



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
in response to the Address by the President
of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1349th meeting of the Permanent Council,

16 December 2021

Madam Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his statement.

The Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, launched in 2014, brought over 14,000 people killed and almost 40,000 wounded. It has led to enormous sufferings and deprivation of basic rights of the population in the conflict-affected and occupied parts of Ukraine. More than 1.5 million Crimean and Donbas residents have been forced to flee their homes as internally displaced persons.

We appreciate the dedicated work of the International Committee of the Red Cross on ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance to the victims of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It makes an important contribution in alleviating the consequences of the external aggression and occupation.

In this context, let me underline the continuing importance of addressing such issues as people missing in connection with the conflict, alleviating the risks for the population of mines and other unexploded ordnance through demining activities, as well as ensuring access to health services in the occupied parts of Donbas.

Mr. President,

We deplore that Russia continues to consistently ignore the modalities agreed by the ICRC, Ukraine and Russia concerning the role of the ICRC in delivery of humanitarian assistance. Instead, it continues its illegal practice of sending so-called “humanitarian convoys” in violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principles of international humanitarian law.

We encourage the ICRC to enhance the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law in the non-government-controlled areas of Ukraine and in the occupied Crimea, which would significantly contribute to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We draw attention to the fact that Russia and its armed formations continue to deny access to the illegally detained persons. Some of them have been in detention for years now, and their fate and conditions remain unknown.

We therefore emphasize that all restrictions on operation of the international humanitarian organizations in the occupied parts of Donbas must be lifted and the ICRC must have unhindered and unconditional access to all illegally detained persons.

Mr. President,

We also encourage the active engagement of the ICRC to help people suffering from the repressive policies and illegal detentions in the occupied Crimea.

Of particular concern is the critical situation of over 100 political prisoners, most of them Crimean Tatars, illegally detained by the Russian Federation.

We would be grateful for the ICRC's active involvement in seeking access to those detained, monitoring the observance of their rights and facilitating their immediate and unconditional release.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.