



**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 1235<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
11 July 2019

**Mr. Chairperson,**

I wish to start by thanking the Slovak Chairmanship for organizing the Informal Ministerial Gathering in High Tatras. The discussions, which we had during this meeting, allowed us to focus attention on the necessity to restore respect for the OSCE core principles and commitments. As I underscored in my statement to the distinguished audience, we should work on the real practical responses, with the use of the OSCE toolbox and executive structures, to the grave security and humanitarian challenges stemming from Russia's violations of the international law.

To mitigate their consequences, Ukraine needs further staunch support of the international community. We are grateful to all our partners, which continue their politico-diplomatic and economic pressure on the Russian Federation to make it abide to its own commitments, including within the framework of the Minsk agreements. Last Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup> Ukraine – EU Summit took place in Kyiv. In the joint statement following it, the EU reiterated strong condemnation of the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014, reaffirmed full commitment to restrictive measures against Russia and made a number of calls to the Russian side on the issues, which we regularly discuss in this hall. The day before, on 7 July, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy and President of the European Council Donald Tusk visited Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area to see in their own eyes the current situation on the ground. The President of Ukraine confirmed readiness of the Ukrainian side to start rebuilding the bridge near Stanytsia Luhanska in the near future.

The consolidated position of the international community on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine was also made clear at the OSCE PA Annual meeting on 4–8 July. The growing scope of security challenges brought by Russia to the OSCE area was highlighted, in particular, in the adopted "Resolution on the Militarisation by the Russian Federation of the Temporarily Occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov". We invite the delegations to read it carefully. In particular, it encourages the OSCE Chairmanship, Institutions and participating States to facilitate the immediate and unconditional release of Ukrainian servicemen held in Russia's captivity and supports development of the relevant measures aimed at deterring further aggressive actions and impediment of the

freedom of shipping by the Russian Federation in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. We urge the Conflict Prevention Centre to pay utmost attention to this call and to submit practical proposals for consideration of the Slovak Chairmanship and participating States.

Politico-diplomatic steps and restrictive measures remain our main tools in the conditions of Russia's persistent denial of its role as a party to the conflict and its unwillingness to withdraw the armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine. The SMM continues to report in its weekly reports on dozens of weapons observed in violation of their withdrawal lines and hundreds of them outside of designated storage sites, all of them but few in Russia-occupied areas of Donbas. Russia's well-known training areas in Buhaivka, Shymshynivka, Kruhlyk, and Myrne continue to host dozens of tanks, howitzers and mortars in each location, which remain there in violation of Russia's commitments. Kremlin's proxies persist in denying access to the SMM ground patrols, especially in southern part of the Donetsk region, and continue jamming and attacking its technical assets.

On 5 July, the SMM lost another mini-UAV in this specific area of southern Donetsk region between Mariupol, border and the Sea of Azov, in which the Russian armed formations try to establish a no-go area for the SMM. We took note that the SMM had concluded its search for the long-range UAV lost on 27 June near Russia-occupied Zaichenko in this exact area after conducting 25 mini-UAV flights. We urge the Russian side to lift all restrictions to the SMM patrols and to allow them to find the debris of long-range UAV. The participating States, which finance the use of these valuable assets, must be in a position to find out the facts on the cause of the crash.

Establishment of facts on the ground is Russia's greatest fear. It is the reason why it continues denying access of the SMM, as well as other international mechanisms, to the occupied Crimea. Kremlin's regime does not want to shed light on the ongoing serious violations and abuses committed against residents of Crimea, pressure on Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, and widespread misuse of counter-terrorism and anti-extremism laws to suppress the dissenting voices. Last week, another Crimean Tatar was detained with the charge of publishing video in a social network 6 years ago, before the start of Russia's occupation of Crimea. The application of Russia's legal system imposed after occupation is contrary to international humanitarian law, and its retroactive action goes against the rule of law. We strongly condemn this continued unlawful practice.

In two days, on 13 July, Ukrainian film-maker Oleg Sentsov will spend his next birthday in a penal colony in the northern Russia. His fate reminds us on dozens of Ukrainian citizens, whom Russia continues to hold behind bars under politically motivated charges, despite numerous international appeals, including the OSCE.

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

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**