



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna**

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 973rd FSC Plenary Meeting under the Chairpersonship of Armenia**
(28 April 2021 at 10.00, via video teleconferencing)
(Agenda item 1, Compliance with International Humanitarian Law)

Mr. Chairperson,

Protection of human rights in armed conflicts is one of the priorities of Ukraine's state policy on the implementation of norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law.

For more than seven years, the Russian aggression continues to take lives of civilians in Ukraine. This international armed conflict and the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, turned the subject of International Humanitarian Law implementation and protection of civilians for Ukraine from an academic to a very practical and daily issue.

According to the thirty-first report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the human rights situation in Ukraine, during the entire conflict period the Office recorded in total 3,077 conflict-related civilian deaths (1,828 men, 1,064 women, 99 boys, 49 girls and 37 adults whose sex is unknown). Taking into account the 298 persons, who perished on board Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 on 17 July 2014, the total death toll of the conflict on civilians, has reached at least 3,375. The number of injured civilians so far is estimated to exceed 7,000.

As of today, it is expected that more than 3.4 million people will require humanitarian assistance in 2021. Over half a million people live in the areas directly affected by the armed conflict, while another two million people are exposed to landmines and explosive remnants of war. This area, according to the UN, has already become one of the most mine-contaminated stretches of land in the world which is a result of ongoing armed aggression of the Russian Federation.

Despite Ukraine's efforts, Russia's aggression continues to affect the full enjoyment of economic and social rights by the civilian population, especially by more than five million residents of the conflict-affected areas and internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, the dire humanitarian situation in the conflict-affected areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions continues to deteriorate.

Russia seriously violates norms of international humanitarian law, changing the demographic composition of local population, forcibly drafting Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied Crimea into its armed forces and forcing the application of its legislation.

According to the official data, since 2014 over 50,000 Ukrainian citizens had to leave Crimea. According to different estimates, the number of Russian citizens that moved from Russia to the peninsula amounts up to 500,000. Only in 2020 over the course of 9 months at least 43,000 Russian citizens relocated to Crimea. The actual number is much higher.

In violation of the norms of international humanitarian law, in particular the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Russian occupation administration recruits its Armed Forces in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine. Since 2015, the Russian occupation administration has already conducted 12 conscription campaigns on the Crimean peninsula, illegally enlisting about 28,000 people, and on 1 April 2021, it started another conscription campaign.

Russian occupation authorities conduct oppressive policy against Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian communities in Crimea, violating political, cultural and religious rights. Many of these crimes are documented in the UN GA resolutions on the situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine (71/205 of 19 December 2016, 72/190 of 19 December 2017, 73/263 of 22 December 2018, 74/168 of 18 December 2019 and 75/192 of 16 December 2020) and reports of the UN Secretary General pursuant to these resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

In order to ensure compliance with International Humanitarian Law during hostilities, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine issued an order that confirmed the updated version of the Instruction on the procedure for the implementation of the International humanitarian law in the Armed Forces as of 23.03.2017 (entered into force on 04.08.2017).

The Instruction introduces general International Humanitarian Law limitations for hostilities, such as the prohibition of indiscriminate bombardment, attacks on civilians, destruction or occupation of hostile or civilian property, except in cases of military necessity. The Instruction also emphasizes the need of civilians to be protected when choosing a place and method for stationing troops, conducting combat operations with minimal damage to civilians, including the

use of maps bearing labeled protected and civilian objects, as well as standardized signs to indicate minefields.

This legal document, along with the Armed Forces Charter, determines the conduct of the military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and provides protection of civilians, as required by the International Humanitarian Law.

The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, also organizes International Humanitarian Law training seminars on a regular basis.

Among other legal efforts, on April 26, 2017 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Decree № 329 «On the Establishment of an Interagency Commission on the Application and Implementation of International Humanitarian Law in Ukraine».

The adoption of the Decree facilitates the proper implementation of the international humanitarian law on the territory of Ukraine, in particular the implementation of the international legal obligations of Ukraine arising from the Geneva conventions on the protection of victims of war of 12 August 1949.

Since 2014, the beginning of the Russian aggression against my country, Ukraine has been able to do a lot to protect civilians. However, much work remains to be done. We also count on the support and assistance of the international community in the implementation of the relevant tasks.

I thank you.