



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

## **Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1316<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
27 May 2021

### **Madam Chairperson,**

The developments of recent weeks clearly testify to Russia's unchanged intention to fuel its armed conflict with Ukraine.

First, it has withdrawn only a tiny fraction of its forces deployed at Ukraine's border and in the temporarily occupied parts of its territory. Along the border and in Crimea, the Russian Federation keeps up to 100,000 servicemen; up to 1,300 tanks; up to 3,700 armoured vehicles; up to 1,300 artillery systems; and up to 380 rocket systems. The Russian occupation forces in Donbas, which are fully integrated with the Russian military command and control system, consist of more than 35,000 servicemen, including almost 3,000 regular representatives of the Russian Armed Forces.

Russia refuses to provide exact numbers, locations and scope of its unusual military activities, despite recommendations given by participating States under the Vienna document 2011. Until military transparency is ensured, Russia's plans remain unknown, and serious escalation can occur any time the Russian side would deem it appropriate.

Second, Russia continues its illegal supplies of weapons, ammunition and military personnel to the temporarily occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine across the uncontrolled segment of the border. In last 2 months, from 18 March to 13 May, the Ukrainian side spotted 84 cisterns with fuel and lubricants, 24 trucks with mortars, mines and UAVs, 3 wagons with ammunition, and 34 Russian servicemen crossing that segment of the border.

Similar findings were reported by the SMM. On 16 May, an SMM long-range UAV spotted a cargo train comprised of two diesel locomotives and 56 empty wagons travelling from the direction of the Ukrainian-Russian state border near Vyselky. On the same day, aerial imagery available to the SMM revealed the presence of three stationary, probable military-type vehicles near Samiilove, 2km west of the international border where there are no border crossing facilities. On 20 May, an SMM mini-UAV spotted a stationary train consisting of two engines and 20 open-top gondola wagons, as well as 80 other stationary railway cars at the railway station in Voznesenivka. Unsurprisingly, the members of the Russian armed formations asked the monitors to leave that area.

Third, Russia continues fueling violence in Donbas, supported by its illegal supplies across the border. As can be noted from the SMM reports, the daily number of ceasefire violations has already exceeded 2020 daily average, with shellings taking place along the entire line of contact. A significant proportion of them is delivered by the Russian armed formations with the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons. Last week, the SMM recorded an over two-fold increase in such explosions. Preparations for the next armed attacks are ongoing: on 20 May, the SMM spotted almost 800 ceasefire violations near Sofiivka,

assessed as a live-fire training exercise held by the Russian armed formations in the security zone, in violation of the respective TCG decision.

Russia's attacks continue to take the lives of Ukrainian servicemen and destroy civilian infrastructure, making already dire situation of the civilians even worse. Since the latest recommitment to ceasefire of July 2020 until last Sunday, 37 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 115 wounded. Today, another Ukrainian serviceman was killed by sniper fire of the Russian armed formations near Novotoshkovske. Last week, the SMM confirmed that the residential area of the town of Marinka in the government-controlled part of the Donetsk region had been shelled with mortars on the afternoon of 20 May from an easterly direction. On 24 May, the Russian armed formations used an antitank missile against the village of Shumy, despite security guarantees provided earlier for the repair works.

Fourth, the Russian Federation makes every effort to undermine effectiveness of the international monitoring provided by the OSCE in the conflict area. Participating States, due to Russia's blackmailing, are forced to adopt the decision on extension of the OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border for only two months. This will considerably increase unnecessary administrative burden for this Mission, undermining its monitoring capacities, which are already severely limited by ungrounded restrictions of the host country.

Russia's pressure on the SMM through the illegal armed formations in Donbas is well known. Over time, it only increases. As reported by the Mission, it observes now a new persistent trend that its trailers are denied to cross the line of contact from the occupied part of the Donetsk region near Olenivka, further aggravating the challenging situation created by systemic restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement after closures of the Russian armed formations' checkpoints.

Fifth, while falsely blaming Ukraine for non-implementation of the Minsk agreements, the Russian side continues its creeping integration of the temporarily occupied parts of Donbas into Russia's political, economic, legal and military space. On 22 May, the SMM patrol, while being at the checkpoint of the Russian armed formations south of Zolote disengagement area, observed four newly installed road signs with "Border and Customs Control Point (Pervomaisk – Zolote)" written on it in Cyrillic. On 25 May, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation announced that different options are considered in order to allow the owners of Russian passports living in Donbas to take part in the parliamentary elections planned in Russia for September.

Sixth, the Russian occupation authorities in Crimea continue persecuting Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians demonstrating their principled position on the illegal temporary occupation. On 17 May, the occupation court rejected the appeal by Oleg Prykhodko, Ukrainian activist falsely sentenced under trumped-up charges for 5 years imprisonment. On 21 May, Ukrainian citizen Ivan Yatskin was found guilty of the so-called "state treason in the form of spying" for Ukraine, in line with the Russian security services practice of illegal use of Russia's legislation in the occupied part of Ukraine. On 24 May, two Crimean Tatars Lenur Seydametov and Timur Yalkabov, detained in February this year, were left in custody until 15 July. The same day, the so-called Supreme Court of the occupied Crimea requested 9 years of imprisonment for the Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people Refat Chubarov. On 26 May, civil journalist Vladyslav Yesypenko had his appeal rejected and illegal detention kept in force until at least 11 July.

This list can be extended much further. It proves Russia's persistent policy to intimidate and stifle any dissenting voices, with a view to legitimize its flagrant violations of international law and OSCE principles in Crimea.

We, again, urge the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, militarization of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations, mercenaries and their hardware from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**