



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S Statement for the Forum for Security Cooperation Ukraine Statement

June 23, 2021

Mr. Chair, the United States is speaking under the topic raised by Ukraine.

We welcomed last week's report by the staff of the Project Coordinator in Ukraine and look forward to hearing more details about this critical work from Ambassador Villadsen in tomorrow's Permanent Council. We appreciate the Project Coordinator's efforts to mitigate the effects of the conflict, something we discuss regularly in this forum.

And let's be clear why these efforts are needed and why we discuss the conflict every week in this forum. It is because Russia and the forces it arms, trains, leads, finances and fights alongside have fomented this terrible situation in eastern Ukraine for more than seven years. Over 13,000 people have died, tens of thousands have been wounded, and more than a million Ukrainian citizens have been displaced. It seems Russia assessed the wanton destruction of the civilian populations of eastern Ukraine was acceptable collateral damage in its efforts to destabilize its sovereign neighbor and prevent it from choosing its own path. We remain concerned that Russia continues to intimidate its neighbor by massing troops on its border and on its territory and failing to make any effort to reduce risks in accordance with its Vienna Document commitments.

On the ground in eastern Ukraine, Russia-led forces continue to impede the efforts of the Special Monitoring Mission. We are increasingly alarmed that the SMM's UAVs are being deliberately attacked by small-arms fire or "blinded" by signals interference. Such interference occurred over 29 times this past week, with the SMM losing two UAVs in non-government controlled areas. We deplore these actions and those who are responsible for the damage and destruction of the SMM's equipment should be held accountable.

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

FSC.DEL/242/21
23 June 2021

ENGLISH only

Despite such challenges, the SMM continued to report ceasefire violations in and near disengagement areas, including a live fire exercise outside the security zone in non-government controlled Kruhlyk with 993 violations on June 17th. Even more troubling, an SMM patrol experienced small-arms fire near its activities and was forced to leave the non-government controlled residential area of Sentianivka, near Luhansk. Perhaps because of the SMM's good work in documenting these violations Russia-led forces continue to restrict the SMM's freedom of movement. Again, this week, the Mission reported multiple instances in which its monitors were prevented from fulfilling their important mandate. According to Chief Monitor Cevik's most recent report, 90 percent of movement restrictions occurred in the non-government controlled areas. The United States calls on Russia to afford the SMM full freedom of movement throughout all of Ukraine's sovereign territory, including Crimea.

Mr. Chair, the United States fully supports Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. We remain concerned over Russia's militarization of Crimea and announced restrictions through October on navigation in parts of the Black Sea, and we call on Russia to immediately rescind these restrictions. We do not, nor will we ever, recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea. We join our European and other partners in affirming that our Ukraine-related sanctions against Russia will remain in place until Russia fully implements its Minsk commitments and returns full control of Crimea to Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair