



**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 792nd FSC Plenary Meeting**
(17 June 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)
Agenda item 2

Madam Chair,

In line with the Minsk agreements the ceasefire must be respected, heavy weapons withdrawn and foreign armed formations, military equipment as well as mercenaries removed from the territory of Ukraine. Regrettably, four months after the Minsk Package of measures was agreed it remains unfulfilled by Russia and Russia-backed militants.

In the aftermath of their massive attack on Debaltseve immediately after the introduction of ceasefire they continued with constant cease-fire violations marked by growing intensity. Although their offensive attempts near the Donetsk airport, and settlements of Shyrokyne, Mar'inka and Krasnohorivka last week were rebuffed, combined Russian-separatist forces have continued armed provocations, aimed at impeding de-escalation process.

Russia continues to maintain military command and control elements in eastern Ukraine, to coordinate joint military operations with the illegal armed groups, to support and train combined Russian-separatist forces. There are also new convincing evidences that the militants continue to be procured with weapons and ammunition from Russia.

The recent deliberate targeting of vital economic infrastructure in Donbas by the Russia-backed militants constitutes a new worrying development. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed separatists to gain control of additional territory will seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution of the conflict.

We underline Russian authorities' responsibility in this regard and call on the Russian Federation to use its influence over the pro-Russian militants to meet their Minsk commitments in full.

**Madam Chair,
Distinguished colleagues,**

We remain deeply worried about the continuing significant ceasefire violations by the pro-Russian militants and their disastrous impact on the civilian population. The SMM continues to provide reporting that demonstrates the failure of Russia and the militants it backs to comply with the commitments they made in Minsk. While Russia claims that abides by the Minsk agreements, the SMM continues to observe ceasefire violations and presence of forbidden heavy weapons in the exclusion zone.

In the morning of 3 June a powerful fighting erupted around the government-controlled town of **Mar'inka** (23km west-south-west of Donetsk). It was the biggest violation of the cease-fire by pro-Russian separatists after Debaltseve. The SMM observed the movement of a large amount of heavy weapons into "DPR-controlled areas – generally in a westerly direction towards the contact line – close to Mar'inka, preceding and during the fighting. The SMM registered shelling conducted by Russian troops and militants from the city of Donetsk.

During the last weekend, fighting intensified in Donetsk, with substantially more shelling observed. The level of violence in areas around **Donetsk airport** remains

high. Over a period of two days, the SMM at the JCCC observation point at Donetsk central railway station observed a total of at least 594 explosions caused by incoming and outgoing artillery and mortar fire, as well as small arms and light weapons, including heavy machine-gun fire. The SMM concluded that the explosions occurred at locations to the north, north-west, north-east, west, and south-west and at distances ranging between 2 and 10km from its position.

Also over the weekend from observation points located west of **Shyrokyne** (20km east of Mariupol), the SMM observed a total of 180 explosions caused by 82mm and 120mm mortars, automatic grenade launchers and artillery, heavy machine-gun, as well as small arms fire.

Ceasefire violations by the combined Russia-separatists forces are registered on a daily basis with a number of casualties among the Ukrainian servicemen and civilians continuing to rapidly grow. In the period since 4 till 16 June pro-Russian militants in Donbas shelled positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and civilian areas across the contact line **682** times using MLRS "Grad", bombardment artillery, mortars, anti-tank missile system, heavy guns, mounted grenade launcher and small arms against Ukraine's ATO Forces. As a result, **27** Ukrainian servicemen were killed, **162** – wounded.

Distinguished colleagues,

It should be noted that Russia and the militants it backs deny to the SMM the freedom of movement which impedes performance of verification tasks assigned to the SMM. The militants' actions also continue to endanger the safety and security of SMM monitors. In the latest example, the SMM reported a June 7 incident during which shots struck close to SMM vehicles at a government-controlled checkpoint in Mar'inka. Ukrainian soldiers took cover and the SMM patrol left the scene.

We reiterate that for the SMM to verify a withdrawal in line with the Minsk package, the SMM must have full access and monitor the movements and the storage of heavy weapons. We urge the Russian Federation to exert its influence on the illegal armed groups it supports to provide for the safe and unimpeded performance by the SMM of its verification functions.

Madam Chair,

The impact of the conflict on the human rights situation remains a serious concern to us. In its tenth report the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in particular highlights grave human rights abuses, intimidation and harassment of the local population perpetrated by Russia-backed separatists, including killings, torture and ill-treatment as well as illegal deprivation of liberty, forced labour, looting, ransom demands and extortion of money.

The Ukrainian side condemns the cynical attempts of Russian proxies from the so-called "DPR" to avoid responsibility for the flagrant violation of the Minsk agreements by forcing captured Ukrainian serviceman Roman Marchenko to repeat for the Russian media main guidelines of the Russian propaganda regarding hostilities in Mar'inka. Upon his release, the serviceman told he had been tortured and threatened to be killed if refused. The signs of torture were visible on footages from the so-called "press-conference". It was another proof that the Ukrainian servicemen in militants' captivity continue to face tortures and mistreatment.

I recall that the several cases of execution-style killings of Ukrainian servicemen by the militants have been recently confirmed, including by the Amnesty International. We reiterate our condemnation of this practice which constitutes a war crime under

international humanitarian law. We call on the Russian Federation to halt abuse of captured Ukrainian servicemen and to facilitate their release in line with the Minsk agreements.

Distinguished colleagues,

We have presented at the previous FSC Meeting the convincing evidences of violations of fundamental OSCE principles by the Russian Armed Forces and Russia-backed terrorists, who used Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for conducting reconnaissance of Ukraine's positions. In this connection we drew attention of the Forum to the notification format of Ukraine under the Vienna Document circulated on 9 June 2015 CBM/UA/15/0053/F10/O. The Ukrainian document provided numerous facts of documented violations by the Russian Federation of the international law and the national legislation of Ukraine relating to the airspace of a sovereign state during an active fulfilment of the military reconnaissance on the territory of Ukraine by Russia from 4 till 8 June 2015.

It runs against Russia's commitments in the OSCE that in its reply on 10 June 2015 CBM/RU/15/0068/F41/O the Russian Federation again refused to provide substantive response to the grounded concerns of the Ukrainian side.

Moreover, despite consistent calls from Ukraine and its international partners, Russia continues its illegal violations of the Ukrainian airspace. On 12-14 June 2015, Ukraine's ATO Forces along with the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine have observed 60 UAVs used by the Russian Armed Forces and Russia-backed terrorists to conduct reconnaissance of Ukraine's positions as well as Ukraine's state border with Russia.

We call on the Russian Federation to contribute to restoring security, trust and confidence in the OSCE region by implementing in good faith the relevant OSCE politico-military instruments. We urge Russia to immediately halt its violations of the airspace of Ukraine and guarantee no repetition of the above-mentioned unlawful activities.

Madam Chair,

Unfortunately, while Ukraine has acted faithfully on all provisions of the Minsk agreements, the Russia's actions continue to run contrary to the letter and spirit of the Minsk agreements.

Therefore, it remains critical for de-escalation that the Russian Federation and its proxies halt cease-fire violations, that they withdraw the heavy weaponry and allow unhindered SMM verification, that the inflow of manpower and weaponry from Russia stops and the Russian regular troops and fighters are pulled back to Russia, that effective control on the Ukrainian-Russian state border in Donbas is established.

It remains imperative to ensure that the violations of international norms and fundamental principles of the OSCE are corrected and Russia's respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders is restored.

Thank you, Madam Chair.