



ENGLISH only

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 807th FSC Plenary Meeting
(16 December 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)
(Agenda item 1)**

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the last regular plenary meeting of the Forum for Security and Cooperation before the winter recess let me first of all express sincere appreciation to Norwegian Chairmanship for the work done in the third trimester of 2015 as well as for its professionalism and dedication shown in the challenging circumstances dominated by continued Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

In the course of the Norwegian Chairmanship the Forum was actively engaged in reviewing military aspects of the crisis. Our deliberations and evidence presented in the FSC have reaffirmed that the crisis stems from the Russia's military aggression and flagrant violations of OSCE principles and commitments. We are grateful to the OSCE participating States for solidarity and firmness in upholding Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We warmly welcome the next FSC Chairmanship of the Netherlands and wish them every success in guiding our work in the first trimester of 2016. I avail myself of this opportunity to express gratitude to the delegation of Montenegro, the outgoing FSC Troika member, for effectively steering the Forum's work in difficult time, when the Russian aggression against Ukraine remained a matter of utmost concern for the OSCE community. It gives me also a great pleasure to greet Poland as a new member of the FSC Troika.

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,**

Ukraine continues to implement fully and in good faith its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including on withdrawal of weapons under the Addendum to the Minsk Package of measures of 29 September 2015. As we informed, on 23 November the Armed Forces of Ukraine have completed the withdrawal of tanks and weapons below 100mm calibre in the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts to the established distances.

However, assessing the present situation in Donbas we remain deeply concerned over the on-going armed provocations by the pro-Russian illegal armed groups, which prevent return to the sustainable ceasefire and de-escalation, observed in September-October. Over the past week the militants' continued attacks and shellings using arms of battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, GRAD systems, 120mm and 82mm mortars, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms, having the most intensive ones near Donetsk, Pisky, Avdiivka, Opytne, Horlivka, Krasnohorivske, Novohorodske, Zaitseve, Mayorske, Luhanske, Shyrokyne, Sahanka, Tryohizbenka and Pavlopol'. In particular, on 10 December the SMM conducted crater analysis at several locations. In government-controlled Krasnohorivka (21km west of Donetsk), Zoriane (30km west-north-west of Donetsk) and Oleksandropil (30km west of Donetsk), the SMM analysed five craters. It assessed that four of them were caused by multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS; BM-21 Grad 122mm) rockets (two in Zoriane and two in Oleksandropil), which was evident from the shrapnel found at the sites. The rockets were assessed to have been fired from an east-south-easterly direction. The SMM assessed that the crater in Krasnohorivka was caused by a 125mm tank round. The SMM assessed all craters as being less than 48 hours old, which

was supported by the residents' assertions that the shelling had occurred on 8 and 9 December.

The Ukrainian military continued to register numerous attempts by the pro-Russian militants of planting mines, conducting subversive operations into the tactical rears of the ATO forces along the contact line.

According to available information, with the approach of the deadline for implementation of the Minsk agreements the Russian Military Command gave an order to the advanced units of the 1st Army Corps in the occupied territories of Donetsk region to blow up old mine fields, unexploded ordnance and detonating devices in order to present them to the OSCE SMM as evidence of ceasefire violations by the ATO forces. We continue to witness the inclination of the Russian military and the militants to gross manipulation and falsification.

Distinguished colleagues,

Combined Russian-separatist forces in Donbas continue to shell the peaceful settlements and Ukrainian armed forces positions in the ATO zone. **During the period from 9 till 15 December** the Ukrainian side of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination **registered over 160 violations of ceasefire** of the ATO positions by pro-Russian militants, compelling the Ukrainian Armed Forces to open fire in response in situations when life was at risk. The Ukrainian side considers such provocative actions of pro-Russian militants as purposeful steps to destabilize situation. Every day we register an increasing number of attacks on the Ukrainian armed forces positions with average amount of 26 times per day. As a result of these attacks **2 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 4 were wounded.**

These escalating attacks and provocations, also registered by the OSCE SMM, indicate that the combined-Russian separatist forces in Donbas have not withdrawn all heavy weapons from the contact line to the appropriate distances. The growing number of ceasefire violations demonstrates the militants' deliberate intention to derail the peace process from the de-escalation path, threatens the ceasefire and progress on the Minsk agreements implementation.

We would like once again to draw attention of the Forum to new evidence of the presence of the regular armed forces and the modern military equipment of the Russian Federation in Donbas.

In particular, on 11 December **the Russian modern anti-aircraft missile system "Luchnik-E" was registered** near the occupied city of Donetsk. The combined Russia-militant forces are presently conducting so-called test of this equipment, thus not abandoning the plans of further fighting in the eastern Ukraine. The system "Luchnik-E" can be employed in any weather and under conditions of a high level of radio interference, and is capable of hitting the modern tactical aircrafts, helicopters, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles. Its main feature is the ability to perform salvo launch at one target and also simultaneously track up to four targets. The complex "Luchnik-E", as well as "Strela-10", is located on the chassis of the multipurpose armored vehicle MT-LB. As witnessed before, Russia has actually turned Donbas into a testing ground for its newest weapons and combat tactics.

