



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 951st FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against
Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea
(8 July 2020, online meeting, via ZOOM platform)
(Agenda item 2, General Statements)

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine, in my national capacity, let me deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's on-going aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea.

On 30 June, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Emine Japarova, met with the Head of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), Halit Chevik, to discuss the SMM's priorities.

The First Deputy Minister assured the Head of the SMM of the full support that the Government of Ukraine will continue to provide to the SMM in the difficult conditions of their monitoring of the security situation in Donbas. Concerns were raised that since March this year the Russian occupation authorities imposed severe restrictions on the movement of the SMM in some areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts under the pretext of fighting COVID-19.

Emine Japarova stressed the importance of effective implementation of the SMM mandate, which extends to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, in order to provide objective information to the international community on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Ambassador Chevik informed about the methodology of monitoring by the SMM, emphasizing that his priority remains the proper implementation by OSCE observers of the Mission's mandate in the current difficult conditions.

Mr. Chairperson,

Moscow plans to issue one million Russian passports to residents of Russian-occupied eastern parts of Ukraine by the end of 2020, Russia's officials confirmed this a week ago. By creating new demographic facts on the ground, the Kremlin hopes to alter the geopolitical balance in the region and derail efforts to end the six-year undeclared war between Russia and Ukraine.

The coercive automatic Russian passportization imposed on Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied Crimea in 2014 is not recognized by Ukraine and is not a ground for losing Ukrainian citizenship. Such passportization is an element of the repressive policy of the aggressor state towards the citizens of Ukraine, who are forced to live under occupation. The Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Civil Rights and Freedoms, and the Legal Regime on the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Ukraine” of April 15, 2014 clearly states that coercive automatic citizenship acquired by the citizens of Ukraine residing on the temporarily occupied territory is not recognized by Ukraine and does not constitute grounds for losing the citizenship of Ukraine.

Article 45 of the Regulations on the Laws and Customs of War on Land, approved by the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, prohibits coercion of the population of the occupied territories to swear an oath of allegiance to the occupying power and, consequently, to forcibly change their citizenship.

These days, we witness an artificial campaign regarding Russian passports, which the Russian occupation administration in Crimea has coercively imposed on Ukrainian citizens since March 2014. The imposed passportization is also an element of the well-planned and cynically implemented systemic pressure of the Russian occupation administration on the citizens of Ukraine.

Citizens of Ukraine residing in the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol were in fact deprived of their right to choose. Opportunities to give up Russian citizenship were strictly limited by the lack of the relevant passport centers and very short deadlines for applications for renunciation of citizenship. Moreover, in case of refusal to obtain Russian passports, the rights of the residents of Crimea to employment, medical care, social benefits and pension were artificially restricted. The absence of a Russian passport could also lead to forced deportation from the peninsula and an entry ban into the territory of the Crimea and Sevastopol.

It is noted that the threat of persecution of the pro-Ukrainian activists by the occupying power was an integral aspect of automatic passportization. The history of the occupation showed that the residents of Crimea had every reason to fear that through filing applications for renunciation of Russian citizenship, the occupation authorities would identify the opponents for further repression.

Citizens of Ukraine were forced to obtain Russian passports in order to preserve their own homes and property on the temporarily occupied peninsula. The recent decree of President Putin, which deprives Ukrainian citizens to own land lots in the temporarily occupied Crimea, is another step towards imposing Russian citizenship and a gross violation of international law. Ukraine will protect the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens living under the occupation in the AR of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as Crimea is Ukraine.

Yesterday the new wave of illegal searches and detentions of Crimean Tatars was carried out by the Russian occupation authorities in various districts of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. According to the available information, at least seven Ukrainian citizens were illegally detained following the searches - Emil

Ziyadinov, Ismet Ibragimov, Alim Sufyanov, Seyran Khayretdinov, Oleksandr Sizikov, Vadym Bektemirov, and Zekyrya Muratov.

Such actions of the Russian Federation constitute a continuation of the repressive practices against the Ukrainian citizens of the occupied Crimea.

