



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in response to Ambassador György Varga,
Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission
at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border**

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1232nd meeting of the Permanent Council,
13 June 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes Amb. György Varga, the Chief Observer of the OSCE Observer Mission at two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his written report and today's presentation.

As we observed before, the Mission continues to operate in difficult and restrictive conditions, which make it impossible to deliver comprehensive monitoring at the two BCPs because of significant restrictions on the freedom of movement within the BCPs, that had been imposed by the Russian authorities. We take note of the so called "recommendation" of the host country, that the border observers even do not have the right to interview by-passers, nor to have conversations with them inside the BCP area.

Although with limited mandate, small size and significant restrictions imposed by the Russian authorities, the Mission provides useful information exposing Russia's support for its armed formations in Donbas. While Russia committed itself to withdraw its military, mercenaries and fighters from Donbas, their illegal flow into Ukraine continues. During the reporting period 381 crossings of people in military-style outfits from Russia into Ukraine and back were observed.

There can be no doubts about why the Russian Federation, one country among 57, has been objecting since 2014 to the expansion of the geographic scope of the Mission and to enabling monitoring between the border crossings of the 409 km Ukrainian-Russian state border segment which is for now controlled on both sides by the Russian authorities. The SMM continues to spot new routes of supply of weapons and military equipment from Russia to the Russian armed formations in Donbas region of Ukraine. For instance, in the middle of the nights 30 May-1 June and 2-3 June an SMM long-range UAV spotted military-type trucks and a car proceed to a compound of the armed formations near non-government-controlled Luhansk city via an unpaved road leading to the border where there are no border crossing facilities. Except this observation, on 27 May in the border's area near the non-government-controlled Manych, the SMM saw fresh tire tracks, assessed as being caused by heavy trucks. In

this regard I would like to remind that since 7 August until end October 2018 the SMM had observed on seven occasions convoys of trucks, including with military hardware, entering and exiting Ukraine from Russia. On 27 October 2018 the Russian armed formations shot down the SMM long-range UAV as it was spotting another illegal entry of a military convoy into the Ukrainian territory from Russia. The ongoing developments on the ground prove Russia's unchanged intentions to fuel the conflict and hide from the international community Russia's direct role as a party to the conflict. Thousands of pieces of weaponry and the modern exclusively Russian military equipment, including the «Tirada-2» satellite communication jamming complex spotted by the SMM in March 2019 and a surveillance radar system «Kredo-M1» spotted by the SMM on 3 of May and 6 of June, all arrived to the occupied parts of Donbas from the territory of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russian citizens acting as foreign terrorist fighters or mercenaries continue to fight against the Ukrainian authorities in the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine in Russia-instigated conflict. The Russian Government conceals Russian casualties. During the reporting period OSCE Observer Mission recorded 19 ambulances and two funeral service vehicles crossing the border in both directions at two BCPs.

On 26 April Russian convoy of three special vehicles of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Russian Federation violated Ukraine's border at the Donetsk BCP when crossing the border to Ukraine and on 27 April crossed back into the Russian Federation at the same BCP. We strongly condemn of the persistent violation by Russia of the state border with Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine continues in flagrant breach of the OSCE principles and commitments, in particular regarding sovereignty and territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers, border security and combating terrorism.

The violence, perpetrated by the Russian armed formations in the Donbas region of Ukraine, underlines the imperative of comprehensive border monitoring in connection with continued flows of military equipment and personnel from Russia in the non-government-controlled areas of Donbas. We emphasise the utmost relevance of the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 whereby the signatories committed themselves to ensure permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border and verification by the OSCE with the creation of security zone in the border regions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This is a very clear commitment, co-signed by Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE, but which has not yet been realized in view of Russia's opposition.

Ukraine encourages the Chairmanship and the Secretariat to intensify efforts with the aim of practical implementation of this crucial commitment relating to the border and border security zone with the use of all available OSCE assets and instruments.

In conclusion, we once again thank Ambassador György Varga and his able team for their dedicated work and wish every success in their future activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.