



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 829<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(21 September 2016 at 10.00, Hofburg)  
(Agenda item 3)

**Madam Chairperson,**

Two weeks ago we marked the second anniversary since the first document of the Minsk agreements – the Protocol - was signed on 5 September 2014 by the Trilateral Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE as a mediator following the direct incursion of the Russian regular troops into Donbas.

Since then Ukraine has consistently demonstrated its commitment to full implementation of the Minsk agreements as a basis for peaceful resolution of the conflict by political means with full respect to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Regrettably, the unwillingness of Russia to act in the same vein resulted in continuing violence of different intensity, in loss of life and destruction.

Accordingly it remains a matter of urgency today to achieve full implementation of initial security provisions of the Minsk agreements two years after the first document was signed.

During the last 828<sup>th</sup> FSC meeting of 14 September the Russian delegation announced the truce in Donbas starting from the midnight of 15 September but in reality this had not happened. Soon after the continuous firing of anti-tank grenade launchers, small arms and light weapons by militants on Troitske, Nevelske and Avdiivka had been registered. And, at the forefront of militants some Russian TV reporters were noticed to report, how the Ukrainian side violates the silence regime.

While the intensity of attacks has dropped for the last week, there is no reason to talk about a complete ceasefire. Regrettably, despite the fact that the Ukrainian side consistently urges Russia to cease fire and such a signal is constantly sent to Moscow from Berlin and Paris, the Kremlin does not give the appropriate orders to the occupying forces and militants controlled and supported by Russia.

Over past week the combined Russian-separatist forces have opened fire on the positions of Ukrainian military with an average intensity of 16 times per day. Despite the provocation, the Armed Forces of Ukraine strictly observed requirements of the Minsk agreements. Violation of the silence regime by militants took place in all directions along the contact line, most of

them - in the Avdiivka industrial zone of the Donetsk region. As a result of the fighting over the past week **2 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 10 wounded.**

On 18 September, the most intense fighting in the Donetsk sector took place in the Avdiivka industrial area. Militants used all types of small arms and conducted two mortar attacks in the evening. Nyzhnye Lozove village near Svitlodarsk became another flashpoint, as Russia-backed militants launched 15 mortar shells there. Besides, militants violated the ceasefire in Novhorodske and Verkhnyotoretske. In the Mariupol sector Russia-backed militant groups were shooting at Ukrainian troops in Mariinka in the north and in Pavlopil-Shyrokyne frontline area in the south. They used small arms and armored personnel carrier. ATO troops came under sniping fire in Pavlopil.

On 19 September, in the Mariupol sector, Russia-backed militant groups shelled Ukrainian positions in three places – Starohnativka, Mariinka and Pavlopol. They mostly used small arms only. Major hostilities in the Donetsk sector traditionally happened in the Avdiivka industrial zone, where militants started shooting after midnight. The ceasefire fully held between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. One militants' provocation took place in Verkhnyotoretske. In total, militants conducted six attacks in this sector. In the Luhansk sector they violated the ceasefire in the area near Popasna. All attacks took place in the evening, between 6 and 10 p.m. No heavy weapons were used.

Ukrainian troops observed three reconnaissance flights of militants' unmanned aerial vehicles in the Donetsk and Mariupol sectors. According to Ukrainian military intelligence, militants were preparing staged subversive acts, intending to put the blame on ATO troops. They are planning to conduct a series of blasts in the vicinity of Pervomaisk and Kirovske to blame Ukraine in being involved in the acts of violence.

**Madam Chairperson,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

We note the recent Mission's findings and other evidence that further contribute to the scope of evidence of the Russia's direct engagement into the conflict in Donbas. The volatility of the security situation is strongly influenced by Russia's continuing direct involvement in the conflict and constant military resupplies and reinforcements. According to the competent authorities of Ukraine, on 16 September a train from Russia arrived to the railway station of Debal'tseve with ammunition of 70 tons for multiple launch rocket systems and 150 tons for self-propelled artillery.

These findings underline the critical need to restore control at the uncontrolled sections of the Ukraine-Russia border and implement without delay an agreed Minsk provision on establishment of a security zone in border areas of both Ukraine and Russia, with the OSCE permanent monitoring and verification. It is necessary to establish SMM Forward Patrol Bases and patrol hubs close to the border in order to ensure due monitoring of uncontrolled sections of the border and adjacent areas, including BCPs and transport

routes. Deployment of an armed police mission, including in the border areas, is necessary to contribute to establishment of safe and secure environment in Donbas.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

The OSCE SMM to Ukraine continues to register an unacceptable situation when significant limitations are imposed on the international monitors in the occupied areas to impede proper monitoring and distort the real situation on the ground. Access of SMM observers is denied or hindered. The SMM teams are imposed direct threats, escorts on their visits, demanded patrol plans in advance. Russia and its proxies do not allow freedom of the SMM's movement in large part of the territory under their control, including along Ukraine-Russia state border. Such restrictions breach the agreed mandate of the SMM and its ability to report objectively on the situation on the ground. It remains absolutely essential to seek that Russia delivers on its commitment on the SMM's full freedom of movement.

Security will remain fragile if the SMM continues to experience significant problems with its freedom of movement and access in the occupied areas of Donbas. As follows from the SMM reports in August-September, the situation in the area has not been improved and remains marked by high statistics of denials of access. It is unacceptable that the OSCE monitors often face intimidations and threats from the Russian hybrid forces. Placing the monitors at a gunpoint, physical threats, forceful searches of vehicles and accusations of espionage affect negatively the work of the Mission and must be stopped.

**Madam Chairperson,**

We expect from the Russian Federation to implement the following 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. The decisions taken in Moscow led to the conflict in Donbas, consequently it requires decisions in Moscow to stop the conflict and progress to resolution.

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, Madam Chairperson.**