We call on the international community to continue to actively advocate for the protection of the rights and freedoms of the inhabitants of the Crimean peninsula and to increase pressure on the Russian Federation to stop human rights violations in the temporarily occupied Crimea.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian side continues to destroy the expensive SMM hardware. At the last two meetings of the Forum, the Ukrainian delegation showed irrefutable evidence that the SMM video cameras in Petrivske and Shyrokyne were damaged on 3 and 22 June by shelling of the Russian occupation forces (ROF).

This time, according to the SMM Spot Report 35/2020 of 1 July 2020 **SMM cameras damaged at the Oktiabr mine near the temporarily occupied settlement Vesele** (Donetsk region). At 19:10 on 30 June, the SMM lost video feeds from its two daylight cameras, located on top of one of two 50m concrete towers at the Oktiabr mine. Footage from both cameras showed an impact of an undetermined weapon occurring in the immediate vicinity of the cameras at 19:08 on 30 June. **The SMM assessed the damage to the mast, cables and camera dome as caused by the detonation of an undetermined projectile fired from a south-westerly direction in the immediate proximity of the camera site.** On the **SLIDE 1** you can see that the direction and the distance of the shelling clearly pointed at the positions of Russian occupation forces as a firing source.

On 3 July 2020 in the period from 06:02 to 06:20 **shelling of the southwestern outskirts of ZAYTSEVE (Northern) was made by ROF** from the direction of ZAYTSEVE (Southern), probably using an 82 mm mortar.

On July 3, 2020, during the photo-fixation, the observation group of JCCC recorded and confirmed the fact of shelling at the address: Donetsk region, Bakhmut district, Zaitseve, street Manuilsky, 67. Upon arrival at the site of the shelling, the personnel of the observation group found a crater, probably from the impact of 82 mm caliber mines. A civilian woman, local resident of 80 years old was killed in the shelling (**SLIDES 2-4**).

On 3 July, an SMM long-range UAV spotted 5 tanks T-64 beyond withdrawal lines but outside of designated storage sites at a training area Oleksandrivske (90km southeast of Donetsk) in the temporarily occupied area of Donetsk region.

