



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's illegal conscription in Crimea in violation of the norms of international law

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1268th meeting of the Permanent Council,
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Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the US delegation for raising this current issue today. Russia's illegal occupation and attempted annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in 2014 brought a wide range of flagrant violations of international law. The compulsory military conscription of Crimea's residents is one of the most serious ones among them.

I would remind that immediately after occupation, the Russian Federation has automatically imposed its own citizenship, laws, jurisdiction and administration in Crimea, making local population subject to the provisions of Russia's legislation. The occupying Power was trying in such a way to legitimize and normalize its attempted annexation of Crimea.

Those who took the decision not to flee from their homes from Crimea into mainland Ukraine, had no other option as to obey the demands of the occupation authorities, including on serving military duty in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. According to the UN Secretary General report on "Human Rights Situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, Ukraine" dated 2 August 2019, since 2015 at least 18,000 Crimeans have been conscripted into service in the Russian Armed Forces. Those who objected and stated unwillingness to serve in the Russian army, became subjects of criminal prosecution.

This was, and still is, a blatant violation of Russia's obligations as the occupying Power. The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 are very precise in prohibiting the occupying Power to compel protected persons to serve in its armed or auxiliary forces, including through pressure or propaganda that is aimed at securing voluntary enlistment.

Despite many calls by the international community, including a number of the UN GA Resolutions and in this hall, the Russian Federation continues to ignore demands to stop the violations of international law by pursuing conscriptions in the temporarily occupied Crimea. As the delegation of Ukraine informed two weeks ago at the 945th FSC meeting, this spring Russia plans to send almost 3,300 people for

“military service” from the territory of the Crimean peninsula. Majority of them are expected to serve beyond Crimea, in particular in the Southern Military District of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, whose military units and command are directly involved in carrying out armed aggression against Ukraine in Donbas. Let me stress it once again: Russia occupied two parts of Ukraine’s territory and sends Ukrainians from one of those parts to fight Ukrainians in another one. One can hardly imagine more cynical way of using occupation for implementing its dubious political goals.

We, along the entire civilized international community, severely condemn the ongoing Russia’s practice of compelling Crimean residents to serve in its Armed Forces. We urge to stop this practice and in particular ensure that Crimean residents are not compelled to participate in military operations of the Russian Federation. We also remind to the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces from Crimea and to end its temporary occupation of Ukrainian territory without delay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.