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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 delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1270<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
4 June 2020

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We share concerns regularly raised by participating States on the civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure caused in the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine affected by Russia's ongoing armed aggression. Those are Ukrainian citizens, both living in Russia-occupied parts and in government-controlled areas of Donbas, who suffer most. Let me stress once again: Ukrainian Armed Forces do not target houses of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and they never use them as a human shield, unlike the Russian side.

For instance, on 2 June, the Russian armed formations placed 152mm artillery systems in the residential area of Starolaspa village and shelled Ukrainian positions. Several kilometres from it, they placed 82mm mortars in Novolaspa residential area and did the same. No response fire by the Ukrainian servicemen followed.

The Russian proxies continue strengthening their military positions in the immediate vicinity of the objects of critical civilian infrastructure. On 31 May, the SMM spotted a recently dug trench parallel to road M-04, used by Voda Donbasa employees to reach the Donetsk Filtration Station. I would ask the Russian delegation to explain the reason of putting armed persons along the road to the station, which provides water to hundreds of thousands people.

Cessation of fire in Donbas as a basic prerequisite for any further progress in peaceful resolution of Russia-initiated conflict was a focus of attention during the recent visit of Ukrainian high-level delegation to Germany on 2 June. The Ukrainian side reiterated the need to implement Normandy Four arrangements reached at the Paris Summit in December 2019 with the aim to unblock the next Summit to be organized in Berlin. Ukraine stands ready to search for the broadest possible compromises to move forward in the conflict resolution, but without crossing such red lines as Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Particular attention during the visit was paid to the issue of mutual release of detainees. Further progress in this field has been

undermined by the absence of access of ICRC to the persons illegally kept behind bars in Russia-occupied parts of Donbas, Crimea, as well as in the territory of the Russian Federation.

We again urge the Russian side to stick to the commitments it has undertaken. Last week, we drew attention of the Permanent Council to fortification works held by the Russian armed formations in Petrivske disengagement area, which were spotted by the SMM. The situation in three disengagement areas, which were planned to serve as an example for disengagement along the entire contact line, remains fragile.

On 29 May, the Russian occupation troops deliberately shelled Zolote disengagement area, using antitank grenade launchers. The same day, an SMM mini-UAV again spotted 25 anti-tank mines belonging to the Russian armed formations inside this disengagement area. On 1 June, the Russian proxies shelled Petrivske disengagement area, using machine guns and small arms. The next day, they placed 82mm mortars on the edge of the same disengagement area and fired Ukrainian military positions, hoping to provoke response fire and to blame the Ukrainian side for violating agreed arrangements. We urge the Russian side to stop breaching the Minsk agreements and, instead, to move forward in their implementation.

Comprehensive and unimpeded access of the SMM to the entire territory of Ukraine, in full accordance with the Mission's mandate agreed by all participating States including Russia, remains critical for monitoring and verification of the progress on the ground. Last week, in line with the multi-year trend, the SMM faced 24 non-mine related restrictions of its freedom of movement, all but one conditional taking place in Russia-occupied parts of Donbas. The Mission also continued to observe the presence of obstacles and mines on roads leading to some of the checkpoints of the Russian armed formations near the contact line, which impeded the Mission's passage through them (near Horlivka, Oleksandrivka and Verkhnohyrokiivske). The de-facto ban for the SMM patrols to cross the contact line, which was imposed by the Russian side, remains in place for more than two months already. We continue to strongly condemn this ban and urge the Russian side to lift it immediately. Let me inform participating States in this context, that Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine announced preparations for opening the first entry-exit checkpoints at the contact line in Donbas for civilians crossings starting from 10 June.

We are grateful to the SMM for its efforts to continue monitoring activities despite Russia-imposed restrictions and COVID-19 related challenges to the physical presence of the Mission on the ground. SMM findings remain a verified unbiased source of information for participating States, which highlights Russia's support provided to its proxies in the occupied parts of Donbas. Only in the recent several days, the SMM spotted about 100 trucks near Uspenka and at least 35 stationary cargo wagons near Voznesenivka border crossing points, as well as a cargo train consisting of at least 50 wagons near Vyselky moving east towards the border and then exiting Ukraine. We reiterate the need to ensure transparency along the uncontrolled segment of the border as a critical part of cessation of Russia-provoked fire and violence in Donbas.

In Russia-occupied Crimea, the situation with observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms does not change for the better. The most severe persecutions continue to be directed against Crimean Tatars, any of whom may wake up in the early

morning with Russian occupation security forces kicking down the door of his or her house. On 2 June, FSB officers and Rosgvardia fighters in full military gear stormed into the house of 65-year-old Sheyde Asanova claiming to be looking for weapons or documents related to the illegal criminal charges initiated against her son. They found nothing.

Other Crimean Tatars are subjected to punitive psychiatry or forcibly moved from the occupied Crimean peninsula to the territory of the Russian Federation. Those who oppose illegal forced military conscription, which we discussed in detail two weeks ago at the meeting of the Permanent Council, continue to be criminally prosecuted. The Crimean Human Rights Group NGO reported on four new criminal cases in May this year. We remind the Russian side of its obligations as occupying Power, including under the international humanitarian law.

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.

**I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**