



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

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

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1334<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
02 September 2021

### **Madam Chairperson,**

I would like to start with the words of gratitude to all partners who participated in the Crimea Platform Summit held in Kyiv on 23 August.

The summit was attended by 46 delegations, representing both national states and international organizations, and concluded with a Declaration reiterating the international community's unwavering commitment to work together to return Crimea to Ukraine.

I also invite participating States, that have not signed the Declaration yet, to join the document.

A lot of work remains ahead of us. In this regard, the OSCE has all relevant tools, experience and capacities to further contribute to implementing rightful goals of the Crimea platform. We look forward to working with the Chairpersonship, national delegations and OSCE Secretary General to translate the declaration into a common action.

Crimea continues to be marked by increasing militarization and systematic violations of human rights and freedoms by the Russian Federation as occupying Power.

Just two weeks ago, Raif Fevziev, Rustem Murasov, Rustem Tairov, Dzebbar Bekirov, Zaur Abdulaiev were illegally detained by the Russian occupation administration in Crimea.

In August, the Southern District Military Court of the Russian Federation convicted another four Ukrainian citizens Ruslan Nagaev, Lenur Khalilov, Ruslan Mesutov and Eldar Kantimirov. Their sentences vary from 12 to 18 years in prison.

Newly published fifth UN Secretary General report on Crimea provides even more detailed account of Russia's crimes committed in the peninsula.

Furthermore, the International Day on Enforced Disappearance, observed on 30 August, highlights continuing impunity in Crimea. Since 2014 there have been 44 victims of enforced disappearances. Six of them were later found dead, 19 were released, three abductees were convicted, and one person was extradited. However, the whereabouts of 15 of them is still unknown.

Apart from human rights violations, the Russian Federation further proceeds with the modernization of its Black Sea fleet including with ships capable to launch cruise missiles. Artificial delays of commercial vessels while they are making through the Kerch Strait together with the effective but unjustified closure of sea areas further undermine freedom and safety of the navigation.

Taking this opportunity, we urge the Russian delegation to engage constructively in the activities of the International Crimea Platform. Full and

unimpeded access to occupied Crimea for the OSCE SMM would be a first step in the right direction.

### **Excellencies,**

The Russian Federation exploits every possibility to convince distinguished delegations how it cares about people residing in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

However, the truth is that ongoing supplies of weaponry through uncontrolled part of border and presence of servicemen from the Russian Federation on Ukraine's soil continue to have devastating impact on the human rights situation therein.

Russia's reluctance to deliver on opening of two new crossing points keeps thousands as hostages. Restrictions of the freedom of movement through the contact line affect their rights to education, family life, health, work and a right to live in peace and unity within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders.

On 27 August Ukraine, for the fifth time, informed the SMM of additional security guarantees provided for EECs "Zolote" and "Schastia" unimpeded functioning. We call upon the Russian Federation to reciprocate this step in good faith.

Cutting ties with Ukraine has also been instrumentalized by Moscow to push the people in the occupied territories for obtaining the Russian passport. We call upon the Russian Federation not only to stop unlawful passportization practice but also to revoke a decision forcing Ukrainian citizens to cast ballots in the upcoming State Duma elections, which is a clear violation of the Minsk agreements.

Apart from this hybrid toolkit in action, residential areas and civil infrastructure continued to be targeted by Russia's indiscriminate military fire.

Just to name Travneve settlement, which was twice under fire in a week.

Avdiivka suffered the same fate on 28 August 2021. It was targeted by heavy shellings with the use of 120-mm mortars and 122-mm artillery prohibited under the Minsk agreements. The shelling caused the interruption of the railway connection, thus, further aggravating the humanitarian situation therein.

In the meantime, in the Donetsk region, between the evenings of 27 and 29 August, the SMM recorded 354 ceasefire violations, including 281 explosions compared to 40 ceasefire violations recorder in the previous reporting period. According to Ambassador Çevik, on the morning of 28 August more than 190 ceasefire violations were recorded in Avdiivka.

Days before, according to SMM daily report issued on 27 August, the Mission saw in violation of withdrawal lines "20 howitzers, eight tanks and six multiple launch rocket systems" in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk region, including in two training areas and in three residential areas. Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites, the Mission observed six tanks, two surface-to-air missile systems and one mortar" in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Behind these figures is the fact that **ten** Ukrainian servicemen were wounded in one single day, on 28 August. Russia's shellings also claimed lives of the Ukrainian defenders on 24 and 27 August.

This recent escalation and upward dynamics of violations clearly point that a sustainable and lasting ceasefire is possible only if additional measures are applied.

Freedom of movement, safe and secure access of the OSCE SMM and its proper engagement, in particular scrupulous monitoring and reporting of the security situation in the area, would contribute to reducing tension, thus preventing further possible provocations along the contact line.

However, it has already become a routine for the Russian armed formations to demand the SMM monitors to leave the area citing "orders or instructions from superiors". As demand to the SMM by armed men to leave the area after 5 minutes monitoring on 25 August near Voznesenivka and Izvaryne crossing points is yet another evidence of Russia's intention – to continue unimpeded supplies of weapons,

military equipment, regular troops and mercenaries to the temporarily occupied territory.

Continued UAVs jamming and small arms targeting are of the same nature of malicious instructions. In view of this we fully support steps undertaken by the Chairpersonship and OSCE Secretary General to resume UAVs long-range flights that would strengthen remote observation, including of the border, with the use technological means.

At the same time opening additional forward patrol bases close to the uncontrolled part of the Ukrainian-Russian border would significantly improve the SMM's efficiency and safety of its patrols and technical assets.

We also urge the Russian side to implement finally the Minsk protocol of 5 September 2014, which provides for the permanent monitoring of Ukraine-Russia border by the OSCE with the creation of security zones.

However, despite all the diplomatic efforts, including in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group as well as N4, the Russian Federation continues to breach its commitments. At the ASRC conference, two days ago, Russia was quite clear that the imposition of the so-called "direct dialogue", under any possible pretext, remains it's the only goal. For this goal Russia is ready to sacrifice any progress in resolution of the conflict it has started seven years ago.

**Dear colleagues,**

On August 29, Ukraine commemorated those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom and Ukraine's sovereignty. Seven years ago, in Ilovaisk, hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers were treacherously killed and thousands were wounded while they were guaranteed a humanitarian corridor and safe passage out of encirclement by the Russian occupation forces.

This day is a grim reminder of pain and suffering Russia has brought to every Ukrainian family and of many lives it has broken on the both side of the contact line.

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, mercenaries and their hardware from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**