



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

### **Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1353<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
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**Mr. Chairperson,**

Every call to the Russian Federation to end its aggression against Ukraine, every visit to Ukraine, every package of practical support makes Russia's new invasion less likely. So does the failure of the Russian Federation to break our unity and solidarity in rejecting Russia's illegal demands for the veto on a right of sovereign states to choose their security arrangements.

That said, strong political messages, preventive measures and further practical steps are needed, as the risk of new aggressive acts, including false flag operations, continues looming given that the belligerent rhetoric of the Russian leadership persists.

Despite Russia's attempts to calm down the international community about the presence of the Russian troops in the vicinity of Ukraine's border and in the occupied Crimea, however, their numbers continue growing. As of 28 January, more than 114 000 regular troops, 1600 tanks, 4000 armoured combat vehicles, over 2200 artillery systems, are kept alongside Ukraine's border and in the temporarily occupied Crimea. These numbers also include 5200 servicemen, 100 tanks, 300 armoured combat vehicles and 120 artillery pieces to be involved into a military exercise 'Unity resolve 2022'.

Nor should we forget about the ongoing heavy militarization of the temporarily occupied Crimea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov by Russia. Last week, another military drill involving more than 20 vessels took place in the Black Sea. Reportedly, between 8 and 11 February a number of Russia's additional warships are expected to enter the Black Sea.

Reinforcement of combat capabilities of the Russian occupation forces in Donbas is another worrying trend. Military exercises continue. On 29 January, the SMM spotted 35 tanks and 25 pieces of artillery at three training areas in the occupied areas of Luhansk region. On 1 February, 15 tanks were revealed at a training area near Pokrovka, Donetsk region. This trend has lasted for weeks. I believe that full access of the SMM to the occupied areas would reveal much bigger numbers. At the same time, since the second half of January, a number of agitation teams increased in order to draft local population into the Russian occupation army. Let me remind this is against Russia's duties under IHL.

In view of this, SMM reporting about the degradation of security environment for the SMM's UAVs is of particular concern, especially over training areas in the occupied areas, typically located at a distance of 25-30km from the contact line.

Yesterday's SMM weekly is also revealing in terms of presence of the Russian modern electronic warfare systems. For instance, it reports about the presence of "Zhitel" with a range of 15-30km, as well as of "Krasukha-2" and "Leer-3" which are capable of covering ranges of over 100km.

So, I have three questions. How many times did the Russian representative refuse to answer the questions about the presence of the Russian military equipment in the occupied territories? When will Russia withdraw its military hardware from the Ukrainian territory? And when will Russia finally end its illegal supplies through uncontrolled part of the border?

Shootings, shelling, sniper fire on Ukrainian positions, and systematic use of attack UAVs against Ukrainian troops have not stopped, despite another understanding on resuming the ceasefire regime reached by the TCG on 22 December 2021. During the week, the SMM registered on average 244 ceasefire violations per day.

At the same time, we all remember how many hopes the opening of bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska invoked back in 2019. However, on 30 January, in direction of Stanytsia Luhanska Russian armed formations opened fire from anti-tank rocket launchers that resulted in injury of Ukrainian serviceman. Next day, due to shelling in direction of Svitlodarsk a civilian was injured, so we expect the SMM to corroborate it.

All these facts speak for themselves that the first priority today is to achieve a sustainable and unconditional ceasefire in Donbas. The ceasefire regime must be guaranteed, reliable, and on this basis, further steps can be taken.

Also, the SMM's mandate must be fully respected by the Russian Federation and de-linked from its political agenda. The denials and restrictions must be stopped, as they narrow corridor for SMM monitoring in the occupied territories and put Mission members and assets at risk. Mission must be allowed to monitor the border areas as the Minsk protocol provides for.

We call upon the Russian side to cancel decisions that aim to further consolidate Russia's control over the occupied territories as well as have negative impact on the political settlement and future reintegration of the occupied territories in violation of Moscow's obligations under the Minsk agreements. The freedom of movement of civilians across the contact line and opening of all the EECs must be ensured in the light of latest artificial restrictions reported by the SMM.

We also condemn intentions to simplify joining the Russian ruling party; recent president Putin's decree about social payments and talks about possibility of drafting of residents of Donbas to the Russian army. All these are the consequences of the ongoing passportization in Donbas, which aims to prepare grounds for future Russia's provocations and interventions.

We call upon the Russian Federation to refrain from such steps that further complicate the diplomatic process and instead of that to engage constructively into the talks as a party to the conflict within the Normandy format as well as within the TCG.

### **Excellencies,**

Over the last week, we have heard from the Russian side that they do not intend to launch a war against my country. But here I want to repeat what my Foreign

Minister has recently said, "If Russian officials are serious when they say they don't want a new war, Russia must continue diplomatic engagement, and pull back military forces amassed along Ukraine's borders and in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Diplomacy is the only responsible way." End of quote.

At the same time, we have to be vigilant also about the non-military dimension of Russian aggression. Today Russia is making great efforts to destabilize the situation in Ukraine. It uses all tools of hybrid warfare, including cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns. Massive disinformation and fake news in the media intend to sow panic among Ukrainian society.

In the meantime, massive disinformation campaign has been also launched in the Russian Federation itself, especially through state-sponsored media. We call upon the RFoM to closely follow this case.

In this regard, let me read just a few quotations from an open letter signed by intelligentsia and published a few days ago in Russia with the appeal to its leadership.

"State television broadcasts only one point of view, that of the supporters of the war. Direct military threats are broadcast there, aggression and hatred towards Ukraine, the US and Western countries. But the most dangerous thing is that the war is presented as an acceptable and inevitable course of events. Authorities are trying to deceive people and impose on them the idea of a holy war with the West instead of developing the country. Russia does not need a war with Ukraine and the West. Nobody threatens us, nobody attacks us. A policy based on promoting the idea of such a war is immoral, irresponsible, and criminal, and cannot be carried out on behalf of the peoples of Russia. Such a war can have neither legitimate nor moral goals". End of quote.

To conclude, we urge the Russian Federation to listen to the voice of its own people and stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, 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 and agreements within the Normandy format, including the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations, and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**