

**General Assembly
Security Council**Distr.: General
26 February 2019

Original: English

**General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda item 67
The situation in the temporarily occupied territories
of Ukraine****Security Council
Seventy-fourth year****Letter dated 22 February 2019 from the Permanent
Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the fifth anniversary of the beginning of Russian armed aggression against Ukraine (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 67, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the fifth anniversary of the beginning of Russian armed aggression against Ukraine

20 February 2019

Five years ago, Russia gravely violated international law when it started on a course of action to illegally occupy Crimea. The illegal and fake referendums that Russia staged in Crimea have not been recognized by the international community. However, reluctance to react robustly has emboldened the criminal Kremlin regime to expand its aggression into new areas, notably its occupation of parts of Ukraine's Donbas region.

On November 25th 2018, Russia attacked Ukrainian ships in the Kerch Strait and Black Sea international waters and once again committed an open act of aggression against Ukraine.

The result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine is dramatic and unprecedented in post-war Europe. Today more than 13 thousand Ukrainians have been killed, 30 thousand wounded and 1.5 million people displaced. Added to this there has been significant destruction within the Donbas region, usurpation of Ukrainian property in occupied Crimea, gross human rights violations by the occupying powers, breaches of norms of international humanitarian law and the political persecution of Ukrainian citizens – all aimed at suppressing any manifestation of anti-occupation sentiment. Finally, there has also been sweeping and large-scale militarization of the occupied peninsula.

Due to the heroic efforts of Ukraine's military, mounting international political pressure and with the support of international partners Ukraine continues to counter Russia's aggression.

A strong international coalition is actively supporting Ukraine, increasing pressure on Russia by demanding its full de-occupation of Ukrainian territories and making it clear to the Kremlin that there are real consequences if aggression continues.

All political prisoners and prisoners-of-war should be immediately released. This is the common position of both Ukraine and international partners. Further delays by Moscow with respect to prisoners' release should have very serious consequences, including increased sanctions.

Ending Russian aggression in Donbas should be underpinned by a full-scale UN peacekeeping mission with a mandate that covers the whole zone of conflict.

The international community supports Ukraine with respect to the issue of the illegal occupation of Crimea. A number of resolutions provide a very clear assessment of Moscow's policy in this regard. Clear demands have been made on Russia to adhere to the norms of international humanitarian law and to de-occupy the peninsula. There is also condemnation for the militarization of Crimea and adjacent parts of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

On 20 February the UN General Assembly for the first time and with the participation of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, discussed the situation in

the occupied territories, proving once again that Moscow's actions are unacceptable to the international community.

We are grateful to our partners for their practical support for the development of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, conducting reforms and providing stabilization of the economic situation for which the war has taken a heavy toll. Only an economically and militarily strong and democratic Ukraine can force the enemy to retreat.

Restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine is needed, not only to ensure the future for Ukraine's citizens – but to renew trust in the European and world security system, which is based on an unconditional respect for the norms of international law and serious consequences for those states seeking to override these laws.