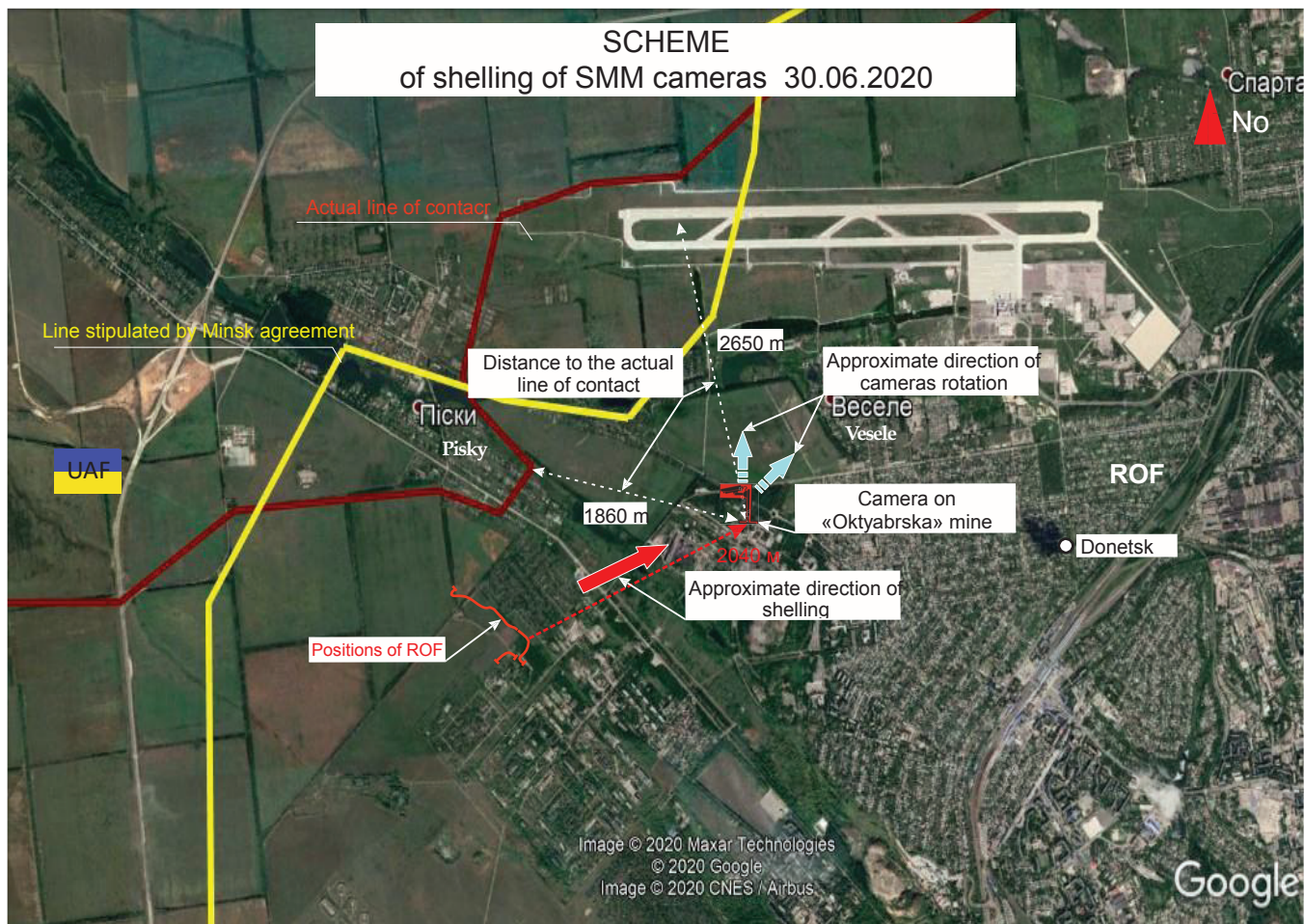
An SMM mini-UAV crashed near temporarily occupied settlement Molodizhne after it had experienced signal interference.

According to the Spot Report 36/2020 of 3 July 2020 ROF continued to deny SMM patrols passage at checkpoints in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. From 27 June to 3 July, ROF again denied the SMM attempts to cross into the temporarily occupied areas along official crossing routes: 7 times in the Donetsk

