



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement on “Russia’s on-going aggression against Ukraine
and illegal occupation of Crimea”**

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1102th meeting of the Permanent Council,
02 June 2016

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine is deeply concerned that 20 months after the first Minsk documents were signed, the situation in Donbas remains tense with the level of violence remaining on unacceptable high level. Over the past month the combined Russian-separatist forces showed their persistent unwillingness to comply with the recent arrangements on full and comprehensive ceasefire, reached at the Trilateral Contact Group meeting in late April.

The disregard by Russia and its proxies for undertaken commitments bears deadly consequences. The past month was marked with the highest toll of casualties among Ukrainian servicemen since August 2015. 28 soldiers were killed and 96 were wounded. Apart from shellings and provocations, the illegal armed formations intensified their subversive activities, attacking Ukrainian units or mining the roads in the government-controlled areas. The OSCE SMM reported of one of such incidents, which happened in Pavlopil, where 4 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 3 injured. There is a constant threat that snipers pose to the Ukrainian military and the civilian population. According to available information, intensive training of sniper personnel for the illegal armed formations is carried out by the Russian military instructors in the training centers in Illovaysk and Luhansk, as well as in the firing grounds in Rostov oblast of Russia. The instructors in the occupied areas of Donbas belong, in particular, to the 45th Separate Spetsnaz Airborne Brigade, names of three of them have been established.

The combined Russian-separatist forces do not give up their attempts to directly attack the Ukrainian positions. For instance, on 26 May the militants attacked the Ukrainian forces in the vicinity of the village Novoselivka Druha in the outskirts of Avdiyivka, resulting in intensive fighting. Avdiyivka remains a hotspot, where provocative shellings by the combined Russian-separatist forces continued unabated, which is registered by the SMM. As clearly reported by the SMM, on the night of 29 May, a Mission’s UAV spotted in militant-controlled Mineralne two 152 mm caliber howitzers Akatsiya, firing in the direction of Avdiyivka and hitting close to the location of the monitors.

The shellings of residential areas by the illegal armed formations persist with the most recent case happening in Stanytsya Luhanska on 28 May, where a number of private houses and administrative buildings sustained serious damage.

We condemn the use by the combined Russian-separatist forces of cynical practice of shellings from the residential areas, which was witnessed many times in the past and is now again reported by the SMM. On 30 May the Mission informed about accounts of the residents of Kyibyshevskiyi district of Donetsk that militants fired from nearby areas before withdrawing their weapons soon after, as well as asked to fire mortars from the rooftop of a residential building. Image of a tank between residential houses, made by the SMM UAV over the militant-controlled areas near Zaitseve and attached to the weekly report, is a conspicuous evidence of disregard for the Minsk agreements and for the security of the local population. In today's daily report the SMM registers the presence in the Donetsk city of 12 tanks in Budyonivski district, 8 tanks in Leninskyi district and 4 tanks in Kalininskyi district. In the same report the SMM registers 5 MLRS "Grad" and one self-propelled howitzer Gvozdika in Budyonivski district of the Donetsk city.

Deterioration of the security situation was in the primary focus of the Trilateral Contact group meeting, held in Minsk yesterday. The Ukrainian side drew particular attention to the high numbers of ceasefire violations, including the use of heavy weapons, and reiterated the urgency of implementing de-escalation proposals put forward by Ukraine.

Establishment of a sustainable ceasefire remains a basic requirement for progress on other aspects of the Minsk agreements. There is the urgent need to fully and verifiably implement three initial security provisions of the Minsk Package of Measures. The Russian Federation deprives the people of Donbas of opportunities for peace as it continues to selectively interpret the Minsk agreements, setting out conditions for stopping the shellings.

Distinguished colleagues,

At the Trilateral Contact group meeting yesterday the Ukrainian side reiterated its call on Russia to ensure that systematic restrictions on the SMM freedom of movement in the occupied areas of Donbas be immediately removed. As follows from the Mission's reports, the situation in this area has not been improving.

