



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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**Permanent Representative of Slovakia
to the United Nations**

Debate of the General Assembly

on

**The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine -
Item 65**

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-Check against delivery-

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.

As it was again confirmed during the working visit of Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic Ivan Korčok in Kyiv 7 days ago on the 16th of February, 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.

We recall the UN GA resolution from December 2020 "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." Unfortunately, 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. Human rights and fundamental freedoms of residents of the peninsula such as freedom of expression, religion or belief and association and the right to peaceful assembly are being systematically restricted. It is therefore critically important that the regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms have unimpeded access to the peninsula. We recall the decision by the European Court of Human Rights recognizing that Russia has de facto control over the Crimean peninsula since 27/02/2014.

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 in a difficult situation also due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We regret that almost seven years since the conflict in eastern Ukraine started, the SMM observers do not have free and unhindered access to all areas in eastern Ukraine, including to the uncontrolled border sections. It has to be reiterated that the absolute majority of cases when the access for the SMM is limited takes place on the territory not controlled by Ukraine's government.

We acknowledge that the ceasefire starting on the 27th of July 2020 is largely holding, yet there are recently worrying information about spikes in ceasefire violations and about new casualties. Also given the situation with global pandemic we appeal to the sides to do their utmost to move forward the negotiations also with the aim to ease the situation of local population affected by the conflict. We welcome the effort of the Ukrainian authorities. We note with disappointment that despite this effort we do not see reciprocal steps that would for example lead to opening of new crossing points Zolote and Shchastia. This would significantly help the local population on both sides of the ABL.

Slovakia fully supports the outcome of the Normandy Four Summit in December 2019. Yet several agreements have not been fulfilled. We call on the sides to implement the commitments.

Mr. President,

After almost seven years since the beginning of this crisis, we continue to stress that in order to achieve a lasting peace and resolution of the conflict, all sides need to engage constructively and in good faith for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We urge Russia to implement the provisions that it has committed itself to as the signatory of the 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 of the population that is for almost a year fighting also the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

Ukraine is Slovakia's friend and largest neighbour, and it is in our strategic interest to have a stable, secure and prosperous Ukraine. We firmly believe that it is in the interest of whole international community.

Thank you for your attention.