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# Conference on Disarmament

21 September 2016

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## **Note Verbale dated 9 September 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting the Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine dated 7 September 2016 on the Russian Federation's large scale military exercises "Caucasus 2016"**

The delegation of Ukraine to the Conference on Disarmament presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference H.E. Mr. Michael Møller and has the honour to transmit herewith the Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine dated 7 September 2016 on Russia's largescale military exercises "Caucasus 2016", urging Russia to stop provocative build-up of its military presence in the occupied territories and near the border with Ukraine and take steps to reduce tensions.

The delegation of Ukraine would appreciate if this Comment could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and circulated to all Member States and observer States of the Conference.

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## **Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on Russia's large-scale military exercises "Caucasus 2016"**

Ukraine is deeply concerned with the military exercises "Caucasus 2016" which are being held on the occupied territories and near the border of Ukraine. The massive build-up of the Russian joint military force grouping in the occupied territories and on the border of Ukraine as well as bringing it to the highest alert constitute an increasing immediate military threat to Ukraine.

Under the guise of a sudden inspection of the combat readiness of the Russian Armed Forces on August 25-31, which had in fact become an initial phase of the "Caucasus 2016" military exercises, Russia has concentrated on the south-western direction a joint military force grouping of about 100,000 soldiers (including about 41,000 near the borders of Ukraine), more than 2,500 combat vehicles, 60 ships, 400 aircrafts and helicopters. More than 11,000 servicemen were redeployed to the Southern Military District from other districts of Russia.

It should be underlined that in the military doctrine of the Russian Federation such steps, namely deployment (build-up) by a foreign state of military units in the areas adjacent to Russia, including with the aim of exerting political and military pressure, are defined as one of the main external military threats.

These provocative actions of the aggressor stake take place against the backdrop of the blocking by Russia of the Minsk process, its failure to fulfil the security provisions of the Minsk agreements and escalation in the Donbas. Explicitly provocative actions of the Russian Federation negate international efforts to stabilize the situation in the Donbas and threaten the regional stability.

It is noteworthy that on the backdrop of the "Caucasus 2016" military exercises, command and staff exercises of the 1 and 2 army corps of the Russian occupation troops in the Donbas are being held on 5-9 September. Such practice has recently become regular as all measures of operational and combat training of these units take place within the integrated system of the Russian armed forces under control of members of the General Staff and the Southern Military Command District of Russia.

Ukraine urges Russia to stop provocative build-up of its military presence in the occupied territories and near the border with Ukraine and take steps to reduce tensions. We call on the international community and partners of Ukraine to undertake measures to encourage Russia to give up provocations and actions aimed at the destruction of the global and regional security.

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