



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

## **Statement in response to the current issue raised by the Russian Federation**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1311<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
29 April 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

I wish to exercise my right of reply to the false accusations, just delivered by the Russian delegation.

By raising this issue at the meeting of the Permanent Council, the Russian side deliberately diverts attention of the OSCE community from its own armed aggression and hybrid warfare led against Ukraine since 2014.

Besides, we have just witnessed the textbook example of how skillfully Russia distorts the facts. This was a classic example of disinformation and propaganda in action.

What happened in Odesa 7 years ago was indeed a tragedy, in which 48 people paid the ultimate price for Kremlin's massive efforts to destabilize Ukraine. Following the attempted annexation of Crimea in March and invasion of the Russian mercenaries into the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in April, the Russian leadership was intending to further undermine Ukraine's territorial integrity by creating puppet "entities" in the South-Eastern regions of Ukraine. Not only Donetsk, Luhansk and Odesa were targeted, but other cities and regional centres such as Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Dnipro and Mariupol were flooded by Russian propaganda, money and weapons.

The tragic events of 2 May 2014 in Odesa started with the clashes initiated by well-organized and armed pro-Russian forces. Two pro-Ukrainian activists were killed. What happened later is known: outnumbered pro-Russian militants retreated to the Trade Union House, locked themselves in it, and the siege which started, has finally ended up with fire and the deaths of dozens. The circumstances of this fire still raise questions. But the investigation has found that there were five points of fire origin in the building and only one of them could be ignited from the outside.

Russia's hand in fuelling clashes in Odesa became crystal clear when during two stages of mutual release of detainees in September and December 2019, Moscow demanded the release of at least nine anti-Ukrainian extremists involved in organising or participating in clashes.

We urge the Russian side to stop speculating on human tragedies, admit its responsibility for destabilizing and attacking Ukraine, and proceed to peaceful resolution of the conflict it had initiated in 2014 and continues to fuel until now.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**