



**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the 789-th FSC Plenary Meeting
(20 May 2015 at 10.00, Hofburg)
Agenda item 2**

Madam Chair,

Although the agreements signed in Minsk in September 2014 and February 2015 have formed an agreed road-map for sustainable peaceful resolution in Ukraine's east based on respect for unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, the situation in Donbas remains tense and volatile due to the on-going violations by the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it supports.

The immediate first steps, stipulated by the Minsk Package, notably the comprehensive ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and ensuring OSCE monitoring and verification, release of hostages remain unimplemented by Russia and its proxies. All of them are crucial for placing the de-escalation process on a sustainable basis.

Russia continues to maintain military command and control elements in eastern Ukraine, to coordinate joint military operations with the illegal armed groups, to support and train pro-Russian militants. There are also new convincing evidences that the militants continue to be procured with new types of weapons from Russia.

Ceasefire violations by the illegal armed groups are registered on a daily basis with a number of casualties among the Ukrainian soldiers and civilians continuing to rapidly grow. Over the weekend pro-Russian militants in Donbas shelled positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and civilian areas across the contact line 189 times using 120-mm mortars, and heavy artillery of 122-mm and 152-mm calibre, mounted grenade launchers and small arms.

Intense fighting takes place in Pisky near Donetsk and Shyrokyne near Mariupol. Along the contact line the pro-Russian militants continuously attacked settlements of Avdiyivka, Opytne, Hranitne, Mar'inka, Novotoshkovka, Krymske, Stanytsya Luhanska, Zolote, Schastya, Myrne, Chermalyk etc. Since February 15, when the immediate and comprehensive ceasefire was established by the relevant provision of the Package of Measures of 12 February 2015, **87 Ukrainian military were killed, 410 – wounded**, the Russia-backed militants have shelled Ukrainian positions **3108** times.

7 Ukrainian soldiers lost their lives and 54 were wounded over the period of 14 -19 May in Donbas. At least 4 local civilians were killed over the recent days as a result of militants' provocations.

The persistent ceasefire violations by the Russian Federation and the illegal armed groups it supports are in breach of the Minsk agreements and hinder Ukraine's and its international partners' efforts toward the peaceful settlement of the crisis.

**Madam Chair,
Distinguished colleagues,**

In the course of last week pro-Russian militants continued to transfer their military equipment and personnel to the contact line between the territory under their control and positions of the ATO forces in Donbas. The main areas of transfers of the military equipment and regrouping of personnel were registered from Krasnodon and Roven'ky toward the north of Luhansk, from Alchevsk and Stakhanov to Perevalsk and Pervomaisk, from Debaltseve to

Horlivka. A busy traffic of military transport loaded with ammunition was observed on the territory of so-called "DPR". Location of 2 reinforced battalions of militants with 22-24 tanks, 46-48 armoured combat vehicles, several smaller units with light armoured vehicles up to 25 pieces, 25 artillery systems and 16 units of MLRSs was registered in the area to the north-east of Luhansk. Russia continued to constantly replenish these battalions with additional military equipment and personnel.

According to the ATO headquarters' information provided on 14 May 2015, the presence of the following Russian troops and military weaponry has been registered in Donbas: 8 760 regular military, 190 tanks, 520 armoured combat vehicles, 4 "Tochka-U" tactical missile complexes, 8 "Buratino" rocket systems, 90 multy launcher rocket systems (MLRS), 150 artillery systems. These figures do not include illegal armed groups of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR", namely 33 400 militants, 534 tanks, 857 armoured vehicles, 282 MLRS, 557 artillery systems, 28 antitank systems and 49 anti-aircraft systems in addition to a large number of mortars and grenade launchers.

The build-up of Russian troops next to the Ukrainian border and information about continued inflow of military equipment and personnel into Ukraine from the Russian Federation add to our serious concern about the situation on the ground. We reiterate that any attempts by the Russia-backed militants to gain control of additional territory will grossly violate the Minsk agreements and seriously undermine all efforts promoting a sustainable political resolution.

Distinguished colleagues,

According to General Viktor Muzhenko, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, despite numerous statements of the Russian leadership about the absence of their troops on the territory of Ukraine, we have irrefutable evidences of their presence in Donbas. We know where they are deployed. Dozens of the Russian military were detained during the fighting near Debaltseve (Donetsk oblast) and in the Donetsk airport. The Ukrainian side continues investigation with regard to all detainees.