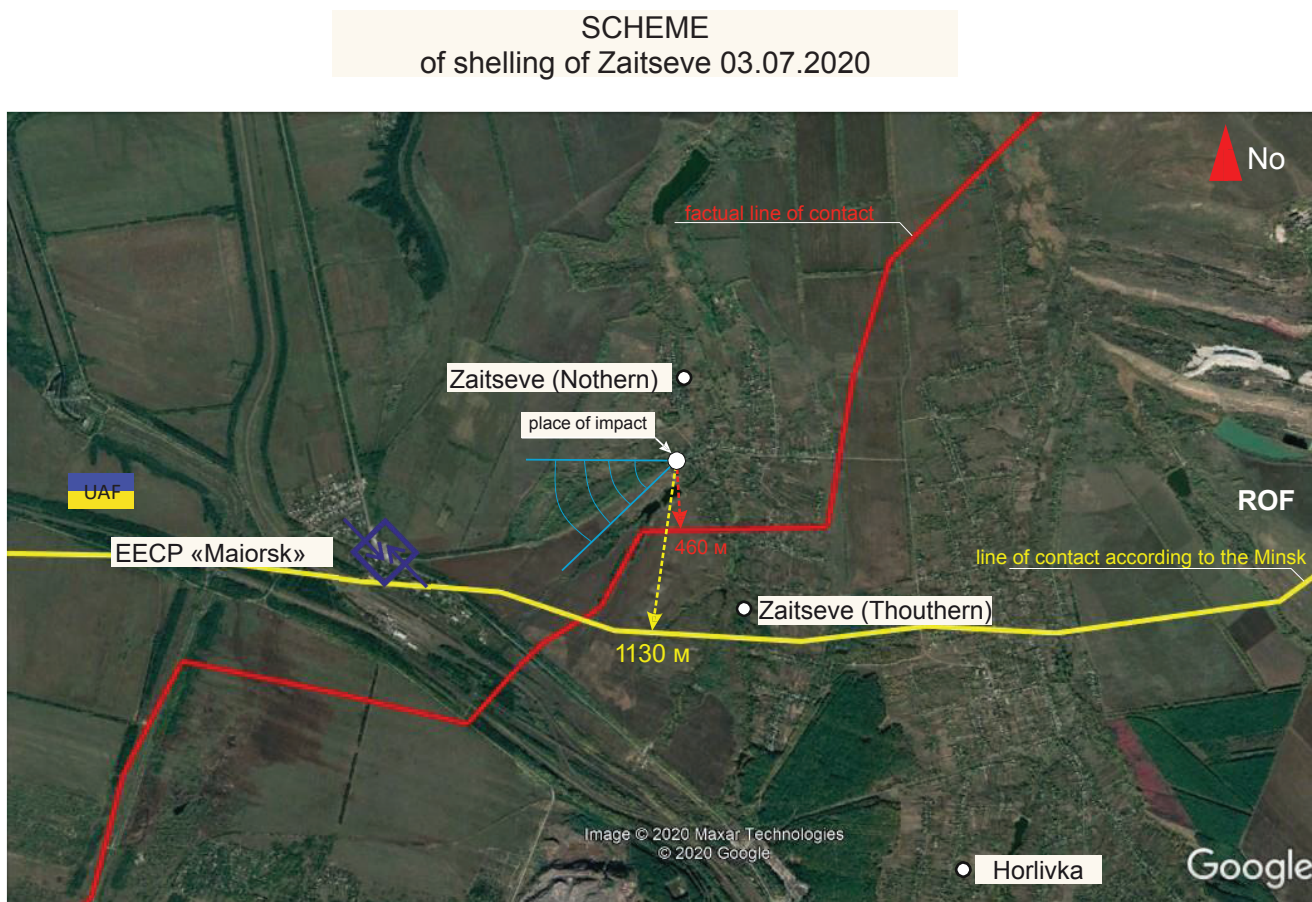
region and 3 times in the Luhansk region, while further attempts to cross into government-controlled areas were also denied – twice in Donetsk region and 4 times in Luhansk region. On 26-30 June and on 1-2 July, at a checkpoint south of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, ROF continued to deny the SMM passage towards temporarily occupied areas on 3 occasions, and passage towards government-controlled areas on 4 other occasions – 5 times referring to the closure of the checkpoint due to COVID-19, twice stating “SMM did not have permission to cross” and once referring to “instructions received from those in control”. On 26, 27 June and on 1 July, at a checkpoint near occupied Horlivka, the Mission was again unable to travel towards temporarily occupied areas due to the presence of a metal barrier and spikes laid across the road, and of a mine hazard sign. In addition, on 27 June, ROF denied the SMM passage towards government-controlled areas referring to a “lack of permission from their superiors”. On 26 June and on 2 July, at a checkpoint west of temporarily occupied Verkhnohshyrovsk, ROF (some visibly armed) denied the SMM passage towards occupied areas, once referring to quarantine restrictions due to COVID-19 and once without providing any reason. On 28 June, at a checkpoint near occupied Olenivka, ROF denied the SMM passage twice – once towards government-controlled areas, and once towards temporarily occupied areas, referring to the closure of the checkpoint on both occasions. On 29 June, at a checkpoint near temporarily occupied Oleksandrivka, ROF denied the SMM passage towards temporarily occupied areas, referring to the closure of the checkpoint. The Mission began facing repeated denials when attempting to cross into temporarily occupied areas at checkpoints of the ROF in the Donetsk region on 21 March and Luhansk region on 23 March. **They restrict the SMM’s freedom of movement across the contact line, thus impeding the implementation of its mandate throughout the country.**

In conclusion, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of the Donbas region of Ukraine, and restore freedom of navigation through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including withdrawal of its forces, illegal armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



*ROF – Russian occupation forces



Shelling of Zaitseve 03.07.2020



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