



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 973rd FSC Plenary Meeting
(28 April 2021, via video teleconferencing)
(Agenda item 2, General Statements,
on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine
and illegal occupation of Crimea”)

Mr. 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”.

Before I begin my statement, allow me to take a moment to pay tribute to the memory of the U.S. SMM paramedic Joseph Stone, who lost his life in the line of duty on 24 April 2017 near temporarily occupied residential area of Pryshyb.

Mr. Chairperson,

The last three weeks have been particularly intense and challenging for Ukraine and the OSCE due to unusual military activity of the Russian Armed Forces and concentration of about 110,000 troops near Ukraine's eastern borders and in the occupied Crimea. The large-scale military build-up gave rise to security concern of Ukraine and many other participating States and necessitated the activation of the Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011. To the disappointment of many, the Russian side did not choose to engage in a meaningful dialogue to dispel Ukraine’s legitimate concern.

On 23 April, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that Russian troops began pulling back from the Ukrainian border to their permanent bases.

While we welcome any steps that lead to the reduction of the military presence of the aggressor state and to the de-escalation of tensions in Donbas, we are aware that the reduction in the number of Russian troops near Ukrainian borders alone does not either halt the escalation or end the conflict.

The situation remains dangerous. There is a constant threat due to the presence of the Russian occupying forces in Ukrainian Crimea and certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Since January this year, Russia has significantly reinforced combat capabilities of its occupation forces (1st and 2nd Army Corps). Currently these formations consist of 28,000 servicemen and more than 2,000 representatives of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Russia continues providing logistical support to its occupation forces in eastern Ukraine. In 4 months of this year alone, Russia has sent approximately 19,000 tons of fuel, 355 tons of

munitions, 35 cars, tanks and MLRS through the uncontrolled segment of the state border in the conflict zone.

In contradiction to the international humanitarian law and its obligations under Protocol 2 to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Russian Federation continues to supply its forces with POM-2 anti-personnel mines, which pose significant threat to civilians. These types of mines are equipped with the self-detonation device, which can be activated in the timeframe of 4-100 hours.

The situation on the ground has also heavily deteriorated. In comparison to the end of 2020, the number of shelling this year has increased by 1.3 times and military losses among the Armed Forces of Ukraine have more than tripled.

As of 2 April, and since its introduction in July 2020, the ceasefire was violated by the Russian occupation forces 1074 times, including 138 times with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. As result, during this period, 25 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 83 were wounded.

To hide its numerous violations, the Russian side continues to restrict freedom of movement of the SMM and interfere with its assets. These actions 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. We call on Russia to take appropriate measures to that end.

Just from the beginning of this year until 20 March, the number of such restrictions reached 93% according to the SMM Chief Monitor report to the Permanent Council. On top of that, 94% of the Minsk-proscribed heavy weapons were stationed in the Russia-occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine according to the report.

Over the past two weeks only, the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were shelled by the Russian armed formations on 156 occasions with an extensive use of Minsk proscribed 82- and 120mm mortars, antitank gun MT12 "Rapira" as well as diverse grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms. On multiple occasions, the adversary resorted to the use of combat UAVs to drop grenade shells, and conducted distant mining. As a result of these acts of armed aggression by the Russian Federation, five Ukrainian servicemen were wounded, and four Ukrainian servicemen were killed.

According to the SMM, the Russian armed formations continued concentrating large quantities of heavy weapons close to the contact line. For the period from 29 March through 25 April, the Mission observed 294 weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and 561 weapons outside of designated storage sites on the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas.

The Russian occupation administrations in Donbas have launched a massive disinformation campaign to discredit the Armed Forces of Ukraine by spreading false information on alleged shelling of the temporarily occupied residential areas. One of the main goals of this campaign is to convince the local population of the alleged plans of Ukraine to de-occupy the territories of Donbas by conducting an offensive operation.

