



**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 1277<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
30 July 2020

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Last week, Russia's ongoing aggression in Donbas left 3 more Ukrainian servicemen killed in action and 6 more wounded. Local residents suffered from fire, shellings and destruction of infrastructure. The Russian armed formations violated security provisions of the Minsk agreements, including close to the disengagement areas, and severely restricted the SMM capacities to monitor and report on the security situation. 40 weapons were registered in violation of their withdrawal lines (all of them but 5 in Russia-occupied areas) and 240 weapons beyond withdrawal lines (all of them but 15, again in Russia-occupied areas). On the night of 20 July, an SMM long-range UAV spotted another Russian military convoy, illegally crossing the Russian-Ukrainian border near Leonove.

It is against this backdrop that we need to assess the agreement on the additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire, which was reached on 22 July within the TCG by Ukraine and Russia, with mediation of the OSCE and participation of the invited persons from the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

On 26 July, the day before this agreement entered into force, Presidents of Ukraine and the Russian Federation reiterated in a phone call the need of its implementation aimed at reaching full and comprehensive ceasefire in Donbas.

The Ukrainian side has shown its will and resolve to abide by the ceasefire arrangements twenty times over the past six years. All previous attempts remained vain, as the Russian proxies violated them sooner or later, after several days, sometimes after several minutes after their beginning.

During the previous ceasefire regime that started on July 21, 2019 and lasted till July 26, 2020, we registered 4 266 ceasefire violations by the armed formations of the Russian Federation. The Minsk-proscribed weapons were used 1 310 times. The populated areas were shelled 60 times. As a result of such armed provocations against civilian infrastructure, 3 people were killed and 6 more wounded.

This time, we paid a lot of efforts to ensure sustainability of the ceasefire. Additional officers were deployed throughout the entire contact line to monitor the ceasefire.

As of now, it is largely maintained. The Russian armed formations have violated it five times: near Vodyane, Pivdenne (Zalizne in the SMM report), Shumy, Novoluhans'ke and Novotoshkivske, the first one only in 20 minutes after the start of implementation of the additional measures to consolidate the ceasefire. Nonetheless, all of the cases took place without the use of the Minsk-proscribed weapons and causing no casualties among Ukrainian servicemen. Our militaries demonstrated their utmost restraint and did not deliver retaliatory fire. The security situation remains controlled.

In accordance with the additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire agreed within the TCG, we urge the Russian delegation to provide explanations on those cases of violation of the ceasefire and information on the disciplinary actions undertaken in their regard using the coordination mechanism of the ceasefire violations response, envisaged in the additional measures. Bringing to account those responsible for the breaches of the existing agreements remains critical to prevent such violations in the future.

We hope that establishment of comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire will lead to further progress in other issues related to Russia's aggression in Donbas: demining, disengagement of forces and hardware, opening of new EECs at the contact line, release of illegally detained Ukrainian citizens and ensuring full and unconditional access to them of the ICRC, as well as the socio-economic, humanitarian and political issues. All these issues were discussed by Presidents of Ukraine and Russia in the abovementioned phone call of 26 July, along with the possible amendments to Ukraine's legislation on local self-governance in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, and decentralization in Ukraine. Special attention was paid to the need to successfully implement the agreements reached by the Normandy Four leaders in Paris in 2019 that would pave the way to the next N4 summit in Berlin.

The illegal occupation of Crimea, another Ukrainian region affected by Russia's armed aggression, continues unabated as well. The two most essential negative trends related to Crimea, that is its ongoing militarization and flagrant violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms by Russia, remain in place.

On 26 July, illegal *quote-unquote* "military naval parade" took place in the occupied city of Sevastopol in the breach of Russia's obligations under the international law, numerous resolutions by the international bodies and in violation of Ukrainian legislation. The MFA of Ukraine emphasized in its statement that this so-called "parade" represented another testimony to the deliberate efforts by Russia on the escalation of tension in the Ukrainian-Russian relations, and sent a note of protest to the Russian MFA.

Two days before that, on 24 July, Archbishop Klyment, Head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Crimea, was ordered to demolish a temple in Yevpatoria, construction of which started yet before 2014. If not implemented, he can face criminal prosecution. This case is only one of the many steps by the Russian occupation authorities aimed at intimidating believers of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Crimea. Religious communities were forced to re-register under the legislation of occupying Power, in flagrant violation of the norms of international humanitarian law, or deprived of their land and property.

Under the pretext of combating the COVID-19 disease, citizens of Ukraine who permanently reside in the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and who have been illegally and compulsorily issued Russian passports by the occupation administration are allowed to leave the temporarily occupied territory and come back only once.

Residents of Crimea who refused to obtain a Russian passport are considered foreigners and can only leave without the possibility of returning to Crimea.

In addition to these restrictions of the freedom of movement, the Russian occupation authorities started to issue fines to residents of Crimea for presenting Ukrainian passports while crossing the administrative border with the occupied Crimea. According to reports, occupation authorities demand using only Russian passports for crossing.

We call on participating States, the OSCE and its assets, to remain seized of the situation with human rights and fundamental freedoms in the temporarily occupied Crimean peninsula. As we have reiterated many times before, it should not become a “grey zone” in the OSCE area.

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

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**