



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement on “Russia’s on-going aggression against Ukraine
and illegal occupation of Crimea”**

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1116th meeting of the Permanent Council,
26 October 2016

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I would like to thank the Chair for presenting the views of the host country in relation to the Normandy Summit, held in Berlin on 19 October. We highly value the mediation efforts of Germany and France in this framework and their dedication to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the Russia-fuelled conflict on the Ukrainian territory in Donbas. Ukraine’s assessments in this regard will be outlined in our statement.

We hope the outcomes of the Normandy Summit will give an important impetus to implementation of the Minsk agreements. It must be recalled however that just as it has been for two years until now, the progress in de-escalation depends on Russia’s readiness to fulfill the undertaken commitments.

We deem it of crucial importance therefore that the participants of the Summit agreed to elaborate a Roadmap of implementation of the Minsk agreements with clear sequence of steps and guarantees of their implementation. It must be a comprehensive document, covering all Minsk agreements, signed in 2014-2015.

Every effort must be made to put an end to the security degradation on the ground, which means, in particular, that the security component of the Roadmap should be considered as a matter of immediate priority. The Ukrainian side reiterated at the Summit that security remains critical requirement for progress on political aspects of the Minsk agreements, which are to form another part of the Roadmap.

In this regard we welcome the readiness of the Normandy Four to work on the issue of an OSCE armed police mission. Its deployment throughout conflict-affected part of Donbas, including in the border areas, is necessary to contribute to establishment of safe and secure environment in the region, which is particularly important during the election process and in transitional period. We expect the follow-up steps to be taken by the German Chairmanship to practically address this issue within the OSCE.

All participants of the Summit agreed that comprehensive and sustainable cease-fire is crucial for de-escalation and must be established without further delay. We regret that a week since the Summit its call for ceasefire has not been met as armed provocations by the combined Russian-separatist forces continue.

The ceasefire violations affect the pace of disengagement process, which was also in the focus of the Normandy Four in Berlin. We note that the security conditions are largely met in two disengagement areas of Zolote and Petrivske, although Russian hybrid forces continue to shell the nearby areas and thus impede the SMM monitoring and verification there.

As regards the third agreed area of Stanytsya Luhanska, we regret to note that ceasefire violations by the Russian hybrid forces, including with the use of mortars, remain of regular nature, making the disengagement in this area impossible so far. Ukraine remains ready to proceed to withdrawing forces and hardware in Stanytsya Lyhanska as soon as ceasefire and other provisions of the Framework Decision of 21 September are met. We reiterate our call on Russia to implement the undertaken commitments on disengagement in good faith, in particular to ensure presence of Russian officers from the JCCC in all disengagement areas, which is yet to be done.

It is important to timely complete the disengagement in three above areas in order to expand this initiative to the next four sections on the contact line. The Ukrainian side insisted in Berlin that Debaltseve must be determined as one of those areas.

Distinguished colleagues,

We are extremely concerned over the sharp deterioration in Mariupol direction, where intense shellings and attacks by the Russian hybrid forces have persisted over the last two weeks. According to the SMM observations, the number of recorded ceasefire violations increased by more than nine times in this area. The combined Russian-separatist forces resorted to using heavy weapons, in particular mortars. At the same time the SMM faced the most significant restrictions to its freedom of movement in occupied areas north-east of Mariupol, as follows from the SMM's weekly report of 19 October. Consistent restriction in this area, as the Mission concludes, creates uncertainty as to the intentions and activity of the so-called "DPR".

Spike of violence near Mariupol, as well as ceasefire violations by the Russian hybrid forces in other hotspots, in particular Avdiyivka, resulted in growing toll of casualties among the Ukrainian servicemen and the civilians. During 17-26 October 1 Ukrainian soldier was killed and 30 were wounded. The civilian population remains extremely vulnerable to violent actions by the illegal armed groups. As the SMM reports, they continue the cynical practice of concentrating the positions in residential areas, while the Ukrainian forces, on the contrary, are located mostly outside populated areas.

