



**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 1314<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
20 May 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

In the PC meetings, we regularly hear accusations and threats by the Russian side, based on its denial of Russia's role as a signatory of the Minsk agreements, a member of the TCG and a party to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It remains isolated in its stance, but continues to deliver fake narratives despite clear and principled positions expressed by other participating States.

Regretfully, the Russian side uses armed violence in Donbas as a leverage to push Ukraine to implement the Russian scenario, which would severely undermine Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence even further.

According to the SMM reports, the number of ceasefire violations remains stable high, reaching over one thousand on certain days, along the entire line of contact. Sniper fire by the Russian armed formations continues to take the lives of Ukrainian servicemen, as was the case on 13 May near Pisky.

This is supported by heavy weapons deployed in violation of their respective withdrawal lines and outside designated storage sites. In line with the trend of the previous weeks and months, predominant majority of such weapons is registered by the SMM in the Russia-occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine (97 and 93 per cent, respectively). The data, gathered by the Ukrainian servicemen, indicate that a significant proportion of the ceasefire violations by the Russian armed formations is delivered with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. In the last two weeks (27 April – 10 May), it was 38%. Most of them happen in the night, when the SMM monitoring and patrolling capacities are limited due to security reasons.

Even more disturbing is the impact of Russia' armed attacks on the safety and security of civilian population.

In Marinka, inhabited houses were damaged by fire from a south-easterly direction, as confirmed by the SMM on 13 May. On 16 May, the Russian armed formations used Russia-produced flamethrower in a direction of the village of Katerynivka. On 17 May, they shelled Ukrainian military positions with mortars 82 and 120 mm, located in a residential area of the Donetsk city, in an immediate vicinity of the city hospital nr. 21, with the aim to provoke Ukrainian servicemen to the response fire. Naturally, it did not follow.

Mines and UXOs remain a serious threat for civilians. Especially anti-personnel mines with indiscriminate effect, which are banned in Ukraine, but not in Russia. In its last weekly report of 18 May, the SMM informs on about 100 probable anti-personnel mines, all assessed as belonging to the Russian armed formations. We thank the Mission for paying proper attention to this issue, which should push the Russian side to remove such mines. For instance, after the SMM reported on 14 May on one anti-personnel mine near the Russia-occupied Molodizhne, the next day it was no longer present, as stated in the SMM daily report of 17 May.

Seven months have passed since the EECs near Zolote and Shchastia had to be opened on 10 November 2020. Thousands of civilians remain cut from their families and friends on the both sides of the line of contact, as well as from administrative services in the government-controlled areas. The issue was again discussed in details in the last TCG meeting of 18–19 May 2021. We hope it would be resolved soon.

The inability to cross without hindrance the line of contact remains a severe challenge for the SMM as well, which continues to operate de-facto as three separate entities due to Russia's decisions. This is accompanied by strong GPS signal interference, which prevents the work of the Mission's UAVs, in particular long-range UAVs able to monitor the remote border areas and heavy weapons storage sites in the Russia-occupied parts of Donbas. According to the data provided by Ukrainian servicemen, this interference is provided by the Russian jamming systems like "Zhytel" with operational range of up to 90km, located along the entire line of contact in Kadiivka, Horlivka, Donetsk and Novoazovsk. Earlier, the SMM has been regularly spotting such systems in the occupied areas. We again urge the Russian side to cease any restrictions to the SMM activities, in line with its mandate.

The Mission's work remains essential for highlighting the impact of the ongoing Russia's aggression on Ukrainian residents. We appreciate the SMM efforts to collect data on the maritime traffic to Ukrainian ports on the coast of the Sea of Azov, included into the latest weekly report of 18 May. We encourage the Mission to continue this work, which is essential to analyze the longstanding implications of Russia's illegal actions in the Black Sea, the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.

We will focus attention of participating States on the dire consequences of Russia's aggression in Crimea in our next statement to the Permanent Council today, given their scale and negative trends. As of now, let me emphasize that Ukraine continues to support Crimean Tatars, suffering most from Russia's persecutions. On 18 May, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy submitted a draft law "On the indigenous peoples of Ukraine" to the Ukrainian Parliament as urgent. This document defines the rights of the indigenous peoples of Ukraine and modalities of implementation, aimed at development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity.

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, Madam Chairperson.**