



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Statement by

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Ukraine debate at the General Assembly

New York, 20/02/2020

Mr President,

Belgium supports the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Mr President,

I would like to start by reaffirming our unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including territorial waters. In accordance with Resolution 68/262 of the General Assembly, we do not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, which we believe is contrary to international law. It constitutes a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and undermines the international rule of law.

Mr President,

Allow me to refer to the situation in Donbass. The Minsk Agreements were concluded in order to bring this conflict to an end. The implementation of these Agreements is the only possible way to reach a lasting political solution. We expect all parties to refrain from any unilateral measure likely to exacerbate tensions. We appeal to the parties to implement these Agreements swiftly and in full and to honour their undertakings. We also call on Russia to use its influence over armed formations to encourage them to respect their commitments in full.

We welcome the conclusions of the "Normandy" format meeting of 9 December 2019 and appeal for their implementation, in particular through the introduction of a lasting ceasefire.

Mr President,

The continued militarisation of Crimea, the Sea of Azov, and the Kerch Straits is a source of concern. This on-going militarisation, as well as all illegal use of force, risk destabilising the region further and exacerbating tensions. We condemn any obstruction of navigation and freedom of passage in the Kerch Strait and urge Russia to guarantee free and unhindered passage in the Sea of Azov in accordance with international maritime law.

Mr President,

The continuing conflict is also reflected by a deterioration in the humanitarian situation and human rights. We urge all the parties to allow full, lasting and unhindered access to the different areas of conflict by international observers and monitoring mechanisms, in accordance with humanitarian principles. We strongly encourage the same parties to respect the mandate of the special observation mission in Ukraine and allow it safe and unhindered access to the entire Ukrainian territory, including along the border between Ukraine and Russia, as well as Crimea.

We are particularly concerned by the targeting of vital civilian infrastructures, contrary to international humanitarian law. With eastern Ukraine being one of the regions of the world most contaminated by mines, we appeal for greater efforts to delimit and mark contaminated zones, and clear mines, especially near schools and entry and exit points.

We also appeal to Russia to release all Ukrainian political prisoners. All the people held must be treated humanely in all circumstances in accordance with international standards.

Impunity only worsens the human rights situation. We are now calling on all the authorities to carry out swift, impartial and effective surveys in the event of presumed cases of violation.

Mr President,

Six years have passed since the start of the conflict in Ukraine and too little progress has been seen. Nevertheless, Belgium remains convinced that the pursuit and strengthening of dialogue between all the parties is the only way to build bridges that will help to overcome divergences and lead to just and lasting peace.