Free and unhindered access of the OSCE SMM throughout occupied areas of Donbas, including in the border areas, is a must for the process of de-escalation to be placed on a solid basis. Given the abovementioned SMM reports on freedom-of-movement

restrictions it has not yet happened. We also consider unacceptable the on-going practice of intimidation of the OSCE monitors in the occupied areas of Donbas, which, according to the Mission, “*has created a heightened sense of security awareness in these areas*”. This unacceptable situation is contrary to the outcomes of the Normandy Summit and the agreement of all participants. Urgent steps must be taken by Russia that would allow the Mission to perform without hindrance their monitoring and verification functions in the occupied part of Donbas, including border areas.

President Poroshenko reiterated in Berlin to his Russian counterpart and the mediating leaders of Germany and France that the uncontrolled part of the state border between Ukraine and Russia remains the main factor for generating instability and violence on the ground. Establishing security zones in the border areas of Ukraine and Russia with the OSCE permanent monitoring and verification on the border, as envisaged by paragraph 4 of the Minsk Protocol, should be the first step towards resolving this problem. Ukraine expects Russia to deliver on this agreed commitment.

Mr. Chairman,

The participants of the Normandy Summit agreed that humanitarian aspects of the conflict resolution must be immediately addressed. We expect from Russia that the agreement on ensuring free and unimpeded access of the ICRC to the hostages and illegally detained persons will be promptly implemented as a first step towards unblocking the process of their release on the basis of “all-for-all” principle, agreed in Minsk.

The above provision applies equally to all Ukrainian citizens, who are held in illegal detention in Russia. Their destiny remains a matter of utmost concern for us. We find alarming the reports of the Russian human rights defenders on serious mental disorder that Stanislav Klyh, one of the Ukrainians – political prisoners in Russia, experiences following severe tortures in Russian prison. According to their observations, he requires urgent medical treatment. We deplore the yesterday’s decision of the Russian Supreme Court to reject an appeal against the sentence of Stanislav Klyh and Mykola Karpyuk.

We also condemn the refusal by Russia to transfer illegally sentenced Ukrainian citizens Oleh Sentsov and Oleksandr Kolchenko to Ukraine in line with the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons. We recall that rejection by the Russian authorities to recognize the Ukrainian citizenship of Sentsov and Kolchenko contravenes international humanitarian law and demand from the Russian Federation to stop illegitimate conferral of Russian citizenship to the residents of Ukraine’s territories, illegally occupied by Russia. We urge the Russian Federation to ensure immediate and unconditional release of those Ukrainian citizens, who are illegally detained in Russia.

Distinguished colleagues,

The human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, illegally occupied by Russia, remains extremely worrisome. We condemn the continuation by the Russian occupation authorities of repressions and intimidation

against the representatives of the Crimean Tatar community. Even a picture with leaders of the Crimean Tatar movement, posted to social networks, could be used as a pretext for a search by the “FSB”, as it was happened with resident of Bakhchysaray Enver Abduveliev on 20 October.

We again urge the Russian Federation, as an occupying power, to take responsibility for halting repressions and other human rights violations on the peninsula. We call for allowing free and unconditional access for permanent international monitoring in Crimea.

Mr.Chairman,

Reporting on commemoration of the Day of Defender of Ukraine the SMM noted the non-violent nature of large public gatherings, which is indicative of the peaceful situation outside of the immediate conflict zone in Donbas. It is an illustrative example that the presence of the Russian hybrid forces is the only source of violence and insecurity in Ukraine. Their withdrawal from Ukraine’s territory as well as disarmament of all illegal groups, as envisaged by the paragraph 10 of the Minsk Package of measures, will be crucial step towards bringing peace back to the region and ensuring safety and security for the local population, as it is the case for the rest of Ukraine.

We urge Russia to restore its respect for the norms of international law and the OSCE principles and commitments, to halt its aggression against Ukraine and reverse the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman.