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Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1253rd meeting of the Permanent Council,
19 December 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The week, which passed since the most recent Normandy Four Summit in Paris, has not brought yet any positive developments in security and humanitarian situation in the parts of Donbas affected by the ongoing Russia's aggression. From 10 to 16 December, 1 Ukrainian serviceman was killed and 8 were wounded, as the Russian armed formations continued their fire and shellings, including from mortars. The SMM reported on heavy weapons in violation of withdrawal lines, including 22 multiple launch rocket systems near Russia-occupied Khrustalnyi on 14 December. The commitment to a full and comprehensive implementation of the ceasefire, reconfirmed by Russia and Ukraine at the N4 Summit, remains unfulfilled. The violations of the SMM mandate by the Russian proxies continue as well: the restrictions and denials of access in Russia-occupied parts of Donbas, which we all are accustomed to seeing in the Mission's reports, remain in place, most notably in border areas and southern part of the Donetsk region. Safe and secure access of the SMM throughout Ukraine, to which the sides to the conflict recommitted in Paris, exists only on paper. Yet, the Russian Federation continued violating Ukraine's borders and sovereignty by sending on 12 December another so-called "humanitarian convoy" in contradiction to the Minsk provisions on the delivery on the basis of an international mechanism, which prompted the MFA of Ukraine to express a resolute protest.

Ensuring sustainable and comprehensive ceasefire, disengagement of forces and hardware, and withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line can only be achieved if the SMM is able to use all possibilities of its monitoring mandate, including safe and secure access throughout Ukraine, as it was reiterated at the N4 Summit. In this regard, the SMM would definitely benefit from establishment of additional forward patrol bases and patrol hubs close to the uncontrolled segment of the Ukrainian-Russian state border. Having in mind systematic denials of access by the Russian armed formations on the

ground, and existing security concerns for the night patrolling, more efforts should be undertaken to enhance the Mission's technical assets, in particular long-range UAVs able to reach distant locations in the night. As we approach the first quarter of 2020, when a new SMM budget must be approved, we call on the participating States to consider allocation of additional resources for the purposes of the Mission.

In the last PC meeting, the delegation of Ukraine informed on prolongation by the Ukrainian Parliament of the term of applicability of the "Law on the peculiarities of local self-government in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions" till the end of the next year. Recent legislative developments related to the conflict also include the Order of the Ministry for Veterans, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine № 92, which entered into force on 28 November. As confirmed by the SMM, it envisages the development of a list of prohibited goods that cannot be taken to or from government-controlled areas, instead of the previous list of allowed goods. This means in practice that a greater variety of goods can be transported across the contact line in Donbas, making the lives of conflict-affected Ukrainian citizens a little bit easier.

Ukraine continues politico-diplomatic efforts to urge the Russian side to fulfil its obligations as the occupying Power and to cease the conflict it initiated. On 9 December, the UN GA adopted the second resolution entitled "Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov". This document, in particular, stresses that the presence of Russian troops in Crimea undermines the security and stability of neighbouring countries and the European region, and urges the Russian Federation as the occupying Power to withdraw its military forces from Crimea and to end its temporary occupation. Yesterday, on 18 December, another resolution was adopted by the UN GA on the "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine". The resolution calls upon Russia to end the practices of deporting Ukrainian citizens from Crimea for not taking Russian citizenship and of discriminating against Crimean residents for not possessing identity documents issued by the Russian Federation, stop transferring its own civilian population to Crimea and end the practice of encouraging such transfers. I would like to recall forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power, or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited under international humanitarian law, regardless of their motive. It also calls upon the Member States to continue advocacy for the respect of human rights, including by condemning human rights violations and abuses committed in Crimea at bilateral and multilateral forums. As the issues of European security and violations of human rights rightly belong to the OSCE agenda of primary importance, we thank all participating States, which supported those resolutions, and call to continue highlighting Russia's abuses in this Organization.

We again urge the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, militarization of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and to stop its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its armed formations from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.