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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Joint Statement of Participants in the International Crimea Platform

Delegations will find attached a revised note on the above-mentioned subject, as received from the EEAS.

Joint Statement of Participants in the International Crimea Platform

1. On 26 February, as Ukraine marks the Day of Resistance to Occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, we, the Participants in the International Crimea Platform once again reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and reiterate our resolve to maintaining pressure on Russia to end the temporary occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol without delay to restore Ukraine's control over its territory.
2. We condemn Russia's continued efforts to further violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, namely the most recent decision by the Russian Federation to recognize the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine as independent entities.
3. We express solidarity with Ukrainians, including Crimean Tatars, who on 26 February 2014 rallied peacefully in support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine in front of the Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. We stand with civic activists, journalists, human rights defenders and defence lawyers, who continue to oppose Russia's temporary occupation of the peninsula at great personal risk.
4. 8 years on since the illegal annexation of Crimea, we continue to condemn the ongoing and systemic violations and abuses of human rights committed by the occupation authorities of the Russian Federation and brutal repressions against all those, who have the courage to peacefully resist the temporary occupation.
5. In this regard we urge the Russian Federation to ensure that all persons belonging to ethnic and religious communities in the peninsula, including ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, are fully able to enjoy their human rights and given the possibility to maintain and develop their culture, education, identity and cultural heritage traditions, which are currently severely threatened by the temporary occupation. The ban on the activities of the Mejlis, a self-governing body of the Crimean Tatars, must be reversed, the prosecution of their leaders, including arbitrary detentions and bans from entering Crimea, stopped and their sentences handed down in absentia repealed.

6. We recall our demand to the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations as an occupying power under international humanitarian law, to release the Ukrainian political prisoners illegally detained in the temporarily occupied Crimea and the territory of Russia, as well as to provide full and unimpeded access to Crimea for conventional regional and international monitoring mechanisms.
7. We condemn all attempts by the Russian Federation to forcibly integrate the illegally annexed peninsula into Russia, including the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and voting, population census, forcible change of the demographic structure of the population of Crimea and suppression of national identity.
8. When appropriate and should Russia's actions so require the ICP Participants express readiness to consider further political, diplomatic and restrictive measures, if provided for by the legal jurisdiction of each Participant and in line with respective procedures.
9. We welcome Ukraine's efforts aimed at preserving links with and supporting its people living in Crimea, in particular opening of two COVID-19 vaccination points on the administrative boundary line with the peninsula.
10. The increasing militarisation of the peninsula by the Russian Federation, including multiple military exercises and the construction of warships, continues to have a negative impact on the security situation in the Black Sea region.

We condemn impediments to navigational rights and freedoms exercised in accordance with international law, including obstructing free passage of ships through the Kerch Strait to and from the Sea of Azov, underlining that such impediments have negative economic consequences for Ukraine's ports in the Sea of Azov and international trade flows, as well as environmental damage resulting from military exercises, construction and other Russia's activities.

11. The Participants are deeply concerned by the illegal seizure of the former nuclear weapons storage sites and efforts of the Russian Federation to extend its jurisdiction over Ukraine's nuclear facilities and material in Crimea.

12. We call on Russia to immediately withdraw its troops, weapons, and military equipment from temporarily occupied Crimea and non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, to comply with its commitments under the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures by providing full transparency over its unusual large-scale military activities on the temporarily occupied peninsula and along the borders with Ukraine.

We further call on Russia to take urgent measures to de-escalate the situation and return to dialogue with a view to political and diplomatic solution.

13. We express our determination to continue working together within the International Crimea Platform to address the challenges stemming from Russia's temporary occupation of Crimea.
14. We recognize the need to continue implementing the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation.
15. We reiterate our readiness to address emerging challenges and evolving hybrid threats resulting from the ongoing militarization of Crimea and to support joint efforts to strengthen resilience to those threats in the context of growing threats to security and stability in the Black Sea region.
16. The ICP Participants finally stress that they do not recognize and continue to condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea. Crimea is Ukraine.