



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

PC.DEL/906/17

30 June 2017

ENGLISH only

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the special session of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference
“Ensuring security and stability in the OSCE region
in lights of developments with respect to Ukraine”
(Vienna, 27 June 2017)**

**Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished participants,**

For the fourth consecutive year the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) features a special session dedicated to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

It underlines both the critical nature of this issue for ensuring security in the entire OSCE region and the regrettable lack of progress in de-escalation and conflict resolution.

A year since the last ASRC meeting and we are no closer to a settlement of the conflict, or to dealing with its root cause - Russia's aggression against Ukraine in Crimea and Donbas which has not been eliminated. Russia remains unwilling to opt for a peaceful path. Their aggressive stance has been translated into a dangerous military build-up and brutal repressions in the temporarily occupied Crimea as well as unabated and bloody hostilities in Donbas. It also results in the on-going sufferings of Ukrainian hostages in Donbas, the illegally occupied Crimea and in Russia itself.

The situation in Donbas remains painful for the Ukrainian people. Everyday fighting and military aggression carried out by the Russian hybrid forces take their toll among my fellow Ukrainians, both service personnel and civilians.

The latest UN figures register over 10 000 killed and over 23,000 wounded since 2014. Since the beginning of this year alone more than 120 Ukrainian servicemen (UA MoD as of 21.06.2017) and at least 47 civilians (OSCE SMM as of 17.06.2017) have been killed in Donbas. This is how far from a sustainable peace we are due to the unrelenting bloody and criminal aggression of Russia's hybrid forces.

These forces have been integrated into Russia's military control and command chains and are equipped and trained by Russian officers. The violence in Donbas is continuously fueled by reinforcements from the territory of Russia, including mercenaries, heavy weapons and equipment through the uncontrolled section of the Ukrainian-Russian border. It is important to note that contrary to Russian claims the situation in Donbas is something which the Kremlin can and does turn on and off like a tap.

Reinforcements from Russia are immediately brought into action against the Ukrainian forces and the civilian population of Donbas. We have plenty of evidence of Russia deliberate targeting civilian infrastructure, residential areas and crossing points at the contact line. This winter the town of Avdiivka was put on the brink of a humanitarian disaster, when shelling left the town without electricity and heat at temperatures below minus 20C.

All our efforts to bring about de-escalation in Donbas are immediately undermined by Russia and its proxies. They disrupted the recent ceasefire initiative, offered by Ukraine on 1 June for International Children's Day. Now we note with concern the disregard that the Russia-led armed groups demonstrated towards the agreement in the TCG framework on the "harvest truce", which was due to last from 24 June until 31 August. Already on 25 June a subversive group attacked Ukrainian positions. As the attack was repelled and the members of the neutralized we established the Russian citizenship of the group leader and some other militants.

Ukraine remains committed to a peaceful resolution of this conflict. We stand ready to implement the Minsk agreements in full, starting with a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire then withdrawal of heavy weapons and then effective verification by the OSCE SMM. But not until these security provisions are implemented, will the progress on other tracks, including political, be possible.

The Russian Federation has deliberately violated its commitments as a party to the Minsk agreements by a number of unilateral steps, which clearly run counter to the norms of international law and the fundamental OSCE principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers.

Let me remind you that earlier this year Kremlins regime recognized the so-called "documents" issued by the illegal institutions in Donbas, introduced the Russian ruble as currency in occupied areas and resorted to seizure of Ukrainian companies, which operated within a Ukrainian legislative framework. The Ukrainian government had little option but to respond with temporary suspension of trade with those companies.

Ukraine strongly supports the OSCE SMM in accomplishing its mandate and tasks relating to monitoring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Minsk agreements. We applaud the dedicated work of the OSCE monitors, performing their duties in the hostile environment in the uncontrolled areas of Donbas.

Regular provocations by the Russia-led militants, obstacles and intimidation of the monitors finally resulted in the tragic death of an OSCE monitor and the wounding of two others near the non-government controlled village of Pryshyb on 23 April.

