



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1273rd meeting of the Permanent Council,
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Mr. Chairperson,

I wish to start by reiterating our gratitude to the Albanian Chairmanship for organizing last week during the ASRC a special session on “Ensuring security and stability in the OSCE region in light of developments with respect to Ukraine”. As stressed by many delegations, these developments, that is Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, remain the most serious challenge to the European security. The large scale armed conflict between two participating States in the heart of Europe, in which one of the sides operates under the guise of illegal armed formations, continues to wreak havoc and destruction, claim human lives and undermine cooperation among the participating States.

Ukraine remains committed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. We do our best, even when the other party to it, the Russian Federation, continues to evade its responsibility, hiding behind its proxies in the temporarily occupied parts of Donbas and denying occupation of Crimea.

On 25 June, during the most recent meeting of the TCG, the Ukrainian delegation submitted for consideration of all participants a calendar plan for preparing and holding local elections in the certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, in line with the time limits envisaged by the Ukrainian legislation. The Ukrainian side reminded in this regard that holding those elections would be possible only after a comprehensive de-escalation, withdrawal of foreign military units and equipment, disarmament of illegal armed groups and restoration of control over the state border in the conflict zone by the Ukrainian government.

The delegation of Ukraine has also submitted a number of proposals on demining and ensuring security for the civilian population, establishment of new disengagement areas and reaching sustainable ceasefire, initiated discussions on serious environmental challenges, including safe storage of radioactive materials in the occupied parts of Donbas, and reiterated the need to ensure “all-for-all” mutual release of the detained persons. The Ukrainian side confirmed its willingness to open two additional checkpoints in the Luhansk region for humanitarian purposes, and to

provide in this regard the necessary security guarantees for infrastructure construction works at the checkpoints, if those guarantees will be used by the Russian armed formations for the purpose stated. The constructive character of the discussions, which took place at the meetings of the TCG and its Working Groups, has been emphasized by Special Representative Heidi Grau and Chief Monitor Halit Cevik.

Now let me highlight how the Russian side implements its part of commitments, in particular on the security track of the Minsk agreements.

Last week, the SMM reported 144 pieces of heavy weapons in violation of their withdrawal lines, all of them in Russia-occupied parts of Donbas. The number of ceasefire violations at the contact line remained at the previous level.

In this context, let me draw attention of the Permanent Council to the most recent UN Security Council resolution adopted yesterday, which demands cessation of hostilities and recognizes the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal. We call on the Russian Federation to fully implement this resolution to silence the mortars and guns in Donbas.

The SMM monitors were again denied access to the border areas, adjacent to the uncontrolled segment of the Ukrainian-Russian border. The Russian side, instead of withdrawal and disarmament of its illegal armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine, carried out military-style parades in Donetsk city and Luhansk city, observed by the SMM on 24 June. Similar parades were held in the temporarily occupied Crimea, including with the involvement of juveniles. These illegal actions by the Russian occupation authorities were condemned by the MFA of Ukraine in its statement, and the protest note was sent to the MFA of Russia.

We thank the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine for its readiness to continue operating in the occupied parts of Donbas even with the current very limited number of monitors, available after more than three months of Russia-imposed de-facto ban on entry to those areas for the SMM. Together with the entire OSCE community, we reiterate our call to the Russian Federation to lift immediately this ban and to ensure safe and unimpeded access of the Mission to the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine, in accordance with the SMM mandate. In the last two weeks, the Mission faced 43 active restrictions to its freedom of movement, all of them in the so-called "non-government-controlled areas".

We also urge the Russian side to stop attacking the SMM assets. Following the recent purposeful destruction of the camera system in Petrivske disengagement area, the Russian proxies destroyed two more cameras: on 22 June near Shyrokyne and on 30 June at the Oktiabr mine. The facts, provided by the SMM in the respective spot reports, clearly indicate responsibility of the Russian armed formations. We continue to condemn such attacks on the SMM and its assets, and we remind the Russian side of its political and financial responsibility in this regard.

Previously, Ukraine and many participating States raised the issue of Russian passports illegally provided and imposed to the local residents of the occupied parts of Donbas and Crimea. The owners of these passports were forced in particular to take part in the recent voting on amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The NGOs have already reported the cases, in which illegally detained Crimean Tatars were threatened and punished after they had refused to take part in

the illegal voting. The MFA of Ukraine has severely condemned this voting in the occupied parts of Ukraine as a violation of the fundamental norms and principles of international law and the legislation of Ukraine. As the delegation of Ukraine stated in the previous PC meeting, this also casts serious doubts on the overall voting results. We call on our international partners to respond to this yet another flagrant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russia, including through strengthening sanctions pressure.

It is regrettable that the Russian side does not abandon its plans to further integrate the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine into Russia's military, legal, economic and cultural space. In its most recent weekly report of 30 June, the SMM confirmed the decision of the Russian occupation authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk to establish Russian as the only so-called "official" language, according to which, for instance, the schools will discontinue the Ukrainian language component of their regular curricula as of September 2020. This represents another evidence of Russia's full control over the territories of Ukraine it illegally occupies. It also testifies to Kremlin's unwillingness to switch to the politico-diplomatic track of resolution of the conflict from the current policy of fueling it. We thank the SMM for reacting to the calls by the delegation of Ukraine and encourage the Mission to continue its work in establishing facts related to violations of OSCE principles and commitments.

Those who reject Russia's creeping integration of the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine face persecutions, illegal detentions and long term sentences. On 25 June, the Russian court dismissed the appeal to release six Ukrainian citizens – Crimean Tatar human rights activist Emir-Usein Kuku and five other Ukrainian Muslims, illegally sentenced under trumped-up charges to the terms from 7 to 19 years of prison in November 2019. This case is only one of the many, in which Russia misuses its national legislation to conduct a politically motivated campaign of repressions against the dissenting voices. We remind the Russian side that such actions constitute a flagrant violation of the norms of international humanitarian law and Russia's obligations as an occupying Power. We thank all participating States, which remain seized of this matter and raise the issue of temporarily occupied Crimea in the OSCE and other international fora. De-occupation of Crimea remains a key prerequisite for restoring respect for the OSCE core principles and enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area.

We again urge the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, militarization of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations, militants and their hardware from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.