We continue to insist that instead of deploying more forces, providing more heavy weaponry, and initiating attacks, the Russian Federation must honor its commitment to the ceasefire by moving all heavy weapons back from the line of contact, observing Minsk withdrawal lines as well as the ceasefire. The Russian Federation has also undertaken the commitment to withdraw its servicemen, fighters and weaponry from the Ukrainian territory which it has not yet even started to implement.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the opening of the SMM Forward Patrol Base in Horlivka and the recent establishment of such base in Debaltseve. We consider that the permanent SMM presence in the areas of concern will strengthen the Mission's monitoring and verification capacities. We expect the Mission to be able to open additional forward patrol bases, since the lack of them, as acknowledged by the SMM, limits its ability to monitor and report in an efficient manner.

We however express our deep concern over the recent serious incident in which the SMM patrol was threatened with small arms fire by the so-called "LPR forces" while approaching a significant number of heavy weapons deployed in breach of withdrawal lines. Since then combined Russian-separatist forces continued to interfere actively in the SMM operations, thus depriving the OSCE community of the real picture on the ground. The SMM recent reports give ample proof that the OSCE observers do not enjoy by far full freedom of movement and access to the areas controlled by militants and to the Ukrainian-Russian border despite commitments of the Russian side on the freedom of access:

-on 9 December:

- In so-called "DPR"-controlled north-western suburb of Donetsk city, armed men prevented the SMM from entering a compound. Fifty metres from the facility's main gate, the SMM noted traces on the asphalt which appeared to be created by an armoured tracked vehicle;
- The so-called "LPR" checkpoint "commander" prevented the SMM from passing through the so-called "LPR" checkpoint south of Stanytsia Luhanska bridge (16km north-east of Luhansk).

-on 10 December:

- Armed men stopped the SMM at the last so-called "DPR" checkpoint before the entrance to the village of Staromarivka (government-controlled, 46km north-north-east of Mariupol). The "DPR" members at the checkpoint were hostile towards the SMM, pointing their weapons at the SMM vehicles;
- At a so-called "DPR" checkpoint west of Oktiabr (29km north-east of Mariupol), the militants told the SMM that it must stay on the main road and proceed directly to the next checkpoint, and should not travel through other areas of Oktiabr;
- Armed men stopped the SMM at the so-called "DPR"-checkpoint at the entrance to Prymorske ("DPR"-controlled, 39km north-east of Mariupol). After a 41-minute delay, the SMM proceeded through the checkpoint. However, the SMM was told that it should not travel off the main road or enter the villages.

-on 11 December:

- In Lukove ("DPR"-controlled, 41km north-east of Mariupol), four armed "DPR" members denied the SMM access to the office of the village council without any explanation and escorted the SMM to Prymorske ("DPR"-controlled, 39km north-east of Mariupol) and further on until 2km before Krasnoarmiisk (33km north-east of Mariupol);
- At a checkpoint in Oktiabr (28km north-east of Mariupol), so called "DPR" members, who were visibly intoxicated, denied the SMM access to the village.

These are just few examples of significant restrictions on the SMM's activities in the occupied areas of Donbas. We once again reiterate that full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including militant-held areas along the Ukrainian-Russian border, is crucial for the SMM to fulfill its mandate. We urge Russia to implement its commitments on providing such access.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the persistent calls from Ukraine and its international partners throughout the three stages of the FSC session in 2015, the Russian Federation has failed to meet its commitments pursuant to a number of OSCE instruments in politico-military dimension. More and more innocent civilians are paying their lives for irresponsible politico-military adventure of the Russian Federation, aimed at assaulting Ukraine and undermining its statehood. According to a UN Human Rights report released on 9 December 2015 the total death toll since mid-April of 2014 in the conflict in Donbas is at least 9,098, with another 20,732 injured.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine and against European security architecture, of which the OSCE is an essential pillar, cannot be contained unless the Russian Federation understands the costs such illegitimate actions entail. We reiterate our call for ever more concerted efforts and solidarity in stopping the threat to security of all of us.

As the Russia's aggression in the east of my country and its illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea continue, efforts of the OSCE community should be focused on seeking practical ways to halt on-going violations and restoring respect to the above principles and commitments. These joint efforts should lead to restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The Russian Federation, claiming interest in peaceful resolution, must withdraw its regular armed forces, weaponry and mercenaries from the sovereign territory of Ukraine, and practically deliver on the commitments it has undertaken in Minsk to resolve the conflict in Donbas.

We urge Russia to fulfil fully and in good faith the Minsk agreements to the end of this year, to return to the tenets of the international law, to halt its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman