



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

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 970<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**

(16 March 2021, via video teleconferencing)

(Agenda item 2, General Statements,

on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”)

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”.

Since the last discussion in this virtual setting of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the security situation in the conflict area in Donbas has escalated. The death toll among Ukrainian servicemen continues to rise as a result of armed provocations and targeted shelling of the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine by the armed formations of the Russian Federation.

Such reckless acts of aggression by Russia further jeopardize fragile ceasefire agreement which entered into force on 27 July 2020. It was intended to facilitate the peace process, including the implementation of commitments reached during the 2019 N4 Summit in Paris. However, the Russian Federation has chosen a path of resorting to force, attempting to destabilize Ukraine and disregarding its commitments as a party to the conflict.

Over the past two weeks the armed formations of the Russian Federation violated ceasefire regime by shelling the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on 122 occasions with an extensive use of Minsk-proscribed weapons, 120mm and 82mm mortars, near Vodiane, Pivdenne, Opytne, Avidiivka, Lebedynske and 5 other residential areas (Krasnohorivka, Pisky, Novozvanivka, Zolote-4, Katerynivka), as well as with the use of different grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms fire, including fatal sniper fire, and distance mining with POM-2 landmines.

In total, from 27 July 2020 to 10 March 2021, the Russian forces violated ceasefire regime 882 times, 94 of which – with the use of Minsk-proscribed 122mm artillery systems, 120mm and 82mm mortars. As a result of the ongoing

armed aggression of the Russian Federation, 16 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 69 were wounded. The Russian occupation forces opened fire on the residential areas 8 times.

The main purpose of such actions remains to provoke the Armed Forces of Ukraine to open fire in response in order to plot false accusations of ceasefire violations by the Ukrainian side. In some instances, the adversary shelled Ukrainian positions simultaneously making a request for a regime of silence due to the alleged shelling conducted by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. It is also done to accuse the Armed Forces of Ukraine of shelling the residential areas and civilian sites on the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas.

These deliberate actions are aimed at keeping tensions high at the contact line and promote Russian propaganda narratives claiming alleged systematic ceasefire violations and preparation for an offensive operation by the Ukrainian side. This disinformation campaign intensifies as the TCG meetings approach, in order to disrupt its work in an attempt to put forward alternative agenda. It is also aimed at misleading Ukrainian citizens forced to live under Russian occupation and at forming negative attitudes towards the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

To that end, Russia also stages false news of alleged shelling conducted by the Armed Forces of Ukraine of the temporarily occupied residential areas of Donbas. On 1 March 2021, the Russian occupation forces denied the SMM passage in the area of temporarily occupied Olenivka (23km south-west of Donetsk) for 5 hours. When the Mission recorded undetermined explosions in the vicinity of this area it had to leave immediately. Taking advantage of the situation, the Russian armed formations disseminated false information through social media and other sources of alleged shelling of temporarily occupied Olenivka and Staromyhailivka settlements with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons, which caused damage to civilian infrastructure.

We would like to draw your attention to the increase in ceasefire violations by the Russian armed formations, including with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons which endanger the lives of civilians, Ukrainian defenders and escalate tensions in the conflict area.

Let me give you some examples of these reckless armed provocations by the Russian armed formations.

## **PRESENTATION**

SLIDE 1 On 22 February 2021, the Ukrainian positions near Vodiane, Donetsk region, were under fire from 120mm artillery systems, presumably 2B16 Nona-K type. The shelling was conducted from the temporarily occupied area near Sakhanka. The Ukrainian side of the JCCC reported on over 6 craters and damaged civilian sites, including residential houses, in this area.

SLIDE 2 on 23 February 2021, as a result of ceasefire violation with the use of recoilless gun in the direction of the residential area of Zolote-5, a civilian sustained multiple lethal shrapnel injury. On the same day, Ukrainian positions were shelled 20 times, including with the use of Minsk proscribed weapons. As a result of the shelling from 120mm (3 explosions) and 82mm (3 explosions) mortars near Zaitsevo one Ukrainian serviceman was wounded and another one was killed. Sniper fire inflicted injuries to a Ukrainian defender near Pisky.

The increased use by Russian occupation forces of the UAVs for reconnaissance and combat operations to drop grenade shells on the Ukrainian positions is of particular concern to us. Since 27 July 2020, the Ukrainian side observed over 58 instances of such forbidden activities. On the following slides you may see the recent case of the use of forbidden UAV by the Russian armed formations which also proves the undeniable military presence of Russia in the conflict area.

SLIDE 3 - On 5 March 2021, the Armed Forces of Ukraine detected UAV Granat-1 type which bears the signs of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation near the residential area of Pervomaiske, Donetsk region.

SLIDES 4, 5 - You may find the registration and serial number on this slide. Given the technical characteristics, this UAV was launched by the Russian armed formations either from the area near the temporarily occupied residential area of Vesele or from the Donetsk airport.

In violation of provision a.) of the TCG agreement of 22 July 2020 that prohibits the conduct of offensive and subversive activities, the armed formations of the Russian Federation regularly change their positioning, which includes advancement of their positions towards the Armed Forces of Ukraine. These actions are considered as provocative and offensive in nature.

You may find detailed information on some of the recent forbidden activities by the Russian armed formations on the development of new positions and reinforcement of the existing ones in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas.

SLIDES 6, 7 - On 9 March 2021, the Armed Forces of Ukraine observed development of positions of the Russian armed formations towards the line of contact near Donetsk airport (48°04'21.23"N 37°43'11,58"E) and Troitske (48°32'15"N 38°25'55,85"E).

SLIDES 8, 9, 10 - On 12 March 2021, development of new positions and reinforcement of the existing ones towards the line of contact were observed near Troitske (48°31'45.15"N 38°25'53,67"E), Vodiane (47°08'46.28"N 37°48'50.67"E) and Naberezhne (47°19'05.05"N 37°50'24.24"E) of the Donetsk region.

SLIDE 11 - On 14 March 2021, engineering works which included laying of mines at the positions of the Russian armed formations towards the line of contact were observed near Troitske (48°31'53.39"N 38°26'38.82"E).

## **END of PRESENTATION**

Russia continued enhancing its military presence and deploying weapons in the conflict area in violation of the Minsk agreements. During the period of 1-14 March 2021, the SMM reported 52 (out of 53) weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and 217 weapons outside designated storage sites in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas. On 1 March, the Mission observed six 122mm towed howitzers (D-30 Lyagushka) in a training area near Ternove, Donetsk region, in violation of withdrawal lines and 174 weapons in 5 other training areas in the Luhansk region, outside designated storage sites. Such concentration and redeployment of weapons and military equipment prove that the Russian armed formations conduct military exercises which may eventually lead to further escalation of tensions at the line of contact.

The trend of severe impediment and denial of access of the SMM patrols and interference with its assets by the Russian armed formations in Donbas remains unchanged. They are clearly intended to hide illegal activities on the ground and must be stopped to ensure full and unhindered implementation of the Mission's mandate.

In disregard of the TCG agreement of 22 July 2020, the Russian armed formations continue to contaminate Ukrainian soil with mines and other explosives. On 4 March 2021, the Mission reported 33 new antitank mines in the vicinity of Yasne and 17 antitank mines near Sakhanka assessed as belonging to the Russian armed formations.

On 25 February and 1 March, the Mission reported on the presence of the anti-personnel mines of the Russian armed formations in Pertrivske disengagement area. We reiterate our strong condemnation and indignation over the use by Russia and its armed formations of landmines in the Donbas region of Ukraine. We strongly urge the Russian side to immediately cease further contamination of the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine with landmines, other types of mines and explosive devices, and proceed with demining.

Ukrainian side considers all of the above-mentioned actions of the Russian armed formations as a blatant violation of the Minsk agreements and disregard of the TCG agreement of 22 July 2020, as well as deliberate steps to destabilize the situation in the temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and adjacent territories, and further instigation by Russia of the conflict it started.

In conclusion, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of Donbas, 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, including the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries and armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.