We draw particular attention of the delegations to the fact that on 16 May 2015 the Ukrainian soldiers of the 92nd mechanized brigade captured two Russian servicemen near the town of Schastya, Luhansk oblast, namely captain Yevgeny Yerofeyev and sergeant Alexander Alexandrov. The detainees have testified that they belong to the 3rd Special Forces Brigade of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, which is permanently stationed in the city of Toliatti. They have confirmed that they are servicemen of the regular forces of the Russian Federation. They were both wounded: one in the leg and another in the arm. One Ukrainian soldier was killed in the fighting at Shchastya, while other Ukrainian military got wounded.

Sergeant A. Alexandrov said that he had been on a spying mission in Ukraine for the last 4-5 days as part of a 14-member Special Forces group. According to the Russian detainee, his unit was tasked to conduct reconnaissance operation on the territory of Luhansk power plant station in the town of Schastya, to find out on the level of its protection in order for it to be seized in the future by pro-Russian militants of the so-called "LPR".

A silenced sniper rifle "Vintorez", which is used exclusively in the Special Forces of Russia, was retrieved from one of those captured. The facts confirming the Russian citizenship of the detainees, including their addresses of residence, study and work, as well as data on their close relatives, who live in the Russian Federation, were provided by the captured.

Commenting on the capture of two Russian regulars, General Viktor Muzhenko, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine noted that Ukrainian soldiers, risking their lives, saved two **wounded** Russian officers who had been targeted by their own side. "Russian officers tried to kill their own people as soon as they understood they were caught by the Ukrainian military," General Muzenko said.

The captured Russian military were provided the necessary medical treatment in the **Main Military Hospital in Kyiv and access by representatives of international organizations including from the SMM.** They will be prosecuted for "terrorist activity and terrorist crimes" according to article 258 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

**Madam Chair,
Distinguished colleagues,**

The Russian military and militants continued to use UAVs for aerial reconnaissance in Donbas. During last week up to 50 UAV flights were registered in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Another drone was spotted in the Sumy oblast of Ukraine near the border with Russia. The UAV illegally crossed the Ukrainian state border from the direction of the Russian settlement of Troitskoye to the Ukrainian village of Volodymyrivka.

According to statistics of the ATO headquarters, in the period from 28 May 2014 to 4 May 2015 32 UAVs of the Russian Armed Forces, both of Russian and foreign production, were shot down over the territory of the Eastern Ukraine. We again reiterate our call to the Russian Federation to immediately halt its violations of the airspace of Ukraine and guarantee no repetition of the above-mentioned unlawful activities.

Distinguished colleagues,

We draw attention of the Forum that the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 provides for humanitarian aid to be delivered through an international mechanism. We deplore that Russia again illegally sent the so-called "humanitarian convoys" into the territory of Ukraine on 14 May. We reiterate that this illegal practice violates Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and runs counter to the modalities of humanitarian assistance based on international mechanisms, agreed in Minsk.

Notably, the OSCE SMM reported regarding the three trucks that arrived at the so-called "ministry of emergency" in Luhansk that an interlocutor, responsible for the warehouse, said that they contained vehicle's spare parts.

We reiterate our condemnation of this practice and call on Russia to fully respect international law and reached agreements on the matter. We urge Russia to provide any humanitarian assistance only through Government-controlled border checkpoints according to Ukraine's national legislation, recognized international practices, as well as previously agreed modalities with the ICRC.

Madam Chair,

The Minsk agreements remain the best opportunity to achieve peace in eastern Ukraine, but they will not succeed if the signatories do not deliver by practical steps, not words, on their commitments. The present situation shows that readiness of the Russian Federation and the Russia-backed illegal armed groups to abide by their commitments is crucial for implementation of the Minsk agreements and for the entire peace process.

We once again call for the immediate withdrawal of all Russian armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under OSCE monitoring. We urge Russia to halt aggressive actions against my country, cease support to the illegal armed groups and reverse annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. It remains imperative for restoring peace and security that Russia backs up its political declarations with practical steps which has not yet happened.

Thank you, Madam Chair