



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

**Statement in response to the CiO Special Representative in Ukraine  
and the TCG Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen and the SMM Chief Monitor  
Yaşar Halit Çevik**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1338<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
7 October 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

I would like to start with expressing gratitude to Ambassador Çevik and all SMM monitors for their everyday tireless work which they do in very difficult conditions.

I also want to welcome Ambassador Kinnunen in his first appearance to the Council in his capacity as CiO Special Representative in Ukraine and the TCG.

**Excellencies,**

Ukraine stays committed to the peaceful politico-diplomatic resolution of the conflict started by Russia.

However, we can succeed only if Russia faithfully implements its obligations, as it was well illustrated by a drop of about 80 per cent of all ceasefire violations, as well as by a drop in numbers of civilian casualties we were witnessing in the first three months of the strengthened ceasefire enacted in July 2020.

However, our illusive expectations for a tangible progress were soon dispelled by Russia's unwillingness to give up the controlled escalation as a leverage of pressure on Ukraine. Developments on the ground demonstrate unchanged Russia's intent to maintain occupation and use military force for achieving its political goals of forcing Ukraine and its people into submission.

Any initiatives suggested by Ukraine on the security, political, and humanitarian tracks of the TCG work have been conditioned by Russia, which links them with a so-called "direct dialogue".

As the Russian Federation pushes its own agenda within the TCG instead of engaging in a meaningful discussion as a party to the conflict and implementing its obligations under the Minsk agreements, the security situation in the region continues to be heated up by Moscow in a controlled mode.

Such a cynical approach costs human life. Current daily average of 239 ceasefire violations – compared with those 20 in the first three months of strengthened ceasefire – has already resulted in the increase of civil casualties and damage to civilian properties and infrastructure.

While the Russian Federation is using every occasion to try to blame Ukraine for any new casualty, it appears that the SMM reportedly continues to face impediments when visiting educational and medical facilities in the occupied

territories, including when trying to corroborate reports of damage or to confirm civilian casualties.

What kind of instructions are they waiting from the Russian supervisors?

It is little wonder that the surge in ceasefire violations coincided with the large-scale military activities along the border with Ukraine and in the Ukrainian occupied territory this spring. With the 19 battalion tactical groups still at the border after the end of military drills “Zapad 2021”, the Russian side is yet to deliver on transparency measures under the 2011 Vienna Document, as recommended at the joint PC-FSC meeting on 14 April. This is a matter of respect for this Council and the distinguished delegations, as well as for its obligations within the OSCE.

In parallel, the SMM is witnessing notable and systematic restrictions of operational capabilities in the occupied territories. It includes UAVs jamming, security threats, unjustified COVID restrictions and security checks and so on - a well-known pattern of Russia lasting for years.

Is there any other explanation for over 90% of all these restrictions to SMM activities taking place in the occupied territories, especially in the border areas, than to conceal Russia’s illegal activities therein?

The recent decision not to extend the BOM mandate is of the same nature, signalling about Russia’s plans to proceed with unabated supplies of weaponry and personnel through the uncontrolled part of the border, which may lead to further escalation of the conflict.

We also noted that the Mission was limited in access to occupied areas along the coast of the Sea of Azov. This is happening when commercial vessels continue facing artificial delays and the Black Sea and Azov Sea areas are being gradually militarized by Russia with Crimea turning into Russia’s military outpost.

We also condemn another forced conscription campaign announced in violation of IHL on October 1 in the occupied territories of both Crimea and Donbas. As of now, more than 30 thousand Ukrainian citizens have been illegally drafted to the Russian Armed Forces since 2014. The Russian occupiers are heavily campaigning among Crimean minors on the need to join the ranks of Russian militaries.

These developments give newfound relevance to our previous requests to the SMM to report on socio-economic consequences of Russia’s illegal activities in the naval areas and on the forced conscription by the occupying Power. We also stress the need to start remote monitoring of Crimea, especially given the recent detentions of Crimean Tatars on 3, 4 and 5 September, which continue the long-established practice of the Russian occupying forces to illegally use Russia’s legislation as a pretext to detain dissenting voices under trumped-up charges.

In this regard, we welcome interviewing people at the administrative border line with Crimea, as outlined in the report and encourage the Mission to further develop this practice.

### **Excellencies,**

The latest developments are yet more proof that security matters as a fundamental prerequisite for any other developments in the peaceful settlement process.

However, the illegal elections in Ukraine’s occupied territories, which were accompanied with simplified and large-scale passportization, added a new dimension to the conflict displaying Russia’s intention to derail the political and humanitarian process as well.

All this demands a continuous and special attention from participating States and SMM to the passportization and Russian legislation being applied in the occupied territories as well as assessment of how it complies with Russia’s obligations under the Minsk agreements and what implications it would have for people-to-people contacts and the future reintegration of these regions.

Furthermore, the fact that a number of civilian crossings across the contact line from January to August 2021 fell by over 95% has another negative impact on the rights of the Ukrainian citizens residing in the occupied territories.

Giving a final green light by the Russian Federation to opening of the two additional EECs near Schastia and Zolote, as well as to finalization of document on demining, along with four additional disengagement areas, would be very indicative whether Russia is ready to improve the humanitarian situation in the region.

Nor should we overlook severely restricted movement to and from Crimea for Ukrainian nationals. This is something the SMM focused back in 2015 and we hope it will continue to be the case.

In the light of the decision not to extend the BOM mandate, enhancing the SMM's technical monitoring capabilities in this area and opening new forward patrol bases could be a litmus test for Russia's good will.

We call upon the Russian Federation to give the necessary security assurances to support the opening of forward patrol bases, especially in the border areas. This goes exclusively about Ukraine's territories. We also encourage the SMM to further report about the impediments on the way to opening of the FPBs.

We fully support and welcome the resumption of full-fledge flights of the long-range UAVs, which would increase SMM monitoring effectiveness. We encourage the OSCE Chairpersonship and Secretariat to keep addressing the issue of security and transparency on the state border between Russia and Ukraine as a matter of priority.

We also urge the Russian Federation to keep muted its jamming equipment, which was spotted on numerous occasions in the occupied territories as well as to start practical work on the implementation of para 4 of the Minsk protocol providing for permanent monitoring and verification of the Ukrainian-Russian state border together with the creation of a security area in the border regions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

### **Excellencies,**

Concluding my statement, I wish to once again thank Ambassador Çevik and his entire team for their hard work. Ukraine supports the activities of the SMM and is convinced that proper engagement of the SMM, in particular monitoring of the security situation in the area, will contribute to reducing tension as well as to preventing further possible provocations along the line of contact

Ambassador Kinnunen, I wish you all success in your endeavours within the TCG. I would like to reassure you of Ukraine's full support of your efforts aimed to facilitate the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity based on the norms and principles of international law.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**