



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine on illegal restriction of the navigation imposed by the Russian Federation in the Black Sea

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1309th meeting of the Permanent Council,
16 April 2021

Madam Chairperson,

During the monitoring of navigation in the area of responsibility, the Command of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine revealed a case of unjustified suspension by the Russian Federation of the right of innocent passage through the so called "territorial sea" for warships and state ships under the flag of other countries.

On 14 April the Russian Federation sent a notification through the NAVATEX station of Novorosiyk on the areas of so called "territorial sea", in which the right of innocent passage for warships and state ships under the flag of other countries was temporarily suspended. However, the areas concerned are within the territorial sea of Ukraine surrounding the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

So, the Russian Federation has announced that starting from the next week and until October 2021, a part of the Black Sea in the direction of the Kerch Strait would be closed for warships and state vessels of other states under the pretext of military training.

These actions of the Russian Federation constitute another attempt to usurp Ukraine's sovereign rights of a coastal state in violation of the norms and principles of international law, as Ukraine is in fact endowed with the right to regulate the navigation in these water areas of the Black Sea.

Also, these actions are a gross violation of the freedom of navigation, guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. According to the Convention, Russia must not hinder or interfere with the transit passage through the international strait to the ports of the Sea of Azov.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing military build-up along the state border of Ukraine, Russia expanded its escalation on the sea. It transfers warships from the Caspian Sea, reinforces its military capabilities in the Azov-Black Sea region, and without any legal grounds decided to close this water area for foreign warships, including Ukrainian ones.

Such behavior clearly indicates Russia's unwillingness to cease its aggression against Ukraine with the use of military and hybrid methods.

These actions of the Russian Federation also contradict the provisions of the Document on CSBMs in the Naval Field in the Black Sea to which it is a party.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its resolute protest against these actions of the Russian Federation and demands that Russia's unlawful decision to close certain water areas of the Black Sea is revoked immediately.

We call on international partners to increase political and diplomatic pressure on the aggressor state so that it revokes the decision to close the water areas and stops the escalation in the Azov-Black Sea region.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.