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Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 1000th FSC PLENARY MEETING
(9 February 2022)**

Agenda item 2, General Statements, on the subject of “Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea”

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the subject of Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea.

While talking about the indivisibility of security in the OSCE area and an obligation not to strengthen own security at the expense of the security of other states, the Russian Federation is doing exactly the opposite.

Despite Russia’s claims that its troops along Ukraine’s border do not pose any threat to anyone, their numbers continue growing. According to the recent estimates, the Russian side has already deployed 118,700 troops (72 battalion tactical groups) in the vicinity of the border with Ukraine and in the temporarily occupied Crimea. If existing trends continue, one can expect that the group of Russian forces will reach 134,000 troops soon.

On top of that, today, a group of six large amphibious assault ships of Russia’s Northern and Baltic Fleets, capable to land assault troops and armour, arrived to the Black Sea.

Another fact that raises our concern is the deployment of Russian Forces to Belarus for the “Union Resolve 2022” joint drills (that includes 5,200 servicemen, up to 100 tanks, up to 300 armoured vehicles, and up to 120 artillery systems and mortars units).

We are also concerned about the covert redeployment from Russia to Belarus and participation in the exercise of highly mobile units of the Russian Armed Forces of the 5th, 35th and 36th All-Military Armies of the Eastern Military District of Russia (Ussuriysk, Belogorsk, Ulan-Ude), as well as units of the 98th, 106th Airborne Divisions (Ivanovo, Tula), and the 31st Separate Airborne Assault Brigade (Ulyanovsk).

We strongly condemn these actions of the Russian Federation aimed at further undermining European and regional stability and endangering security situation along the Ukraine's borders.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing military build-up, the Russian Federation continues to accuse Ukraine and its international partners of the so-called „preparations to resolve the conflict in Donbas and to liberate Crimea by force”.

These are false narratives. When combined with the refusal of the Russian Federation to explain the unprovoked build-up of its own troops along the Ukrainian borders, it may be a sign of Russia's intentions to find a pretext for a possible another armed invasion.

Another worrying trend is a significant increase in the combat capabilities of the Russian occupation forces in Donbas. At present, these formations number up to 35,000 personnel, of which about 3,000 are servicemen of the regular Russian Armed Forces at command posts and other major combat positions.

In the Russia-occupied border areas, illegal border crossing by freight trains and convoys of trucks, delivering weapons to the Russian armed formations in Donbas, is, regrettably, a common practice. In January, the occupation forces, deployed in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, were supplied with 9,000 tons of fuel, a number of tanks, armoured fighting vehicles, self-propelled artillery systems and additional UAVs as well as other weaponries and ammunition transferred through the segment of the Russian-Ukrainian state border, temporarily not controlled by the Government of Ukraine.

The Russian Federation continues to engage new personnel into its military service and to hold military exercises aimed at strengthening combat readiness of the occupation troops. Such drills are conducted in the occupied territories on a regular basis under the supervision of special commissions established by military authorities of the Russian Armed Forces.

The Russian occupation forces continues to shell positions of the Joint Forces, use UAVs and conduct remote mining. Starting from 27 July 2020, the Russian side violated the ceasefire 3,096 times, including 835 times with the use of weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements. In total, since the beginning of the current attempt to introduce full and comprehensive ceasefire, 75 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 309 were wounded in action.

The most recent case occurred on 7 February 2022, when a Ukrainian soldier was wounded near Pisky in Donetsk region as a result of sniper fire by the occupation forces from the direction of the Lozovskyi settlement. Earlier, on 5 February 2022, the

occupation forces shelled the positions of the Joint Forces with the use of small arms and 30 mm calibre AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher from the direction of the Yasne settlement located in the occupied territory of Donetsk region. As result, one soldier was wounded. In this regard, we reiterate that the full and comprehensive ceasefire is a basic precondition for the peaceful resolution and must be implemented immediately.

We are also extremely concerned that the Russian side continues to shell residential areas and civilian infrastructure objects in the conflict zone. It is particularly disturbing that the weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements are used for these purposes. On 2 February 2022, the occupation forces used a UAV to drop a VOG-17 grenade on the Hnutove entry-exit checkpoint in Donetsk region. Ukraine considers this attack as a blatant violation of norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law, as well as all agreements reached with the Russian Federation within the N4 and the Trilateral Contact Group. We call on the Russian side to act fully in line with the Additional Measures to Strengthen the Ceasefire agreed by the TCG on 22 July 2020 and to stop its regular violations of the ceasefire, in particular with the use of the UAVs and Minsk-proscribed weapons.

Mr Chairperson,

Unfortunately, despite all calls on the Russian Federation as a party to the conflict and an occupying Power, the situation on the freedom of movement of the OSCE SMM continues to deteriorate, as it is reflected in the Mission's numerous reports. In February alone, the Mission issued two Spot Reports on the restrictions of movement accidents that occurred in the occupied territories. The Russian occupation forces widely use radio electronic warfare systems against the SMM's UAVs. In particular, according to the OSCE SMM Daily Report 27/2022, on 4 February 2022, the Mission's mini-UAV experienced GPS signal interference near Verkhnohyrokiivske in the non-Government controlled area in Donetsk region after which the Mission lost spatial control over it.

We urge the Russian Federation as an occupying Power to ensure unrestricted and unconditional access of the SMM throughout the occupied territories of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, including areas adjacent to the temporarily uncontrolled by the Government of Ukraine segment of the state border. We are convinced that international monitoring is essential to stop the conflict.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to de-escalate current security situation, end its aggression against Ukraine, de-occupy the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, stop the ongoing militarisation of the Azov-Black Sea region and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including the withdrawal of its armed forces, mercenaries, armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.