



Permanent Mission of Ukraine  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 847<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(8 March 2017 at 10.00, Hofburg)  
(Agenda item 3)

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 was a date that marked the third anniversary of the appearance of the so called «little green men» in the Ukrainian Crimea. While the talks on political resolution of a crisis were held in Kyiv, the elite units of the Russian special operations forces were ordered to implement Kremlin's oppressive plans violating the basic principles of the international law. By pursuing the armed aggression against Ukraine, illegal occupation of Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as its further military intervention and hybrid warfare in Donbas Russia has positioned itself as a clear threat to the European and global security. That day of the year 2014 and Russia's contempt for international rules triggered the worst security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold war.

Regretfully, the past two weeks, when we have not convened for our FSC plenaries, have not brought de-escalation to the conflict-affected territories in the east of Ukraine. On the contrary, significant escalation of hostilities in the area of Donbas started on the last day of February with 117 fire attacks by the hybrid Russian forces at the Ukrainian positions and residential areas. And such a trend with an average number of over a hundred fire attacks per day continues. During the reported period the hybrid Russian forces have violated ceasefire more than 1400 times altogether, one third of which was carried out by heavy weapons, primarily mortars, artillery systems and tanks. The hybrid Russian forces continue to use MLRS BM-21 «Grad», as confirmed by the SMM report of 27 February on the outgoing explosions from non-government controlled Horlivka. Most frequently, the following settlements with their surroundings in the Government controlled territory were targeted by hybrid Russian forces: Popasna - in the Luhansk direction; Avdiivka, Pisky, Kamianka, Zaitseve - in the Donetsk direction; Vodiane, Shyrokyne, Hnutove, Pavlopil - in the Mariupol direction. As an area with increased combat activity the «Svitlodarsk bulge» has again been registered in the recent SMM reports. Two weeks of intense attacks by hybrid forces significantly increased the **toll of casualties: 9 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 90 were wounded. Also, 2 civilians were wounded.**

As a result of indiscriminate fire attacks by illegal armed formations the village of Vodiane was almost completely destroyed. All houses and a great

number of fruit trees around them were damaged by Russian artillery shells and mortar mines. Local civilians were forced to leave their homes.

Due to on-going hostilities around Avdiivka the population of the town and its suburbs continue suffering from disruption of electricity and water supply. Terrorist fighters again returned to the practice of regular shelling at Avdiivka in the regime of 24 hours a day, conducting fire from the «DPR»-controlled Yasynuvata and Spartak. We draw attention to the daily SMM report of 3 March, which registers that «in Avdiivka, the SMM observed eight fresh impacts on a building at №15, Vorobieva street, including one 1.5m below a static SMM camera. The impact, assessed as that of a round of an undetermined weapon fired from an east-south-easterly direction, caused structural damage to the south-eastern corner of the building». In the very same building the Ukrainian part of the JCCC has its observation office. The Ukrainian officers reported that the impacts were the result of fire from a tank gun. The constant provocative actions by the Russian hybrid forces not only put in jeopardy lives of the Ukrainian JCCC members, damage the SMM equipment but also keep as hostages the civilians of this area on both sides of the line of contact.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

We highly value the everyday work and efforts of the SMM. The Ukrainian side pays full attention to the incidents that may occasionally happen in Government-controlled areas, conducts their investigation and takes due measures of response. This approach on the part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces contrasts sharply with the attitudes of the hybrid Russian forces.

We particularly point out to the following egregious examples of denial of access and intimidation by the hybrid Russian forces:

- a “DPR” member at a permanent weapons storage site demanded in a threatening and hostile manner that the SMM leave the site;
- an armed man wearing a Russian Federation Armed Forces-style uniform with “DPR” badges demanded in an aggressive manner that the SMM leave the area of the entry-exit checkpoint in Olenivka (23km south-west of Donetsk);
- the SMM heard small-arms fire assessed as occurring at a south-south-westerly direction shortly after launching a mini unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) near the Donetsk Water Filtration Station west of Yasynuvata. The SMM performed a forced landing of the UAV and was unable to retrieve it, due to a lack of security guarantees;
- while monitoring the movement of weapons assessed as two self-propelled howitzers near “DPR”-controlled Khreshchatytske, the SMM heard 20 single shots of small-arms fire 1km north-east and then five bursts of small-arms fire 300-500m east-south-east, assessed as warning shots. Due to security considerations, the SMM left the area.

We want to stress that a matter of particular concern is the increased number of cases of intimidation of the SMM monitors by fighters of the hybrid Russian forces. Those were not «isolated cases» as the Russian side was insisting in the past weeks, but constitute a deliberate policy of restriction the SMM freedom of

movement to prevent the monitors from fulfilling their mandate and reporting fully and objectively on the situation on the ground. Russia has not taken any measures to properly control its fighters and thus they continue to intimidate monitors.

The SMM reporting about an armed man wearing a Russian Federation Armed Forces-style uniform demonstrates the ongoing support of illegal armed formations from Russia.

**Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished colleagues,**

We urge Russia to provide for full freedom of movement and access of the SMM in safety.

The daily SMM reports depict a worrisome situation along the whole line of contact. The Ukrainian forces are ready to fully abide by undertaken commitments, however progress depends on the readiness of Russian side and its proxies to stop attacks and withdraw in a verifiable manner.

Until now the Russian hybrid forces continue to act contrary to the commitments they undertook.

We call on the Russian Federation to exercise its responsibility in implementing the Minsk agreements, in particular their security provisions on comprehensive cease-fire, withdrawal of forces and full access of the SMM for monitoring. We urge Russia to pull out its forces from Ukraine, halt its support to the illegal armed formations in Donbas region of Ukraine as well as its military build-up along Ukraine's south-eastern borders.

As we have stated many times before Ukraine for its part is fully committed to full and faith implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The conflict instigated and fuelled by the Russian Federation will not be resolved until the Russian forces get out of the territory of Ukraine. Therefore we urge Russia to return to the tenets of the international law, to cease its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**