



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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Mr. Chair, intense fighting near the Donetsk Filtration Station led to a temporary suspension of its operations last week, jeopardizing the water supply for over 350,000 people. While we welcome the reopening of the station, more must be done to ensure real and lasting security for the brave workers and SMM monitors who are committed to keeping the water running. Without a sustained reduction in the violence, we fear it is just a matter of time before the station is forced to close again.

The violence showed no signs of abating last week: the SMM registered 780 ceasefire violations in the vicinity of the Filtration Station; this week, they jumped to 1270. Both Russia-led aggressors and Ukrainian defenders have an obligation to protect the Station and its employees from further harm. A return to the Joint Center for Coordination and Control by Russian forces would help reduce this risk. As the instigator of this conflict, The Russian Federation retains command and control over the forces that it arms, leads, trains and fights alongside, and has the power to prevent another strike on the Filtration Station and those who work there.

Mr. Chair, disengagement of forces from the area around the station would defuse tensions. However, let's recall that Russia-led forces first breached the agreed contact line and have advanced their positions around the station in defiance of the agreed-upon September 2014 line of contact. To this day, Russia-led forces remain on the Ukrainian side of that line. Mr. Chair, If Russia truly supports disengagement from the station, as it has repeatedly claimed in this Council, then it will pull its forces behind the agreed-upon September 2014 line. Russia and the forces it arms, leads, and fights alongside must not be rewarded for seizing territory near the station in disregard of the contact line as defined in the Minsk Memorandum.

A sustainable ceasefire depends on safe and unfettered access for the SMM throughout the entire conflict area. Yet the mission remains in the crosshairs. On June 9, an SMM long-range UAV was targeted by two SA-8 surface-to-air missiles fired from territory not under Ukrainian government control. This incident came one day after Russia-led forces targeted another long-range UAV, jamming it as it flew along the line of contact. Mr. Chair, it is no coincidence that

on June 3, a SMM UAV twice spotted a TORN radio intelligence system in Russia-controlled territory near the contact line. This is yet another example of Russian-made hardware not in the Ukrainian military arsenal deployed by Russia-led forces in the Donbas. It is further proof that Russia continues to violate its Minsk commitments.

We condemn the firing of warning shots near SMM monitors on June 8 in an area close to the contact line. The monitors were accompanied by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including JCCC representatives, who also took cover when the shots were fired. These actions deliberately endanger the lives of citizens from OSCE participating States serving as SMM monitors.

Mr. Chair, four years of continued Russian aggression against Ukraine have taken a massive toll on those living in or displaced from the conflict area. Recently, our Russian colleague questioned U.S. humanitarian aid to those in need. Since October 2016, the United States has provided nearly \$30 million in humanitarian assistance to the nearly 3.4 million people in and around Ukraine, making the United States the third-largest provider of aid after Germany and the EU. Assistance from the United States has helped feed the hungry, provide drinking water, provide counseling and other forms of support, and supply construction materials. All this assistance was provided through international humanitarian aid organizations who ***transparently and objectively*** assess humanitarian needs, and deliver it to those most in need, and they monitor its effectiveness. All of this assistance is provided to people living on both sides of the line of contact. It is coordinated through the international Humanitarian Action Plan, and it is delivered through the UN, the ICRC, and other international humanitarian aid organizations.

Mr. Chair, there is no reason why the Russian Federation could not deliver assistance through the same mechanisms like so many other participating States here, proving its claims to care about the people of eastern Ukraine. There is no reason or need for the Russian Federation to deliver aid in secretive convoys to military bases in use by Russia-led forces – unless, of course, the convoys do not contain humanitarian assistance.

It is possible to mitigate human suffering and build positive momentum toward implementation of the Minsk agreements. International experts should be allowed to assess the risks posed by chemical and radiological sites in the conflict area, including the Yunkom mine, so that preventative measures can be taken before an environmental and humanitarian disaster occurs. Detainees on both sides should be released on the basis of the “all-for-all” principle, as spelled out in the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chair, humanitarian logic should also prevail in the plight of the over 60 Ukrainian political prisoners currently held in Russia. Ukrainian filmmaker Oleh Sentsov’s hunger strike enters its 31st day today. Russia transferred Mr. Sentsov from Crimea to Russia, and we call upon Russia to immediately release him and all other Ukrainian political prisoners, including three others who are also on hunger strike: Volodymyr Balukh, Oleksander Shumkov, and Stanislav Klykh.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, Russia’s aggression and conduct in Ukraine undermine the core principles and commitments of the OSCE, as well as our collective security. The United States

fully supports Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We do not, nor will we ever, recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea. Crimea-related sanctions on Russia will remain in place until Russia returns full control of the peninsula to Ukraine. The United States joins our European and other partners in restating that our sanctions against Russia for its aggression in eastern Ukraine will remain until Russia fully implements its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.