



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

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine  
in response to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross,  
Mr. Peter Maurer**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1295th meeting of the Permanent Council,  
10 December 2020

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The Delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for the comprehensive presentation of the ICRC activities.

We appreciate the dedicated work of the International Committee of the Red Cross on ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance to the victims of armed conflicts. We also recognize the importance of the ICRC efforts on promoting respect for international humanitarian law, which significantly contribute to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We welcome the adoption last week of the Ministerial Council Decision on the prevention and eradication of torture which, inter alia, calls on the participating States to fully cooperate with the ICRC.

Almost seven years of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine have led to enormous sufferings and deprivation of basic rights of the population in the conflict-affected and occupied parts of Ukraine. We highly value the extensive program of assistance provided by the ICRC for Ukraine to alleviate the consequences of the external aggression.

Ukraine appreciates your personal involvement, Mr. Peter Maurer, including your recent five-day visit to Ukraine and meetings with President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, as well as government and parliament officials.

We welcome your commitment to continue the ICRC activities in Ukraine as in the face of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict Ukraine remains the 8<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world in terms of the volume of the ICRC work.

We underline the continuing importance of addressing such issues as people missing in connection with the conflict, alleviating the risks for the population of mines and other unexploded ordinance through demining activities, and ensuring access to health services in the occupied part of Donbas.

We deplore that Russia has consistently ignored the modalities agreed by the ICRC, Ukraine and Russia concerning the role of the ICRC in delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Russian Federation has also ignored Ukraine proposals to use the border check-points under the control of the Government of Ukraine for delivery of what is alleged to be humanitarian aid. Instead, it continues its practice of sending so-called “humanitarian convoys” in violation

of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principles of international humanitarian law, which we strongly condemn.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

On a separate note we wish stress the need in securing systematic and unhindered access of the ICRC to all illegally detained persons held in connection with the conflict in the occupied part of Donbas, as well as the need to obtain the lists of illegally detained persons.

In this context we recall the agreement of the Normandy Ministerial of March 2016 stipulating that all restrictions on operation of the international humanitarian organizations in the occupied part of Donbas must be lifted and the ICRC must have access to hostages and illegally detained persons. However, Russia and its proxies continue to deny access to the hostages and illegally detained persons. Some of them have been in illegal detention for over six years, and their health conditions are unknown.

We emphasize the importance of ICRC access to places of illegal detention and call upon Russia to remove any obstacles in the occupied part of Donbas that restrict the ICRC from performing in full its role.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The human rights situation in the occupied Crimea is marked by grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law on the part of the Russian occupation administration.

We encourage the active involvement of the ICRC to relieve the plight of people suffering from the repressive policies and illegal detentions on the peninsula, in particular by facilitating the search of missing persons and victims of enforced disappearances, and seeking access to all detainees in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

We urge Russia as an occupying power in Crimea to provide safe and unimpeded access by the ICRC to all detainees, including political prisoners, and all places where persons may be deprived of their liberty, in the occupied peninsula.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Ukraine's support to the ICRC, our interest to foster co-operation and wish you every success in performing your organization's vital work.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**