



United States Mission to the OSCE

Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 16, 2021

The United States congratulates the Chair-in-Office on a successful ASRC, at which Russia's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity were widely cited. Russia's ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine and occupation of Crimea has caused appalling human rights violations, abuses, and humanitarian crises for which Russia is solely responsible. To date, this Russia-led conflict has claimed more than 13,000 lives and wounded tens of thousands, including four Ukrainian service members killed and sixteen wounded in action from this past Friday through Monday alone.

Russia's irresponsible and destabilizing behavior not only threatens the security of its neighbors, but also the security of the wider OSCE region. Ukraine has demonstrated the political will to find a peaceful, diplomatic resolution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine via its substantive and constructive participation in the Trilateral Contact Group and Normandy Format. In contrast, Russia simultaneously denies its own involvement in this conflict while carrying out its aggression.

I would like to thank SMM Deputy Chief Monitors Etherington and Grawe for their informative presentation last Friday. We depend on SMM's reporting and you can be sure the SMM has the full support of the United States. The SMM plays a vital role, despite systematic obstruction of its movements by Russia and the forces it leads and equips. In direct contravention of the SMM's mandate, Russia impedes the SMM's ability to operate across the Line of Contact and within Russia-controlled territory and interferes with its UAVs and cameras. I remind you all that the SMM assets are funded by participating States, including those damaged by Russia's jamming.

Russia's ongoing blockage of the entry-exit crossing points along the Line of Contact directly harms the most vulnerable people living in the Russia-controlled territory in Ukraine. We know the government-controlled side of the crossing points are open. Why does Russia selectively keep open the crossing point at Stanytsia Luhanska, which is pedestrian only, and keep closed all other crossing points, including those at Zolote and Shchastiya? I remind you Russia agreed to construct EECs at Zolote and Shchastiya, but then refused to open them once complete.

Russian political parties, including United Russia, campaign in Russia-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine in advance of Russia's Duma elections. Russia continues its passportization campaign in eastern Ukraine, through which Russia has coerced hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian nationals into obtaining Russian citizenship. These actions are flagrant violations of OSCE principles on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of participating States.

If I may revert to Russia's comments that the BOM was a gesture of Russia's good will. The United States agrees entirely and we would welcome more good will from Russia moving forward. Our goal is to end Russia's aggression against Ukraine, not to malign Russia. I would also like to note that Russia's representative noted Russia's participation at the September 2014 signing of the Minsk Agreements, which further undermines Russia's transparently false and increasingly fragile argument that it is not a "party to the conflict" in Ukraine, but rather an "impartial mediator."

Finally, I would like to reiterate, and will continue to reiterate weekly, the United States' support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We do not, nor will we ever, recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea. We reaffirm that Crimea is Ukraine. We again congratulate Ukraine on successfully hosting the inaugural Crimea Platform Summit August 23, in which we were proud to participate.

We join our European and other partners in affirming that our eastern Ukraine-related sanctions against Russia will remain in place until Russia fully implements its Minsk commitments. Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns full control of the peninsula to Ukraine. We again call on Russia to fulfill its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including with regard to support for the Border Observation Mission, and to cease interference with and harassment of the SMM.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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