



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 961st FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine
and illegal occupation of Crimea

(18 November 2020, Vienna, via video teleconferencing)

(Agenda item 1, General Statements)

Madam 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"**.

On 14 November, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasized that the construction of new and modern checkpoints on the line of contact and restoration of roads and infrastructure of Donbas is an indisputable proof that Ukraine is open to all its citizens, including those living in the temporarily occupied territories. Ukraine has opened all checkpoints in the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions under Government control. Moreover, in line with previously reached agreements, two additional checkpoints were opened in Zolote and Schastia, Luhansk region. A new service center in Schastia was launched, where people can receive pensions, social benefits and a total of 88 administrative services. There is also a bank branch, a post office, a pharmacy, a mother and child room which are convenient, modern, comfortable and safe. The President expressed his conviction that Ukraine should be associated with such words as convenience, comfort and security, especially for the citizens living in the temporarily occupied territories. These efforts prove the very fact that Ukraine is doing everything to finally bring to an end the armed conflict.

On 13 November, a meeting of political advisers to the leaders of the Normandy Four was held. The parties discussed progress achieved by Ukraine with regard to the opening of 2 new checkpoints in Luhansk region and called upon Russia to take immediate steps to provide passage through all checkpoints from the territories temporarily not under Government of Ukraine control. The need to ensure unhindered access of the ICRC to places of detention in the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas in order to speed up the process of verifying the lists for mutual release of detainees was highlighted.

Head of Office of the President of Ukraine Andriy Yermak underlined the need to intensify the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and called for the adoption of a document that would give impetus to the Minsk negotiating format, in particular, through the action plan prepared by the Ukrainian side. The document entitled "Plan of joint steps of the members of the Trilateral Contact Group for the implementation of the Minsk agreements" is based on important developments within both the TCG and the N4. If an understanding is reached, this action plan can, indeed, become the basis of a broad road map that could be adopted within the Normandy format. The Normandy four countries agreed to continue consultations on a single road map based on the document submitted by Ukraine.

Despite the efforts undertaken by Ukraine towards peaceful resolution of the conflict, the security situation in the conflict area in Donbas necessitates our further close attention. During the period from **9 through 15 November** the armed formations of the Russian Federation resorted to **armed provocations on 21 occasions** (near Vodiane, Kamianka, Novoluhanske, Avdiivka, Mariinka, Starohnativka, Donetsk region), opening fire against the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with the use of different grenade launchers (GP-25, RPG-7, AGS-17, SPG-9), heavy machine guns, small arms, including sniper fire (near Mariinka). The Russian armed formations shelled Ukrainian positions near Vodiane, Avdiivka and Kamianka settlements with the **use of Minsk-proscribed weapons**, namely 82 mm mortars. As the result, one Ukrainian serviceman was wounded. On 13 November, in the area of Shumy the Russian armed formations attempted to use a combat UAV loaded with a grenade shell VOG-17. Its operation was disrupted by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

PRESENTATION

(Slide 1) On 11 November at 00.40-00.50, the Russian armed formations conducted provocative targeted fire from the direction of Kruta Balka (48°08'51"N, 37°49'15"E) on the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the direction of the residential area Kamianka with the use of small arms (1 round) and heavy machine guns (3 rounds). As a result of this shelling, one Ukrainian serviceman was wounded. Ukrainian side to the JCCC duly informed the SMM of this case.

(Slide 2) For the period from 11 through 16 November, an armed escalation erupted near the residential area of Vodiane. The Russian armed formations conducted provocative fire on 7 occasions with the use of small arms, including different grenade launchers (GP-25, RPG-7, AGS-17, SPG), as well as 82mm mortars prohibited by the Minsk agreements. The Ukrainian side of the JCCC duly informed the SMM of these cases.

The Russian armed formations continue the practice of provocative shelling with a simultaneous request for the introduction of the regime of silence followed by ungrounded accusations against the Armed Forces of Ukraine in alleged ceasefire

violations, including with the use 82 mm mortars forbidden by the Minsk agreements.

During the period from 11 through 16 November, eleven requests were made by the Russian armed formations (on 4-11 November there were 23 such requests). 4 of them were made in connection with the alleged use by the Armed Forces of Ukraine of weapons forbidden by the Minsk agreements. On 5 occasions the requests for the introduction of the regime of silence were made simultaneously with the start of shelling of the Ukrainian positions.

