



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 999th FSC PLENARY MEETING
(2 February 2022)**

Agenda item 2, General Statements, on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the subject of Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea.

The Russian Federation continues its military build-up. According to the recent estimates, 66 battalion tactical groups (114,000 troops) equipped with 1,600 tanks, 4,000 armoured fighting vehicles as well as 2,200 artillery systems of different calibres are currently deployed around Ukraine’s borders and in the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

In the Black Sea, from 26 to 31 January, the Russian fleet held another military drill involving more than 20 vessels. This sabre-rattling is only a part of the ongoing intensive militarisation of Crimea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov by Russia, which poses a serious threat to Ukraine, all littoral states and much wider region.

So far, Russia refuses to explain its actions and military movements in a transparent manner, has made no trustworthy move to withdraw troops. By refusing to explain its activities, the Russian side not only increases tensions but also undermines security architecture based on confidence and security building measures.

Russia must revert its illegitimate and ungrounded demands, and return to fulfilment of its commitments under the existing European security order. If the Russian Federation really has no intention to attack Ukraine, the Russian troops should be withdrawn from the border with Ukraine and from the occupied parts of its territory. While we stand ready to support diplomatic talks, there is no room for compromise on principal issues. Any major concession to the Russian side would only provoke it to put forward additional demands, raising stakes and undermining European security.

Intensification of the work of the Normandy format, including at the level of leaders of the four countries, is an important prerequisite for moving forward towards lasting peace in Donbas, and we are ready to resume N4 talks in all formats. The recent political advisers' meeting on 26 January in Paris, despite many differences, gives a hope for a continuation of the negotiation process, which Ukraine will staunchly support.

Mr Chairperson,

The apparent intention of the Russian Federation to keep existing tensions fuelled is highlighted by regular shelling and armed provocations by the Russian occupation forces in the conflict zone in Donbas. In total disregard for the provisions of both the Measures to Strengthen the Ceasefire agreement of 22 July 2020 and the agreement on recommitting to the ceasefire of 22 December 2021, the Russian side violated the ceasefire 3,085 times, including 834 times with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements. The sad results of these actions are 75 Ukrainian soldiers killed and 306 wounded.

Regular shelling by the Russian occupation forces of residential areas along the line of contact including with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements poses a direct threat to the local population in the conflict zone and causes damage to civilian infrastructure. In total, since the beginning of the recent attempt to introduce full and comprehensive ceasefire regime residential areas were shelled 77 times. The most recent episode that led to civilian casualties occurred on 31 January 2022 when a man was wounded as a result of gunfire opened by the Russian occupation forces in the direction of Lozove-Svitlodarsk settlement.

Against this backdrop, we are extremely concerned that the Russian side continues to undermine normal functioning of the OSCE SMM setting restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement, jamming its UAVs and destructing its cameras. Russia's continued efforts to significantly weaken the SMM could strive to claim the Mission's inability to implement its mandate and contribute to conflict resolution.

We reiterate our strong position that all attempts of the Russian occupation administration to prevent the international community from receiving unbiased information on the state of play in the conflict zone, including on the situation along the temporarily uncontrolled segment of the state border are unacceptable and should be stopped immediately.

Despite all agreements reached within the N4 and the TCG, the Russian Federation continues to reinforce its occupation forces in Donbas with new troops, weapons and ammunition, illegally transferring them through the temporarily uncontrolled by the Government of Ukraine section of the state border.

From 20 December 2021 to 19 January 2022, 29 tank wagons with fuel and lubricants as well as 10 platform wagons loaded with two T-72 main battle tanks, three "Gvozdika" self-propelled howitzers and one MT-LB armoured towing vehicle were observed at the railway stations in Ilovaisk and Chervona Mohyla.

On 25-28 December 2021, six 152 mm calibre “Msta-S” self-propelled howitzers, one “Forpost” UAV, one “Zastava” UAV as well as two trucks loaded with ammunition for UAVs arrived from Russia through the Diakove checkpoint in Luhansk region. On 11 January 2022, four Kamaz trucks with trailers loaded with POM-2 and PMN-2 antipersonnel landmines were observed entering Ukraine through the same checkpoint.

Moreover, 460 Russian militaries, including high-ranking officer newly appointed as the chief of staff of the infantry brigade of the occupation forces illegally entered Luhansk region during this period. In total, there are up to 3,000 representatives of the regular Armed Forces of the Russian Federation serving in the 1st and 2nd Army Corps deployed in Donetsk and Luhansk regions respectively.

These actions undoubtedly testify to Russia’s ongoing violation of international law, fundamental OSCE principles and commitments, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act regarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their borders, and its commitments under OSCE politico-military instruments.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to de-escalate current security situation, end its aggression against Ukraine, de-occupy the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, stop the ongoing militarisation of the Azov-Black Sea region and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.