue 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 casualties. These violations and their further aggravation stem from ongoing unwillingness of the combined Russian-separatist forces to renounce violence. It remains a matter of our deep concern that after almost three

years, despite all the efforts undertaken by Ukraine and our international partners, even the initial security provisions of the Minsk agreements, first and foremost the immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, have not been fulfilled by Russia and its proxies in Donbas.

The Russian Federation continues permanent illicit supply of manpower, weapons and ammunition for hybrid forces to maintain military tension, for continued killings of Ukrainian citizens and the destruction of residential buildings and industrial sites in the east of Ukraine. A small glimpse on the amount of lethal power brought by Russia to advance its intervention into Donbas was provided in the SMM report of 6 January 2017: in Luhansk oblast near Miusynsk the SMM observed 238 pieces of equipment and weaponry, nearly 60 more than was observed in July 2016, among them 48 multiple-launch rocket systems in violation of withdrawal lines, 11 tanks and 18 howitzers; near Buhaiivka – 21 howitzers and 33 tanks in violation of withdrawal lines; in Donetsk oblast at a compound near Manuilivka – about 55 tanks. And this is the amount of Russian weaponry – 347 pieces - at only three locations in the occupied areas of Donbas!

We are deeply concerned with the rise of fighting along the contact line, which further heightens the risk to military and civilians. The combined Russian-separatist forces keep violating the latest arrangement on sustainable and permanent regime of comprehensive ceasefire from 24 December 2016, reached in the Trilateral Contact Group. They actively use heavy combat weapons, including 122mm artillery and 152mm self-propelled guns, tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and light portable rocket systems “Grad-P”. The Svitlodarsk, Avdiivka and Shyrokyne remained the hotspots, while provocations extended to the entire contact line.

Only over the past month the combined Russian-separatist forces opened fire on the positions of Ukrainian military with an average intensity **of 42 times per day. 46 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 125 were wounded.**

We particularly note that on 18 December 2016 the combined Russian-separatist forces undertook an offensive operation to seize control of Ukrainian Armed Forces positions and territory near town of Svitlodarsk. The militants had resorted to intensive shelling of the Ukrainian positions on the Svitlodarsk bulge with use of mortars and artillery – nearly 700 shells were fired. They conducted the shelling positioning their weapons in the residential areas of Debaltseve, Vuhlehirsk, Kalynivka. The massive artillery attacks were followed by an offensive operation of the combined Russian-separatist forces aiming to advance in the direction of the settlement of Luhanske and to seize strategically important locations controlled by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. In the course of the day repeated attempts of advance were undertaken accompanied by three massive artillery shellings lasting from three to six hours each. The shellings damaged the civilian infrastructure facilities and power lines leaving town Svitlodarsk and villages around it without electricity. In the evening of the same day, three artillery shells exploded near the school in the village Luhanske. The attacks were repelled by the counterattacks of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, making the units of the combined Russian-separatist forces to retreat. The Ukrainian Armed Forces had moved forward to new positions some 500m around Svitlodarsk with aim to curb the militants from further attacks. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian Armed Forces sustained the biggest one-day losses in the last five months: 5 Ukrainian servicemen lost their lives, 16 were wounded and 1 was missing.

The SMM in the period of 18-24 December daily recorded nearly 3,000 explosions in the Svitlodarsk-Debaltseve area, including explosions assessed as caused

by MLRS, artillery and tanks. In a single hour of the morning of 22 December, the SMM recorded about 500 undetermined explosions north-east of Horlivka, near the Svitlodarsk area. Explosions from incoming artillery rounds were observed and felt by monitors as close as 70m from the SMM's forward patrol base in Svitlodarsk, forcing the Mission to temporarily leave the base on 24 December. The SMM returned to its forward patrol base in Svitlodarsk late in the morning on 26 December. All military experts, present in this hall, understand clearly the amount of ammunition supplied and used by Russia to sustain these attacks.

We call on Russia and its hybrid 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 encourage the upcoming FSC Chairmanship and delegations of the participating States to use all instruments at their disposal to make Russia respect ceasefire, envisaged as the first step in each of the Minsk documents, and stimulate the Russian Federation towards full implementation of undertaken commitments under the Minsk agreements.

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,**

Over the past two and a half years in the FSC meetings the delegation of Ukraine has presented the participating countries about two dozen photo- and video presentations with evidence of Russian aggression against Ukraine and its illegal military presence on the territory of Ukraine. In this context we would like to draw your attention today to the report of the professional group of investigative journalists "Bellingcat", released on 21 December 2016, based on research of open sources and documentation of the large scale of the Russian artillery attacks against Ukraine from the territory of Russia in summer 2014 (full report is available at: <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2016/12/21/russian-artillery-strikes-against-ukraine>).

During the summer of 2014 numerous evidence became available about Russia's armed aggression in Donbas of Ukraine. The main findings of the report are:

- artillery units of the Russian Armed Forces made at least 149 separate artillery attacks against Ukraine in the summer of 2014. Another 130 locations were judged likely to have been used as artillery positions;

- 408 artillery target sites inside Ukraine within the range of Russian artillery systems have a trajectory crossing the Russian-Ukrainian border, 127 of them are within 3 km of the Russian border;

- in total, as evidenced by the number of impact craters, thousands of artillery projectiles were fired by the Russian military on targets inside Ukraine in the summer of 2014;

- the artillery attacks of the Russian Armed Forces from Russian territory began from early July 2014 and increased in frequency and scale into August and September 2014;

- cross-border artillery attacks can be traced along the entire border area of the conflict zone in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine;

- due to the frequency, spatial distribution, and scale of the artillery attacks, it is impossible to consider these attacks merely as accidents or as actions of rogue military units.

These findings reaffirm the direct and central role of the Russian Federation in instigating and escalating the conflict in the Donbas region of Ukraine. As until now Russia fails to implement the commitments it has undertaken under the Minsk agreements, it remains critically important to maintain sanctions imposed in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine until full implementation of the Minsk agreements as well as complete withdrawal of Russian forces from the territory of Ukraine including Crimea.

According to the Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine, Anatoliy Matios, during the Russian military aggression in Donbas in period 2014-2016, Ukrainian courts rendered 57 verdicts on charges of launching and conduct of the aggressive war against Ukraine. Among the 39 convicted Russian citizens there are 31 soldiers and officers of the Russian regular forces. All of them are serving sentences in Ukraine. In addition, Ukrainian courts have found guilty on similar charges another 27 Russian servicemen.

The Military Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine carefully documents all evidence of war crimes and transmits them to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. In the framework of the investigation of the Ilovaisk tragedy of August, 2014, which resulted from direct invasion of Russian troops, the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine has notified suspicions of crimes to Russian Minister for Defence S. Shoigu, 14 generals and 2 colonels of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. It remains of paramount importance to take to account the responsible for unleashing an armed aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine is committed to stop Russian aggression and de-occupy Donbas by implementing the Minsk agreements. We regret that Russia fails to translate into practice its commitments to peaceful resolution. We continue to urge 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.

The conflict instigated and fuelled by the Russian Federation will not be resolved until Russian forces get out of the territory of Ukraine in its internationally recognised borders. 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, Mr. Chairman.