



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement in response to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1247th meeting of the Permanent Council,

14 November 2019

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Ukraine joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for the insightful presentation.

We appreciate the dedicated work of the ICRC on ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance to victims of armed conflicts and on promoting respect for international humanitarian law as a significant factor and contribution towards protection of human dignity, human rights and freedoms, which are at the core of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

Over five years of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine have led to enormous sufferings and deprivation of the population in the conflict-affected and occupied areas of Donbas.

We highly value the large-scale program of assistance provided by the ICRC for Ukraine to alleviate the consequences of the external aggression.

We note with appreciation that only last year ICRC through its activities helped about 1 mln people at Stanytsia Luhanska and at Maiorske crossing points; over 300,000 people benefited from ICRC assistance on water supply in Donetsk oblast after reconstruction of Karlivska water pipe station; 9,000 households received over 27,000 tons of coal, wooden briquettes and firewood to help them heat their homes during winter; almost 5,000 households received materials for insulation of windows, walls and roofs; 15,000 teachers and children benefited from the installation of protective sandwich panels and anti-blast film on windows and improvement of facilities of 77 schools and kindergartens.

We welcome the recent joint initiative “Conflict and Industrial Risks in Eastern Ukraine” of ICRC, Ukrainian Red Cross Society, Austrian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross as well as other stakeholders who united in 3P Consortium. It aimed at implementing the activities in raions and municipalities which border the line of contact and where industrial/ecological hazards are located. They will improve

understanding of, and promote and take measures towards, preparedness to industrial and ecological risks – including those exacerbated by the conflict.

These examples of significant and genuine humanitarian assistance to the people in need put into sharp contrast the practice of the Russian Federation of sending so-called “humanitarian convoys” in violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principles of international humanitarian law. Ukraine strongly condemns this practice.

Russia has consistently ignored the modalities agreed by the ICRC, Ukraine and Russia concerning the role of the ICRC in delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Russian Federation has also consistently ignored Ukraine proposals to use the border check-points under the control of the Government of Ukraine for delivery of what is alleged to be humanitarian aid.

Distinguished colleagues,

We would like to recall the agreement of the Normandy Ministerial of March 2016 stipulating that all restrictions on operation of the international humanitarian organizations in the occupied part of Donbas must be lifted and the ICRC must have access to hostages and illegally detained persons. This has not happened until now.

Moscow and its proxies deny access to the overwhelming majority of hostages and illegally detained persons. Some of them have been in illegal detention for over five years, their health conditions are unknown. We emphasize on the importance of access of ICRC to places of illegal detention and call upon Russia to remove any obstacles in the occupied part of Donbas that restrict the ICRC from performing in full its role.

Ukraine also encourages the active involvement of the ICRC in facilitating the search of missing persons in occupied parts of Donbas and in Crimea.

According to the recent Report of the UN Secretary General “Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine” major violations have occurred in the five years since Russia invaded the region, affecting the basic human, political, civic and religious rights of citizens.

The human rights situation in the Crimean Peninsula is marked by grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law on the part of Russian occupation authorities. We encourage involvement of the ICRC to relieve the plight of the people suffering from repressive policies and illegal detentions on the peninsula as well as their families deprived of financial support.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Ukraine’s support to the ICRC and our interest in the further development of our co-operation. We wish you, Mr. Maurer, and hundreds of thousands of ICRC volunteers throughout the world success in performing the noble work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.