



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

FSC.DEL/47/16  
24 February 2016

ENGLISH only

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 813<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(24 February 2016 at 09.00, Hofburg)  
(Agenda item 2)

**Madam Chairperson,**

As reported in the previous meetings, the situation in Donbas along the contact line has been deteriorating and remains extremely tense. Continuous cease-fire violations by the Russia-backed militants have an upward trend. These actions aim at provoking the Ukrainian Armed Forces to respond and further escalation, undermining the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Today we register about 40 thousand-strong pro-Russian military forces including over 7 thousand Russian regular troops stationed in the occupied area of Donbas. Russian regular troops perform continuous military exercises both on the territory of the Ukrainian Donbas and near the Ukrainian state border. Often these manoeuvres are carried out jointly with the illegal armed formations. The force is commanded and coordinated by the Russian generals and military officers. Subversion and reconnaissance groups keep operating and running their illegal activities, including with the use of advanced technologies. A recent example, on 19 February near the village of Grodivka in Donetsk oblast, UAVs managed by the militants three times attacked with incendiary grenades the warehouses of the 93rd mechanized brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The timely response of the Ukrainian military personnel allowed preventing serious consequences of those attacks. Outbreaks of fire caused by explosions were localized in a timely manner.

Russia consistently escalates pressure on Ukraine concentrating large amount of military personnel and equipment close to the Ukrainian border and in the occupied Crimea. There are about 50 battalion tactical groups (about 53 thousand servicemen) deployed on the Russian side of the border. Russia's military presence in Crimea doubled over the last year. Russia concentrates landing ship forces in the Sea of Azov and prepares facilities for deployment of nuclear weapons in the occupied Crimea.

New facts of replenishment with military personnel, weapons and equipment, ammunitions and fuel supplies for the Russian military units in the occupied territories have been registered. Russia continues to deliver sophisticated weapons to Donbas: artillery systems (including MLRS),

surveillance and secure communication devices, drones and detecting systems, air defense systems, tanks and others. Some of these weapons are in use only in Russia and have never been on the inventory of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Recently, two trains from Russia with military machinery (15 wagons) have been observed upon arrival to the town of Illovaysk, loaded with diesel fuel (up to 180 tons), ammunition and armaments (10 wagons).

The Russian regular forces continue to engage in subversive and combat operations in Donbas. According to available reports on 19 February 9 Russian servicemen were killed and 8 were wounded during the combat clashes near the town of Mar'inka in Donetsk oblast. Bodies of the killed Russian citizens were secretly removed from Donetsk to Russia. On 21 February at the Mariupol direction another Russian sabotage and reconnaissance group had casualties: 3 soldiers were killed and 5 wounded. The names of the killed Russian servicemen: squad commander sergeant L. Nikitin (born 24.09.1995 in the Arkhangelsk city), and privates I.Sidorov and V.Petrachenkov.

**Madam Chairperson,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

Attempts by combined Russian-separatists forces to escalate the situation on the ground in Donbas continue. Reportedly, last week during a secret visit of the Russian President assistant, Vladislav Surkov to Donetsk city the preparedness for resuming hostilities was discussed. A similar visit took place to Luhansk earlier. The combined Russian-separatist forces continue to contemplate military advance to the administrative borders of the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Furthermore, destabilization of situation in other Ukrainian regions, first of all - Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhya oblasts, remains a matter of particular interest for Moscow. After Surkov's visit, we have witnessed the escalating the propaganda hysteria in so-called "DPR" and "LPR" concerning allegedly pending offensive. Against the backdrop of increasing attacks by militants, the recent developments may indicate the preparation (or simulation) of the offensive at several directions.

Only over the last two weeks Ukrainian positions and the nearby residential areas were shelled with an **average intensity of 54 times per day** with the use of infantry fighting vehicles, 120mm and 82mm mortars, MRLSs. **8 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 22 wounded.**

**Distinguished colleagues,**

We note with concern that despite the SMM's mandate and the agreements in the Normandy format the OSCE SMM does not have full, secure and unhindered access to all territories currently not under control of the Ukrainian Government. The SMM's access to the Ukrainian-Russia border

remains problematic. There are numerous facts of intimidation of the SMM observers. According to Deputy Head of the SMM Alexander Hug, in January this year the monitors encountered up to 100 cases of restrictions on the right of free movement in the ATO area. For 80% of these restrictions the responsibility lies with the so-called "DPR" and "LPR" militants. The glaring incidents of intimidation with violence took place on the territory controlled by the militants. In February (up to 17th) members of the SMM 60 times were restricted the right of free movement, overwhelming majority of these cases again took place on the territory controlled by the militants.

Unfortunately we still have a long way to go for resolving the conflict. The agreement on sustainable cease-fire has not yet been secured, the SMM cannot freely move to monitor and verify. These are the tasks that must be accomplished as a priority and a basic requirement for progress on other aspects of the Minsk agreements.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Ukraine again calls on Russia to take the necessary steps and to exert its influence on the militants it backs to make sure that the SMM to Ukraine is able to operate and perform its mandate enjoying full freedom of movement, safety and security in the occupied areas. We urge to halt military provocations, to withdraw heavy weapons from the contact line in a verifiable manner, to stop provision of ammunition and logistical support to the militants.

We wish to emphasise the imperative for the OSCE community to continue to focus on seeking practical ways to address the on-going violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to resolve the conflict by peaceful means with full respect to the OSCE core principles and commitments.

We urge Russia to return to the tenets of the international law, to cease its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**