



**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 1319<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
10 June 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

We thank participating States for expressing clear positions on who are the parties to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It leaves no space for the aggressor State to avoid responsibility for its resolution. We regret that the Russian side continues disseminating its false narratives, which only delay progress in this direction.

The most recent meeting of the TCG and its working groups on 8 and 9 June was another manifestation of this untenable situation. It was marked by persistent attempts by participants, invited by the Russian side from the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions occupied by it, to legitimize their status. Any arrangements, which would not serve this purpose, were rejected.

For instance, no meaningful discussion took place on demining, as procedural issues related to those attempts on legitimization prevented it. Meanwhile, since the beginning of 2021, the SMM confirmed 36 civilian casualties including 11 fatalities due to mines and UXOs. Civilians are taken hostage by Russia, which demands to recognize members of its occupation administration in Donbas as a party to the conflict, in an effort to exonerate Russia from legal and political responsibility for its armed aggression against Ukraine.

The impasse in TCG consultations is accompanied by Russia's armed attacks against Ukrainian servicemen and civilians in Donbas, as well as increased military presence along the border with Ukraine and in its temporarily occupied territories.

In May 2021, the Ukrainian side counted 271 cases of shelling by the Russian armed formations, 40 per cent of which (that is 110) were delivered with the use of the Minsk-proscribed weapons. Four Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 18 wounded. Residential areas were shelled 7 times.

These armed attacks continue to be supported by Russia's ongoing supplies across the uncontrolled segment of the border. In two months, from 18 March until 20 May, the Russian side sent 3 rail wagons with ammunition, 34 cars with ammunition, mortars, UAVs, mines and electronic warfare systems "Triton" and "Leer-3", as well as 84 cisterns with fuel and lubricants. It should come as no surprise that Russia strongly objects to any steps aimed at enhancing transparency at the Ukrainian-Russian state border, be it the flights of the SMM long-range UAVs or monitoring activities by the Border Observer Mission.

In the past two weeks, the SMM reported gradual decrease of ceasefire violations. Their number remains well below the level registered in the first half of 2020. Still, dozens of ceasefire violations per day are far away from the situation, which could be characterized as a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire. It can easily deteriorate any time.

Last week, the SMM spotted 139 heavy weapons outside designated storage sites, namely in the training areas in the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. I would ask the Russian Ambassador: what do they train for?

Unpredictable military intentions of the Russian side remain a serious security challenge for Ukraine. Reluctance by the Russian side to ensure necessary military transparency, including under the Vienna Document 2011, only adds reasons for concern.

Militarization of the occupied territories of Ukraine does not slow down. On 8 June, the Russian occupation administration in Crimea took the decision to establish so-called “military-patriotic centre for youth” near the town of Saky. In this regard, we remind the Russian side of its obligations as occupying Power under international humanitarian law. In UN GA Resolution 75/29 of 7 December 2020, the international community expressed its deep concerns over the continued conscription by the Russian Federation of the residents of Crimea and called on Russia to refrain from establishing educational institutions that provide combat training to Crimean children with the stated aim of training for military service in the Russian armed forces. We regret that these calls, as well as many others, were left unnoticed by the Russian side.

Crimean residents continue to suffer from politically motivated persecutions. Any independent media, which would be able to deliver truth on the developments in the occupied peninsula, were squeezed out of Crimea. Those civil activists who took on the function of reporting, are tracked down, detained and illegally sentenced for long terms under trumped-up charges. As Ukraine marked the Day of Journalist on 6 June, it served as another reminder on the fates of 10 civil journalists from Crimea who are illegally kept behind bars and under house arrest by the Russian occupiers.

On 8 June, the Russian occupation court illegally sentenced in abstentia to a 7-year term former political prisoner Edem Bekirov, set free in the mutual release of detainees between Ukraine and Russia in September 2019. He was charged under the favourite article of the Russian special forces – “storage and transport of explosives”, which is used when they want to detain a person without any possibility for him or her to refute the allegations based on planted evidences.

We severely condemn Russia’s behaviour in Crimea and parts of Donbas. We demand Russia to stick to its commitments and obligations and stop violating human rights and fundamental freedoms of the occupied population.

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.**