Unfortunately, this tragedy has changed nothing of Russia's strategy of "blinding" the SMM to conceal its illegal activities in Donbas and facilitate creeping integration of non-governmental areas into the Russian political and economic space.

We deem it dangerous for the OSCE credibility that the SMM is attacked in an attempt to make it serve the purposes of Russian propaganda and to underpin its deceptions and fake news. These attempts must receive a proper response from the OSCE community.

Colleagues,

We must also not forget that bringing peace back to Donbas will be only a one part of resolving the Russia-made crisis. The other, just as serious, relates to the illegal occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol. Over the past year the situation there has further deteriorated in terms of both security and human rights. The peninsula has been turned by Russia into a military base, thus increasing the threats to the Black Sea littoral and neighboring states. And the occupying regime does not tolerate dissent – it imposes its illegal rule by persecution, detention and abduction.

A particular plight continues to affect Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar communities on the peninsula. This was clearly assessed in the UN GA Resolution of 19 December 2016 and the decision by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers of 3 May 2017. Both spoke about the dire human rights situation in the occupied Crimea and Sevastopol.

On 19 April 2017, the International Court of Justice recognized the validity of Ukraine's claims in the submitted case "Ukraine against Russia" and ordered, inter alia, that the Russian Federation must, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention on the Eradication of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, to refrain from maintaining or imposing limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to conserve its representative institutions, including the Mejlis, and to ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian language.

The Court order has not yet been implemented by Russia. The unwillingness of the Russian Federation to fulfill the resolutions, decisions and orders undermines international law. There must be continued and concerted pressure on Russia to make it stop violating international rules and norms, in particular those enshrined by the Helsinki Final Act.

The ongoing campaign of the Kremlin's regime based in revanchist ambitions and aiming, in particular, at undermining the Ukrainian state and probably wishing to

resurrect the Soviet Union in some form at the same time, represents a dangerous policy threatening the very foundation of the European security architecture.

This is a policy aimed at building new dividing lines in Europe at the eastern borders of Ukraine. On one side a part of Europe, Ukraine, that is committed to values and rules-based order and on the other side a state, sad to have to say, that shows utter contempt for the same rules and norms.

No sustainable long-term security is possible in Europe without restored territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Stability and trust will be illusive notions until Russia pulls its troops back to within its own borders.

We believe that the concerted pressure of the international community on the aggressor state combined with further progress of Ukraine as a democratic European state, will best serve the interests of peace and security. The sanctions regime, introduced in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and flagrant violation of international law, remains an important instrument to urge Russia to respect to the rules-based order. The international community must be consistently firm and clear in its message that in today's world aggression brings penalties not rewards.

At the same time, it is important to continue to seek ways to develop the necessary tools for peaceful reintegration of Donbas. Without prejudice to the Minsk agreements a basis for the peaceful resolution, the toolbox to address the conflict, both on the national and international levels, should be adjusted to the security realities on the ground.

The concept of an armed police mission led by the OSCE or the UN needs to be finalized to enable deployment as soon as the security provisions of the Minsk agreements are met. And the mission needs to be ready to provide security before, during and after local elections are held in Donbas.

The uncontrolled part of the state border between Ukraine and Russia remains a critical factor in why peaceful efforts have had limited effect. Without being addressed, the problem of an uncontrolled border will continue to generate more insecurity and escalation in violence. We believe it is necessary to set up a working subgroup on border issues within the Trilateral Contact Group to address the border case. In particular there is a need to halt the illegal movements of military personnel and weapons. Russia's stance towards restoring border control to the Ukrainian government and ensuring, as a first step, full transparency and OSCE verification at the border will signal whether they are serious about a peacefully resolution the conflict.

Release of hostages and illegally detained persons is an urgent humanitarian priority. We want to speedy finalization of the verification process without any artificial

obstacles from the Russian side as a part of the Minsk agreements provision on the release on the basis of “all for all” principle.

These are the steps, which we see as our joint priorities. We once again urge the Russian Federation to follow this path. It is, ultimately, the only way to resolve this horrific and brutal conflict and restore security and stability to this part of Europe.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.