



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 998th FSC PLENARY MEETING
(26 January 2022)**

**Agenda item 1, Security Dialogue: Compliance with International Humanitarian Law and
Protection of Civilians**

Mr Chairperson,

Ukraine has aligned itself with the EU Statement. Let me also make some remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to join colleagues in warmly welcoming today's keynote speakers and thank them for their valuable contribution to the FSC discussion on the topic of compliance with International Humanitarian Law and protection of civilians.

This issue is of particular importance for us and we are grateful to the Chairpersonship of Azerbaijan for dedicating the first Security Dialogue in this trimester to this high-priority issue.

Ukraine pays special attention to issues related to compliance with International Humanitarian Law, in particular those aimed at preventing forced displacement, as well as protection of women and children affected by armed conflict, including conflict-related sexual violence.

The Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, started by the Russian Federation in 2014 and sustained by it since then, has turned the topic of IHL implementation and protection of civilians in Ukraine from an academic topic into a very practical and, regrettably, everyday one.

In its relevant resolutions, the UN General Assembly placed particular emphasis on the necessity to ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law. Referring to 1949 Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I thereto, the General Assembly qualified the Russian Federation as occupying power and urged it to uphold all of its obligations under applicable international law.

The ongoing Russian aggression continues to take lives of Ukrainian citizens. According to a recent report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Ukraine, since the beginning of the conflict, the total number of conflict-related civilian deaths has already reached 3,092. Taking into account the 298 deaths on board of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, the total civilian death toll of the conflict has reached at least 3,390. It is estimated that more than 7,000 civilians were injured.

COVID-19 pandemic has multiplied the threats from the hostilities as it increased vulnerability of the local population in the conflict zone. Russia as a party to the conflict blatantly disregards its duty of an occupying power under IHL and fails to ensure public health in the territories it occupies.

In addition, Russia continues to block proper and unhindered access by international monitoring missions, most notably the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to the temporarily occupied territories.

In violation of the obligations under International Humanitarian Law, the Russian Federation proceeds with forced conscription of Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied Crimea. Ignoring the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, Russia has already conducted 14 conscription campaigns (the most recent one was completed in December 2021). Since the beginning of the occupation, the Russian Federation has conscripted up to 34,000 Crimean residents. Contrary to the IHL norms, Russian occupation authorities carry out propaganda campaigns in favour of military service in the army of the aggressor state, including among children.

The human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol has also deteriorated throughout the period of Russian occupation.

Criminalization of freedom of expression on social networks, interference in the work of the media and human rights organizations, including Crimean Tatar organizations, torture and ill-treatment, inadequate prison conditions, and impunity for these crimes by Russian law enforcement agencies have become a "new norm" in the occupied territories.

The occupation administration of Crimea systematically persecutes communities, including religious, which are not under Moscow's control.

Mr Chairperson,

As a party to core international instruments related to the protection of civilians, Ukraine persistently promotes and supports all efforts aimed at strengthening proper implementation of International Humanitarian Law.

In line with the provisions of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which require dissemination of the IHL principles within armed forces, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine in cooperation with International Committee of the Red Cross regularly organizes IHL

training seminars for its personnel. Overall, during the past years, over 5,000 Ukrainian militaries participated in the IHL training seminars.

Ukrainian Defence regularly updates respective normative acts on implementation of IHL in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

According to the Law of Ukraine “On the Armed Forces of Ukraine”, our Armed Forces have the duty to deter and repel the armed aggression against Ukraine. This Law clearly restricts actions of commanding officers to issue orders that constitute any unlawful act against the civilian population, its property and the environment.

The existing “Guidelines on procedures for the implementation of the IHL principles in the Armed Forces of Ukraine” envisages relevant procedures during the preparation for and conduct of hostilities and during the organization of combat support, mandatory study of IHL during combat training and in higher military educational institutions. In particular, it provides for IHL limitations for hostilities, such as the prohibition of indiscriminate bombardment, attacks on civilians, destruction or occupation of hostile or civilian property, except in cases of military necessity.

The Guidelines also highlights the need to protect civilians when choosing the place and method of deploying troops, and to conduct combat operations with minimal damage to the civilian population, including the use of maps marking protected and civilian objects, as well as standardized signs to indicate minefields.

Mr Chairperson,

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that as a responsible member of the international community, Ukraine will continue its tireless efforts to ensure full compliance with norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law. We are grateful to all our partners and respective governmental and non-governmental organisations for their support and assistance aimed at protection of civilians in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson!