



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the 958<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine**  
**and illegal occupation of Crimea**

(21 October 2020, Vienna, Hofburg, also via video teleconferencing)  
(Agenda item 2, General Statements)

**Madame Chairperson,**

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the subject of "Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea".

A **regular meeting of the TCG was held on 14 October** by video conference with the participation of the delegations of Ukraine and the Russian Federation and moderated by the OSCE. During the discussion of the work of the TCG security group, Chief Monitor of the OSCE SMM Yaşar Halit Çevik noted the achievements in the implementation of the ceasefire regime, which had been observed for almost three months, and stressed the need to ensure its sustainable nature. The OSCE representative noted that political issues that made the group's meetings less effective should not be at the forefront of the security group's work. In particular, he stressed the need to address the issue of an updated demining plan, which is especially relevant due to the approach of winter.

During the discussion of political issues, the parties emphasized the inadmissibility of blocking the work of the TCG. They also discussed proposals for an action plan for the implementation of the package of measures to implement the Minsk agreements.

The Ukrainian delegation in the socio-economic group again raised the issue of the possibility of forming a group of experts under the auspices of the IAEA to monitor the storage of radioactive materials in the temporarily occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

During the discussion on the mutual release of detainees, OSCE Coordinator of the Humanitarian Working Group Toni Frisch said that Ukraine had provided a list of

four categories of such persons. No information was provided from the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Toni Frisch stated the readiness of the parties to simultaneously open two new checkpoints in the Luhansk region in the first decade of November to fulfill the agreements of the summit of the "Normandy-4", held in Paris in December 2019.

Despite the difficult process, we count on progress in unblocking the consultations within the TCG. Particularly important in this regard is the question of demining considering the imminent onset of winter weather conditions.

The day before the TCG meeting at 1AM the Armed Forces of Ukraine recorded **mortar shelling of their positions in the area of Zaitseve settlement** - 6 shots. At approximately 6am, during an inspection of the positions, six 82 mm pieces of unexploded ordnance were found, one of which was located directly in the territory of the observation post and the remaining 5 - at a distance of approximately 50 to 100 meters to the east (**Slide Presentation, Slide 1**).

According to the information at our disposal, before the shelling, the sound of the engine of a truck approaching the positions of the Russian occupation forces was heard. After the shelling, the car drove in the opposite direction. Thus, apparently, the mortar for the shelling was brought by the car and after the shelling the same car took it out (**slide 2, location of unexploded ordnance**).

Only one shell was photographed, which fell directly on the position of the observation post, the remaining 5 mines could not be recorded due to the impossibility of approaching them.

Despite the agreement reached by the TCG on 22 July 2020 on additional measures to consolidate full and comprehensive ceasefire, the **Russian occupation forces continue provocative actions against the Armed Forces of Ukraine**. They conducted non-targeted shelling, in order to provoke retaliatory fire and carry out forbidden fortification works in the immediate vicinity of the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

**Propaganda and disinformation resources of the Russian occupation administrations** periodically disseminate in the temporarily occupied areas of Donbas false accusations that the Armed Forces of Ukraine conduct shelling and fortification of forward positions. For most of these accusations, no specific data are provided, while coordinates, dates, time indicators and weapons, allegedly used, and so on, have been manipulated with.

On 16 September 2020 the Ukrainian side provided security guarantees for the specified repair and restoration works for the period from **20 September through 20 October 2020 from 7h00 to 16h30**. Any violation of these security guarantees

by the Armed Forces of Ukraine is excluded, as these works did not pose any threat to the lives of its military personnel and the situation was monitored by representatives of the JCCC monitoring groups **(slide 3)**.

However, on 12 October 2020 at 12h22, the Russian armed formations made a request for introduction of a regime of silence from 12h50 in connection with the alleged shelling of the depot, located on the temporarily occupied territory, at the settlement of Avdiivka, by mines of 82 mm (3 pieces).

The Ukrainian side used all means at its disposal to immediately check the fact of the alleged shelling, and revealed thereafter that the UAF unit at the contact line had recorded the sound of explosions in the area, which was estimated to be a result of munitions blasts in the temporarily occupied territory.

This artificial situation was used by propaganda and disinformation resources of the Russian occupation administration to make another false accusation against the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The peculiarity of this case is that the Ukrainian side was accused of using the civilians, who peacefully performed repair and restoration works, as "targets" for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This approach, in the idea of its creators, should have strengthened the morale and psychological effect of the disinformation, while contributing to hostile attitudes among the civilian population towards the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

According to the data of the SMM daily report of 16 October, 2020, the Ukrainian side of the JCCC revealed incontrovertible evidence of another provocation, planned against the Armed Forces of Ukraine **(slide 4)**.

In this report, in the Table of ceasefire violations of 15 October, 2020, you may find the full list of violations recorded by the SMM cameras, which are located in Avdiivka (*17 km north of Donetsk*) and at the Donetsk filtering station (*15 km. North of Donetsk*).

Accurate location information provided by the cameras, as well as information on the location of detected muzzle flames (shots) and the location of explosions (shell bursts) allow to graphically display the location of firing positions, direction of fire and areas of fire.

Based on the data of the Table, it is clear that the locations of the firing positions (12 shots) in the evening of October, 14 (starting from 23h31) and at night on October, 15 (until 01h57) were recorded at a distance of 500 to 1000m south of the camera at the Donetsk filtration station, which is actually located along the line of contact on the temporarily occupied territory. The area where the shell ruptures were recorded (19 cases) is also located in the temporarily occupied territory and is equipped with a system of engineering fortifications of the ROF. At the same time, the cameras recorded separate explosions (2 bursts of shells) in the area

occupied by the forward units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. At the same time, there are no recordings of muzzle flames (shots) in the location of the units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

It is noteworthy that it was at this time (00h10) when the ROF addressed the SMM with an initiative to introduce a "silence" regime, accusing the Armed Forces of Ukraine of shelling their positions with 82-mm mortars.

This tactic of deliberately accusing the Armed Forces of Ukraine of ceasefire violations, which is simulated by the requests to introduce a "silence" regime with simultaneous **conduct of controlled explosions at the positions of the Russian armed formations for the purpose of their engineering equipment, has been recorded since September 2020** during daylight hours. In the case described earlier, a similar tactic was applied. However, this was a **real shelling by the armed formations of their own positions** and the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at night time. After such deliberate actions, ROF actively spread false information accusing the Armed Forces of Ukraine of shelling their positions.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the situation regarding night provocations on October 14-15, 2020, it is possible to make the following preliminary conclusions:

- the actions of the ROF are carried out according to one scenario and have signs of escalation;
- up to two 82 mm mortars as well as AGS-17 and RPG-7 are used for provocative shelling;
- all such provocations take place mostly in one area (Avdiivka-DFS-Mineralne), where there are two SMM surveillance cameras, which should ensure recording of alleged shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with their further reflection in the SMM reports and use as factual material in accusations of the Ukrainian side at all levels of the negotiation process;
- conducting fire against its own positions and, at the same time, against the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is intended to provoke retaliatory fire, which may indicate that the conduct of fire is carried out by a mobile unit of the ROF, which arrives specifically for this purpose in the area;
- the absence of recorded flashes of muzzle flames (shots) at the UAF positions indicates that the Ukrainian side did not open fire in response.

The ROF are implementing planned provocative measures to escalate the armed confrontation in order to exert additional pressure on the Ukrainian side and to promote their own agenda during the meetings of the TCG. Actually, the Russian

occupation forces are trying to artificially create a vision in the information space that the ceasefire regime is allegedly on the verge of failure. It is probably intended to serve as an instrument of moral and psychological pressure on the military and political leadership of Ukraine.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

During the period from 5 through 18 October the armed formations of the Russian Federation resorted to armed provocations and committed other violations of the Agreement of the TCG, reached on 22 July. They **violated ceasefire regime on 46 occasions** (*near the residential areas of Zaitseve, Novoluhanske, vodiane, Pisky, Opytne, Shumy, Mariinka, Maiorsk, Lomakyne, Avdiivka, NovoMykhailivka in the Donetsk region and Kamyshuvaha, Orikhove, Khutir Vilnyi, Prychepylivka, Novotoshkivske in the Luhansk region*), directing fire against the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with the use of different grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms, as well as conducting distanced mining of POM-2 mines using rocket propelled grenade launchers (*near Opytne, on 8 October*).

Near Pyschevyk, Vodiane, Shyrokyne, the Russian **armed formations** used the **UAVs forbidden by the Minsk agreements** that crossed the line of contact. The UAF had to respond and suppress these activities by electronic warfare means. It is noteworthy that Russia has been using UAVs against the UAFs from the very start of its invasion in Donbas in 2014. Separate units were formed by Russia to perform these tasks.

The **RF continued supplying its occupation forces in Donbas with weapons, ammunition and manpower in full violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine**. These illicit supplies from Russia took place through the non-Government-controlled **part of the Ukrainian-Russian border, on the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas**, where there are **no border crossing facilities**. On 3 October the Mission reported such convoys near Huselshchukove, about 12km west of the border. The SMM saw a white vehicle stationary on the side of a road, with "military inspection" written on it in Russian. On the same road, the Mission saw fresh infantry fighting vehicle tracks leading towards Patriotychne (*94km south of Donetsk*), in a zone within which deployment of heavy armament and military equipment is further proscribed according to paragraph 5 of the Minsk Memorandum of 19 September 2014. On 16 October an SMM long-range UAV spotted one convoy consisting of two-military type trucks and one mini-van heading south-west on an unpaved road near Manych (*76km east of Donetsk*), about 200m west of the border with the Russian Federation. On the same day, the UAV spotted a second convoy consisting of two military-type trucks **entering Ukraine** on the same unpaved road near Manych, and driving towards the

stationary convoy. Between 22:12 and 23:00, cargo unloading took place, during which the UAV spotted 22 people, 12 from the first convoy and ten from the second. At 23:10, both convoys headed towards Uspenka (*73km south-east of Donetsk*). At 23:13, the second convoy diverged from the first in the direction of the same unpaved road near Manych and **exited Ukraine** at 23:37, while the first convoy continued towards Uspenka and stopped at a compound in central Donetsk city's Voroshylovskiyi district at 00:57. One truck was seen entering the compound while the other two vehicles and 12 people remained outside.

Moreover, according to the MoD of Ukraine, the RF continues **increasing combat capabilities of its occupation forces** in Donbas. Notably, the rearmament of the tank units is underway. Instead of T-64 tanks, which have exhausted their service life, new T-72B tanks are being illicitly transferred by Russia through the railway. Meanwhile, the old models T-64 are intended for demonstration at special sites in order to mislead the SMM of alleged fulfilment of the obligations on withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line.

The Russian **armed formations continued planting mines** in peaceful areas of Ukrainian Donbas. Notably, in its report of 7 October, near the temporarily occupied residential area of Nyzhnie Lozove the SMM UAV again spotted a total of 225 anti-tank mines laid in several locations, belonging to the Russian armed formations. Distance mining was also used by the armed formations.

The SMM continued to observe **weapons in violation of withdrawal lines in the temporarily occupied areas** of Donbas. In total, the Mission reported on 89 of such weapons, including seven multiple launch rocket systems near the residential area of Sadovyi, and 275 weapons outside the designated storage sites.

This ongoing concentration of heavy weapons near the contact line, severe restrictions of the SMM freedom of movement, armed provocations, fortification of forward positions by the Russian armed provocations as well as illicit transfers of weapons and ammunition by Russia are clear indicators of reluctance of the Russian side to proceed further to genuine peaceful resolution of the conflict it started and continues to sustain.

Notwithstanding the challenging circumstances, Ukraine has been proactively restoring civilian infrastructure, improving living conditions and carrying out demining in the conflict-affected areas under Government control, with the SMM observing the adherence to localised ceasefires. We are grateful to the Mission for its dedicated and restless work on this direction.

**In conclusion**, we urge the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine, reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea, de-occupy parts of the Donbas, and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, through the Kerch Strait and in

the Sea of Azov. Russia must fully implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including withdrawal of its forces, illegal armed formations and weapons from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

**Thank you, Madame Chairperson.**





