



**Statement by H. E. Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the UN
Debate of the UN General Assembly on The situation in the temporarily occupied territories
of Ukraine - Item 63**

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this important debate on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the European Union. Allow me to add some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Slovakia reiterates its support for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders; reconfirms Ukraine's sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula and its part of the Sea of Azov; and Ukraine's absolute right to have full access to the Sea of Azov, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. In line with the General Assembly resolution 68/262 (2014) Slovakia does not recognize and continues to condemn the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia.

Ukraine is our largest neighbour and friend, and it is in our strategic interest to have a stable, secure and prosperous Ukraine. We welcome the recent increase in talks regarding the conflict resolution, and we reiterate that such must be based on full respect to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

For two years in a row, Slovakia has supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution subtitled "Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov." However, we can only reiterate our ongoing concerns that the security situation in the occupied Crimea remains dire and the military activities on and around the peninsula are jeopardizing security in the entire region.

Allow me to reconfirm our unwavering support to the Normandy Format, the Trilateral Contact Group and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) in finding a peaceful political solution to the conflict in Donbas. I would like to repeat our call for free and unhindered access by SMM observers to all areas in eastern Ukraine, including to the uncontrolled border sections.

Slovakia also strongly supports the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in Ukraine.

As you are aware, in 2019 Slovakia was chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Our Chairmanship focused on prevention, mediation and mitigation of conflicts while focusing on the people it affects, together with providing for a safer future and effective multilateralism. Special attention was paid to humanitarian projects focused on improving the lives of people in the areas affected by conflicts, including Ukraine.

As the crisis in and around Ukraine affects the common security in the OSCE region, the Slovak Chairmanship did put forward every effort towards its peaceful resolution. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčák, paid multiple visits both to Ukraine and to the Russian Federation.

The OSCE, also owing to Slovakia, has played and will continue to play a key role in the process of meeting the commitments to the peace agreements and conflict settlement in Ukraine and its surroundings. As a member of Troika, we will support the current Chair Albania in all their efforts in this regard.

We acknowledge that some of the recent developments are encouraging, including the repair of the strategic bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska, the meeting of the leaders of the Normandy Four, as well as the two exchanges of prisoners in September and December last year.

However, we are deeply concerned about the unprecedented ceasefire violation that has occurred on February 18 near Zolote in Donbas, resulting in one lost human life. We call on all parties to strictly implement ceasefire as they have committed under the Minsk Agreements and the Normandy Format.

Slovakia fully supports the outcome of the recent Normandy Four Summit, and we consider progress in all working groups of the TCG as indispensable in order to build a solid base for the next planned Normandy Four Summit.

Mr. President,

After almost six years since the beginning of this crisis, we continue to stress, that in order to achieve a lasting peace and resolution of the current conflict, all sides need to engage constructively and in good faith for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

In conclusion, I would like to, once again, reaffirm Slovakia's utmost commitment to prevent a further escalation in the region and to facilitate the improvement of the dire humanitarian situation.

Ukraine is our largest neighbour and we sincerely wish there to be peace, which is, without any doubt, a prerequisite for stability in the whole Europe.

Thank you for your attention.