



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

PC.DEL/1411/18
16 November 2018

ENGLISH only

Statement on “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1202nd meeting of the Permanent Council,
15 November 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset I wish to underscore the political significance and urgency of the special meeting of the Permanent Council on Monday, 12 November, which registered the prompt OSCE response to the latest blatant breaches by the Russian Federation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the Minsk agreements to which Russia is a party. We are grateful for convening that urgent meeting. We witnessed the clear and overwhelming condemnation by the participating States of the illegal and fake so called “elections” conducted by Russia and its proxies in Russia-occupied parts of Donbas and non-recognition of their results. In the wake of the said blatant breaches, committed by Russia, Ukraine initiated an urgent meeting of the Trilateral contact group (TCG). The request was supported by the OSCE, however Russia refused to engage, thus further showing contempt for the Minsk agreements and the role of the TCG as defined by those agreements. The SMM’s Spot report of 12 November 2018 provided a glimpse on circumstances of coercion, in which the citizens of Ukraine were forced to visit the Sunday’s illegal exercise, threatened, in particular, with the interruption of salaries or health care in Russia-occupied areas. Civilians remain the prime victims of the ongoing Russian armed intervention into the territory of Ukraine, which the Russian armed formations try to conceal by all means. In particular, Russia’s strategy of “blinding” the SMM also manifests itself in impeding the monitors’ access and contacts in residential areas, hospitals, schools and public facilities, which are necessary to establish facts on the ground, as mandated by the OSCE participating States. We once again condemn the irresponsible behaviour of the Russian occupation regime and its disregard for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the local population.

We note that until now the Russian Federation evades its responsibilities and has not taken steps to return to the SMM the wreckage of the mission’s long-range UAV shot down by the Russian armed formations on 27 October near the border with the Russian Federation. Russia has not yet responded to the question regarding its

financial compensation for the lost long-range UAV. Moreover, we are deeply concerned that the Russian armed formations continue to target and seriously threaten the SMM and its assets in the occupied territories of Donbas. As reported by the SMM, on 8 October another SMM long-range UAV was nearly lost in those areas when severe jamming “caused most of the control and communication links (including backup systems) between the Ground Control Station and the UAV to fail” while it was flying near the occupied Korsun 31km north-east of Donetsk. The SMM pointed out that it was the same location where back in June 2016 another SMM long-range UAV had been lost after spotting a surface-to-air missile launcher and an anti-aircraft gun. This latest incident of severe jamming makes us recall regular spotting by the SMM of different models of modern Russian military systems for jamming and electronic warfare. Among them were R330 “Zhytel”, Leer-3 RB-341V, a 1L269 Krasukha-2, a RB-109A Bylina and an anti-UAV system, Repellent-1. Those sophisticated military systems were only recently adopted on the inventory of the Russian Armed Forces and the Russian authorities have not yet explained their presence in the occupied parts of Donbas. We can now see that such kind of powerful systems are employed by the Russian armed formations to seriously impair the use of SMM UAVs and put them at the risk of loss. This is utterly unacceptable. Such hostile actions are taken by the Russian forces against the OSCE SMM to diminish its monitoring capability: the SMM weekly report of 7 November informed that the SMM’s ability to monitor weapons in violation was limited during the reporting period due to “security restrictions put in place after the loss of a long-range UAV whereby these are not flown over non-government-controlled areas and are thus able to observe only a limited part of these areas”. During the same week all instances of presence of the Minsk-proscribed weapons in the Russia-occupied areas of Donbas were registered by the SMM with the use of mini- and mid-range UAVs. On the one hand, these findings show the practical significance of the technical assets of the Mission, on the other – they are indicative of the level of restrictions imposed on the SMM in Russia-controlled areas. For instance, in one single day of 11 November, the Russian armed formations denied SMM access to a border crossing point near Voznesenivka, to Chervona Mohyla railway station and a checkpoint north of Novoazovsk.

We draw attention of the Permanent Council to contamination of Ukrainian lands with anti-personnel mines planted by the Russian armed formations and supplied from the Russian Federation. On 7 November, the SMM patrol saw a mine, which it “assessed as a MON-100 anti-personnel type equipped with an electrically-driven detonator” near the occupied village of Verkhnoшыrokyvske. The anti-personnel mines are prohibited in Ukraine, which is a party to the Ottawa Convention, with stocks destroyed in accordance with Ukraine’s obligations. A week before, on 30 October, the SMM “observed a blue or violet laser emanating from a known military-type position of the armed formations on a hilltop in the southern part of the Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area”. The SMM recalled that its cameras at Prince Ihor monument and at Stanytsia Luhanska had previously been temporarily disabled by such lasers, while soldiers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces had been reported to sustain eye injuries induced by such lasers at other checkpoints. We strongly condemn the use of such weaponry by the Russian side and remind it of its

obligations as a party to the current interstate armed conflict started by Russia and taking place on the Ukrainian territory.

Mr. Chairperson,

We note with alarm that there are no signs of Russia's readiness to make any steps towards de-escalation and stabilization of security, as envisaged by the Minsk agreements. In its weekly report of 7 November, the SMM recorded more than 10.000 ceasefire violations, a 28 per cent increase over the previous week, and nearly three times as many (135 compared to 51) instances of the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. The security environment in and around all three disengagement areas continues to be unpredictable and unstable, with heightened tensions and numerous violations of ceasefire regime inside and in the vicinity. Only in one week, reported on 7 November, the SMM recorded 62 ceasefire violations inside the Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area (and 435 ceasefire violations in the 5km of its periphery), 58 ceasefire violations inside the Zolote disengagement area (and 109 within 5km of its periphery) and three ceasefire violations within 5km of the Petrivske disengagement area's periphery.

The Russian armed formations continue to target and destroy the civilian facilities, like the pig farm near Novoluhanske where the SMM spotted fresh impacts caused by 82mm mortar rounds fired from a south-southeasterly direction. The residential area of the village of Marinka was shelled on 10 November. Near the occupied village of Naberezhne, the SMM registered new trenches with firing positions belonging to the Russian armed formations. Those are just a few facts of Russia's reluctance to cease aggression and violence, to implement its own commitments on withdrawal of its troops and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine and to move towards a peaceful politico-diplomatic resolution of the conflict.

During the recent meeting of President of Ukraine, President of France and Federal Chancellor of Germany in Paris a strong common support was expressed for the necessity to release all illegally detained persons and political prisoners before the end of this year. We strongly urge the Russian Federation to unblock this process without delay, in relation to Ukrainian citizens both in the occupied territories and in the Russian prisons. We condemn the repression of Ukrainian citizens illegally detained by the Russian authorities, in particular the most recent extension by the Krasnodar court of the Russian Federation of the arrest of Ukrainian political prisoner Pavlo Hryb until 24 April 2019. Russia must stop the repression and persecution of Ukrainian citizens in the illegally occupied Crimea and fulfill its obligations as the occupying power under international law.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are in the fifth year of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Russia's clear, gross and uncorrected violation of the OSCE principles and commitments. Instead of correcting the violations, the aggressor state takes further steps to worsen the situation.

This must compel the international community to take further measures of defence of the rules-based security order by stepping up politico-diplomatic pressure on Russia and strengthening the sanctions regime to make Russia abide by its commitments.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.