



Embaixada da Ucrânia
na República Portuguesa

Av. das Descobertas, 18,
Restelo 1400-092 Lisboa,
Portugal

(+351) 21 301 00 43
(+351) 21 301 00 59 (fax)
emb_pt@mfa.gov.ua

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**Statement of H.E. Inna Ohnivets, Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the Portuguese Republic at
the 2022 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably
use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable
development**

(Lisbon, 29 June 2022)

Your Excellencies Co-Presidents,

Excellencies,

All protocol observed,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Humanity faces enormous challenges in ensuring the health of the oceans for future generations. I would like to emphasize that the international cooperation and coordination is crucial for success in this regard.

I hereby address an urgent call for a joint effort to protect humanity and nature. A full-scale invasion into Ukraine by the Russian Federation is a flagrant breach of the UN Charter and the fundamental norms and principles of international maritime and humanitarian law, environmental and nuclear security, food security and global peace, and therefore, require immediate response.

Hundreds of missiles have been launched from Russian warships. The warships that have paralyzed the navigation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and use once peaceful maritime

zones as a launching pad to sow death and terror in Ukraine.

Russian invaders destroy our natural heritage. As of today, Russian armed forces use more than half of the Ramsar sites in Ukraine during hostilities against the Ukrainian people. This concerns the coasts of the Azov and Black Seas and in the lower reaches of the Danube and Dnieper rivers. The Russian armed forces demonstrate blatant disrespect for the environment. In particular, the occupied since 2014 Ramsar sites "Kryva Zatoka" and "Kryva Kosa" in temporarily occupied part of the Donetsk Region and the "Water-coastal complex of Cape Opuk" in Autonomous Republic of Crimea were constantly used for military exercises. More than 20 nature and biosphere reserves and national nature parks have suffered tremendously due to Russian aggression.

Russian federation continues to use sea mines in the Black Sea as a tool for hiding its illegal activities in the Black Sea, contrary to the principles and norms of international maritime and humanitarian law, and to evade responsibility for war crimes and piracy.

Maritime traffic from all Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov remain blocked due to the threat of attacks by the Russian navy, ship capture, or detonation of sea mines. There is a number of explosions of the Russian naval mines, which were torn from the anchor and carried by the current to the seashore of the Odessa and Kherson regions, causing deaths of people and damage to marine life.

According to the Tuzla Estuaries National Nature Park employees, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the protected area has become a high-risk zone. Fragments of Russian missiles and funnels caused by explosions have been repeatedly recorded on the territory of the national park.

The situation with marine environment pollution has also aggravated following the war as a result of massive shelling of

ships, port and other critical infrastructure, located ashore. The regular shellings of port of Mariupol itself and the metallurgical plant “Azovstal” with tens of thousands of tons of hydrogen sulphide solution having spilled into the Sea of Azov after the mass bombardment. This chemical leak could cause a complete extinction of flora and fauna of the Sea of Azov.

As a result of Russian military operations on sea and ashore the situation in some parts of them is even critical. Among many sad evidence – several thousands of wounded and dead dolphins found off the coasts of the Black Sea. The horrific numbers that greatly exceed those usually recorded in the region. Sea fauna is very sensitive to noise pollution from warships and active hostilities in the area are completely unfavorable to the marine environment.

In addition, the chemical composition of sea water is deteriorating because of oil and other harmful substances spills. The dangerous substances could also get into the Mediterranean Sea.

Excellencies,

Today, every country in the world should make every effort to stop Russia's invasion into Ukraine, which has the potential to lead to a global environmental catastrophe.

In this regard, Ukraine insists on bringing Russia to international responsibility for illegal activities in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, war crimes and marine environment pollution.

Thank you for your attention.