We strongly condemn the downing of the SMM UAV over the outskirts of the occupied Horlivka on 27 May, after it had spotted a surface-to-air missile system Strela-10. Later that day another incident happened near Yasynuvata, where the SMM patrol came under fire. Thorough investigation should be conducted to establish the details of this incident given the visible signs of a deliberate provocation. Many other incidents of intimidation towards the monitors in the occupied areas have been reported by the SMM and they are utterly unacceptable.

Ukraine strongly supports the SMM in accomplishing its monitoring and verification tasks and maintains close contact with the Mission on issues of safety and security for

the monitors, which gain extra relevance against the background of security deterioration. These issues were taken up at the meeting with Deputy Chief Monitor A.Hug in the MFA of Ukraine two days ago.

The SMM continues to report heavy jamming of its UAVs over the occupied territories. This jamming is activated by advanced Russian radio-electronic warfare complexes with R-330 Zhytel, registered by the SMM, only one of them. The ability of the SMM to duly monitor the situation is also limited by impediments to monitors' contacts with the local residents, imposed by Russia-backed militants. In its weekly report of 26 May, the Mission informed of new cases, when a number of interlocutors in occupied Debaltseve and Horlivka refused conversation, claiming that meetings had to be approved by the so-called "DPR". Lifting of all those restrictions depends on the Russian Federation and we urge it to undertake the necessary measures.

This includes re-connection of the SMM cameras near the Donetsk airport, which have been intentionally disabled by the militants since 20 May immediately prior to intensive shelling of the areas under Government control. Given that the Russian officers of the JCCC have been reported by the SMM present in different locations, including Donetsk, we request the Russian delegation to clarify whether specific measures were taken by the Russian side in the JCCC to restore the work of the SMM monitoring equipment near the airport.

Mr.Chairman,

The uncontrolled border remains a critical impediment to de-escalation as Russia continues to send its weaponry and other reinforcements into Donbas. The volume of conclusive evidence continues to grow. On 30 May the Ukrainian servicemen, fighting off an attack by a subversive group, seized a modern infantry flame-thrower MRO-A, accepted by the Russian Army in 2003. We again ask for explanations of the Russian delegation on how this weapon together with Russian military Orlan-10 UAV and TOS-1 Buratino, registered by the SMM, made their way to Donbas.

Also pending are explanations from the Russian delegation concerning the SMM report about its visit to the closed BCP "Uspenka", indicating that people with the so-called "DPR passports" and vehicles with so-called "DPR licence plates" were allowed to enter the territory of Russia.

We condemn the illegal practice of sending by Russia of the so-called "humanitarian convoys" in violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the principles of humanitarian law. We urge Russia to use for humanitarian assistance delivery the checkpoints at the border controlled by the Ukrainian authorities.

We again draw attention to the issue of release of hostages and illegally detained persons, which remains a priority. We call on Russia to speed up their release on the basis of "all-for-all" principle and underline that the relevant provision of the Minsk Package of measures applies equally to the Ukrainian citizens, who are held in illegal detention in Russia.

Mr.Chairman,

The developments in the occupied Crimea are a cause of deep concern and consistently prove that the most glaring human rights violations take place in the situations of occupation. The Russian Federation fails to implement its obligations under international law. We reiterate our call on Moscow to allow free and unconditional access of the international monitors to the occupied peninsula to enable permanent monitoring of the human rights situation.

We consider an important outcome of this week's meeting of Ukrainian and Russian journalists in Vienna to urgently address the issues of journalists' rights in the occupied Crimea.

Distinguished colleagues,

Recent statements by the Russian leadership indicate their preoccupation with realizing original Moscow's scenarios for Donbas and Ukraine, but, unfortunately, not implementing the Minsk agreements in good faith. It remains essential that the international community maintains its political and economic sanctions, which were imposed in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, until Moscow fully implements its Minsk commitments on peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas and exerts its influence on the militants it supports to do likewise. Until now this has not happened.

We urge Russia to restore its respect for the norms of international law and the OSCE principles and commitments, to halt its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman.