



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine  
at the 808<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**

(20 January 2016 at 10.00, Hofburg)

(Agenda item 2)

**Madam Chairperson,**

At this first regular plenary meeting of the Forum for Security and Co-operation in 2016 we wish to start by warmly welcoming the new FSC Chairmanship of the Netherlands and wishing them every success in guiding our work in the first trimester of 2016. We are grateful to Ambassador Wim Geerts, Director-General for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, for attending this meeting and for his opening statement outlining the main priorities and planned activities of the FSC Chairmanship.

We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the 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 has been actively engaged in reviewing the military aspects of the crisis. Our deliberations and evidence presented in the FSC have factually proved that the crisis stems from the Russia's military aggression and flagrant violations of OSCE fundamental 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.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express also our gratitude to the delegation of Montenegro, the outgoing FSC Troika member, for effectively steering the Forum's work in this difficult time. It gives me a great pleasure to greet delegation of Poland as a new member of the FSC Troika.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

Since March 2014 numerous attempts to use the FSC mandate and the existing politico-military toolbox to the full extent were undercut as the

situation on the ground has further escalated, placing under threat not only Ukraine and its people but also the entire European security architecture.

As we meet today, the Crimean peninsula remains illegally occupied and annexed by Russia, the situation in Donbas remains tense and volatile with a tendency to deterioration.

The Minsk documents are the agreed framework for peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas based on respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, these documents cannot be implemented only by unilateral steps of Ukraine that have been faithfully undertaken in the course of last year, without reciprocation from the Russian Federation in practically delivering on undertaken commitments. Russia showed a total disregard to the Minsk package immediately after signing it by launching a massive assault on Debaltseve and continued in the same vein through the year. By the end of 2015 not a single provision of the Minsk package was fulfilled by Moscow and its proxies, moreover Moscow has not changed the pattern of its direct intervention into Donbas and broad-ranging support to the illegal armed formations.

Assessing the present situation in Donbas we note with deep concern that after a relative calm of September-October there is again a dangerous trajectory of growing numbers of armed provocations by the Russia-backed illegal armed formations, which deliberately destabilize the situation and prevent establishment of sustainable ceasefire and de-escalation.

Notably, only in the last few days the combined Russian-separatist forces shelled peaceful settlements and Ukrainian Armed Forces positions 48 times on 17 January, 36 times on 16 January, 40 times on 15 January.

The attacks and shellings are carried out with the use of battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, 120mm and 82mm mortars, MRLS "Grad", grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms. The most affected areas are near Donetsk, Pisky, Avdiivka, Opytne, Horlivka, Novhorodske, Zaitseve, Mayorske, Troitske, Tryohizbenka, Svitlodarsk, Verhnetoretske and Semyhir'a. Only two days ago, the SMM registered the use by militants of MRLS "Grad" from a Horlivka location. The militants did not allow calm to the local people for the New Year and Christmas holidays despite agreements of the Trilateral Contact Group or the conduct of agreed demining works that would help repair infrastructure. From 23 December 2015, when the agreed "silence regime" was to take effect, until 13 January 2016 the militants shelled 12 priority areas for demining nearly 250 times.

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.

Despite undertaken commitments on the synchronized withdrawal of weapons from the contact line, the combined Russian-separatist forces have moved weaponry to conceal it or to put it beyond the scope of the Addendum

and therefore beyond the verification process, while at the same time amassing weaponry that can be quickly brought to the front line in an offensive. Indicative in this respect is the last SMM report that as foreseen by the Package of measures, the so-called “LPR” declared 43 weapons (MRLS and artillery) at two permanent storage sites, whereas the so-called “DPR” declared 97 weapons at “areas of temporary dislocation”. Hiding behind these figures is a much bigger number of weaponry, generously supplied by Russia to its proxies. According to information of ATO Headquarters, the illegal armed formations have in their possession up to 475 battle tanks, 863 armoured personnel carriers, 208 MRLSs and 746 pieces of artillery systems.

The illegal armed formations maintain their deadly grip in the occupied territories with the support and under supervision of the Russian military. Last month Moscow admitted the presence in Donbas of some people dealing with issues also in the military sphere. What this remark means in real terms, according to Ukraine’s competent authorities, are about 7.5 thousand regular Russian troops in Donbas, organised in 19 tactical groups, comprising 11 battalion- and 8 company-level tactical groups, and armed with up to 227 battle tanks, 463 armoured personnel carriers, 149 heavy artillery systems, 95 MRLSs, and 4 systems “Tochka-U”.

In addition, Russia continues to maintain a concentration of its troops on the Russian territory near the Russian-Ukrainian state border - 33 tactical groups, 20 battalion- and 13 company-level, with a total of 36.7 thousand officers and soldiers. We have repeatedly urged in this Forum the return of the Russian troops from the border to the locations of their permanent stationing which did not happen. Instead, Russia started construction of facilities for military bases close to the border with Ukraine, in particular near the settlement of Valuiki in Belgorod oblast (25km from the border), near the training range “Kadamovsky” in Rostov oblast, near the settlement of Boguchar in Voronezh oblast. The Staff quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> army of the Western military district was deployed to the city of Voronezh from its earlier location in the city of Mulino in Moscow oblast.

The Russian military, officers of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces (GRU) and Federal Security Service (FSB) have placed on a solid footing the instruction and training of fighters of the illegal armed formations. 111 training camps are located on the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, 30 training bases are located in the temporarily occupied Crimea and 54 camps are located in Russia’s regions close to the border with Ukraine.

The resolution of the conflict in Donbas requires that Russia takes the responsibility for embarking on the de-escalation path and implementing the undertaken commitments, that Donbas be de-occupied from Russian forces, fighters and mercenaries, as envisaged by paragraph 10 of the Package of measures, that effective control at the Ukrainian-Russian state border be re-established. The militants would not have been able to constantly provoke

and escalate the conflict unless they received permanent replenishment of ammunition and logistical support across the border from Russia.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Seeking restoration of peace in Donbas, Ukraine welcomes the increase of the number of OSCE observers and opening of the SMM Forward Patrol Bases in Donbas. 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, including to significantly strengthen the monitoring of areas along the border with Russia.

To effectively perform its tasks, the Mission must have full and unimpeded freedom of access and movement. We view as unacceptable the recent surge in restrictions on the SMM freedom of movement experienced in the occupied areas of Donbas and also serious incidents of intimidation of the monitors. We condemn the incident of 16 January when the militants shot at the SMM vehicle on a mission to facilitate the restoration of critical infrastructure near Mar'inka, just south-west of the Donetsk city. The incident came just days after the SMM monitors in Horlivka were forced by the militants from their vehicles and compelled to lay on the ground at gunpoint. The restrictions and incidents of intimidation of the SMM are totally unacceptable.

We call on Russia to take the necessary steps and to exert its influence on the militants it backs to make sure that the Mission is able to operate and perform its mandate enjoying full freedom of movement, safety and security.

**Madam Chairperson,**

The Russian aggression against Ukraine and against the basic principles and foundation of the European security, of which the OSCE is an essential pillar, will not stop unless the Russian Federation realizes the cost such illegitimate actions entail. We reiterate our call for ever more concerted efforts and solidarity with Ukraine in countering the aggression.

We expect that the efforts of the OSCE community will continue to be focused 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.

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

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**