To fulfil these malicious plans, on 12-17 April, the Russian forces carried out several armed provocations with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons against the residential areas of Opytne, Pisky, Mariinka and Novomyhailivka from the direction of Donetsk city.

On the following slides, you may see some of the most glaring cases of ceasefire violations committed by the Russian armed formations since the end of March this year with the use of Minsk proscribed weapons, including those that caused damage to civilian infrastructure.

PRESENTATION

Slide 1 On 28 March (at around 2.05), Ukrainian positions near Vodiane and on 8 April, residential area of Vodiane settlement were shelled from the direction of occupied Uzhivka and Nova Tavria with the use of 120mm calibre munition.

Slide 2 On 29 March (at 06.15), the residential area in Zaitseve settlement, Bakhmut district of the Donetsk region (47°26'11.89"N 38°01'04.13"E) was under fire from the direction of occupied residential area of Zaitseve with the use of 73mm antitank grenade launcher (SPG-9 type).

Slide 3, 4 On 13 April (at around 04.45), the Russian armed formation unleashed fire against Ukrainian defenders near Maiorsk from the direction of the occupied Mines 6,7 and simultaneously employed combat UAV to drop VOG-25 grenade shells. As result of this armed assault, 3 Ukrainian servicemen were wounded.

Slide 5, 6 On 15 April (at 06.58-07.05), distant mining with the use of RPG POM-2 (3 shots) was conducted against the residential area of Novgorodske from the direction of occupied Zalizna Balka (approximate coordinates of the shelling 48°19'16,59N 37°54'18,24E).

Slide 7 On 17 April, a civilian site in Zaitseve settlement (Bakhmut district of the Donetsk region) was affected by shelling with the use of 120mm mortar from the direction of occupied Horlivka.

Slide 8 On 19 April (at 03.40), distant mining with the use of RPG POM-2 was carried out against the residential area in Zaitseve settlement from the direction of the occupied part of this settlement in the south.

Slide 9 On 22 April (at 19.54), the residential sector in Pivnichne settlement (48°23'54,92N 37°56'14,69E), Donetsk region, was shelled with the use of 120- (10 mines) and 82mm (5 mines) mortars from the direction of Mine named after Gagarin (48°21'38,04N 37°56'26,20E).

Slide 10 On 23 April (07.10-07.30), the residential area of Shumy, Donetsk region, was shelled with the use of 120mm munition (10 shots) from the direction of occupied Mines 6,7 (48°22'30,00N, 37°05'40,43E).

Slide 11 On 23 April, the residential area in Pivdenne settlement, Donetsk region, was affected by shelling with the use of 120mm mortar (8 mines) from the residential area in occupied Horlivka settlement.

Slide 12 On 24 April (21.18-22.50), the residential area in Vodiane settlement, Volnovakha district of the Donetsk region (47°08'52,00N 37°47'04,00E) was shelled with the use of 120mm (12 mines), 82mm (4 mines) and SPG (12 shots) from the direction of occupied Pikuzy village.

END OF PRESENTATION

Distinguished colleagues,

Against the background of the recent escalation, Ukraine has received unprecedented international support. We are grateful to our partners for their resolute and timely reaction to Russia's dangerous military escalation. However, we must not lose vigilance and should continue closely monitor the security situation, take further active steps to deter any aggressive intentions.

We urge the Russian side to take into full consideration the recommendations expressed by the delegations at the joint PC-FSC meeting on 14 April, convened under Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011, reverse its dangerous actions, and engage in a meaningful dialogue to dispel concerns of participating States over its military activity.

To this end, we would like to see consistent constructive practical steps by the Russian side that could be duly confirmed and verified.

In this connection, we reiterate that stationing of Russian troops on the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula and conduct of any military activities, including in the territorial waters of Ukraine, without the consent of Ukraine are illegal. Such actions contravene the fundamental OSCE principles and commitments further aggravating regional stability and security.

We condemn the conscription campaign launched by Russia in the beginning of April in the temporarily occupied Crimea as a gross violation of international humanitarian law.

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, Mr. Chairperson.