In accordance with the SMM daily report of 16 November 2020 No. 273/2020, for the period between the evenings of 13 and 15 November, the SMM recorded 89 ceasefire violations in the Donetsk region (81 undetermined explosions) and 49 ceasefire violations in the Luhansk region (9 undetermined explosions).

(Slide 3) 89 ceasefire violations in the Donetsk region (81 undetermined explosions) recorded in areas north-east of Shyrokyne (100km south of Donetsk) occurred as result of the armed clashes (14 November at 20h02 – 15 November at 01h05), when the Armed Forces of Ukraine had to open fire in response to lasting provocative shelling of the Russian armed formations, which endangered the lives of the servicemen.

The reason underpinning such bold provocations was the presence of the SMM cameras in this area and inability of the Mission to access this area, what is confirmed by the SMM thematic report of 10 November 2020 on the restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement and other impediments to the implementation of its mandate. By such actions the Russian armed formations aim at creating an image of alleged systematic ceasefire violations by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This practice is carried out with a view to accuse the Ukrainian side of these violations and discredit the Armed Forces of Ukraine before the SMM, using the obvious evidential base (the SMM cameras, UAVs etc).

With reference to the SMM daily report of 12 November 2020 No. 270/2020, the Mission recorded 90 ceasefire violations, 89 of which were undetermined explosions, in the Donetsk region, and 7 such violations, including 1 undetermined explosion, in the Luhansk region.

(4 Slide) According to the report table of ceasefire violations, on 11 November at 10h30-11h30, the SMM patrol was located 1.7 km from the temporarily occupied residential area of Komuna (its current name is Debaltsivske, 56km north-east of Donetsk) and heard 89 undetermined explosions 8-10 km to the north-east from its position. According to information received from the Ukrainian side of the JCCC and units deployed in this area, there were no ceasefire violations of the Ukrainian side on 11 November. Neither the JCCC received requests from the SMM on the introduction of the regime of silence on this date. Based on preliminary assessment

of these explosions, they are qualified as engineer works aimed at illegal extraction of coal by a detonation method.

According to the SMM, the Russian armed formations continued **deploying weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and severely impeding the freedom of movement of the Mission in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas**. The SMM thematic report of 10 November 2020 underlines the gravity of persistent denials and other restrictions of the freedom of its movement, including those which endanger the lives of the monitors, committed by the Russian armed formations.

Notwithstanding the challenging circumstances, Ukraine has been proactively restoring civilian infrastructure, improving living conditions and carrying out demining in the conflict-affected areas under the Government control, with the SMM observing the adherence to localised ceasefires. From 7 through 13 November, the demining teams of Ukraine surveyed over 30 hectares of land and destroyed 580 explosive devices. All EECPs were opened for passage, including the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint, restored after arsons committed by the Russian armed formations. We regret that Russia and its armed formations **failed to fulfil its obligations by denying passage of civilians from the temporarily occupied territories through almost all EECPs**, including the two newly established ones.

These developments in the conflict area in Donbas along with ongoing obstruction of the work of the TCG by Russia reflect further reluctance of that country to meet its commitments and proceed to peaceful resolution of the conflict of its own making.

Distinguished colleagues,

Ukraine is extremely concerned with the ongoing Russia's actions to prepare the Crimean military infrastructure for deployment of nuclear weapons, including refurbishment of the infrastructure of Soviet-era nuclear warheads storage facilities.

Since the Soviet times, there have been several facilities that were used to store nuclear weapons. One of them is the so-called "Feodosia-13" facility, now it is the village of Krasnokamyanka, that was in use until 1996. Then it was partially mothballed and dismantled. However, following the temporary occupation of Crimea, Russia began to carry out specific works at the site.

There is also a second facility in the temporarily occupied Crimea, where nuclear weapons could be deployed. That is Balaklava, where the Russian submarines are, currently, illegally stationed. Moreover, additional tunnels for submarines were constructed.

Eventual deployment of nuclear weapons by Russia on the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea could pose a threat to any part of Europe. For example, when Tu-22M3 bombers are deployed to the temporarily occupied

Crimea, they can endanger even the most remote areas of Europe. For the time being, it is unclear what type of nuclear weapons Russia intends to deploy on the Peninsula. But one can be certain that the very intention of doing so already creates a great danger to any part of Europe and puts at stake the whole NPT regime.

In conclusion, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of Donbas, and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including withdrawal of its forces, illegal armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.