

Information on developments in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea

In the period from 21 to 22 February 2014 on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in the city of Sevastopol there were major movements of a large number of military armored vehicles (more than 30 armored personnel carriers) of military units of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation stationed on Ukrainian territory, part of these were not cleared with the appropriate Ukrainian authorities. In particular, 16 BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers stationed in the city of Sevastopol belonging to the 810th separate marine brigade of the Black Sea Fleet left for the settlements of Kacha and Hvardiyske, and to sites within the Sevastopol metropolitan area.

Apart from this, on 23 February 2014 three BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers moved through Sevastopol from where the 810th separate marine brigade was stationed all the way to Cape Khersones and back.

Given the priority of maintaining social and political stability in Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the Russian side to avoid extraneous movement of Russian Federation Black Sea Fleet military equipment, including that which was involved in the strengthening of the protection of Russian military facilities, and to conduct these in cooperation with the relevant Ukrainian government departments, as agreed to in paragraph 4 of Article 8 of the Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the status and conditions of the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine dated 28 May 1997.

It was proposed to the Russian side that bilateral consultations be held.

On 27 February at 20.50 the large amphibious assault ship "Azov" moored at dock number 141 in Pivdena Inlet of Sevastopol Bay, passed border control procedures, then moved to Kozacha Bay (the location of the 810th Marine Brigade of the RF BSF), where about 300 soldiers with guns were set upon shore. They were then transported in 15 KamAZ military vehicles.

At 20:56 on 27 February a column of 14 Ural motor vehicles without number plates and two BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers with a total of some 400 soldiers left the territory of the 7th BSF RF training detachment in a direction leading out of Sevastopol. In the vicinity of the road junction Sevastopol – Sapun-Hora – Inkerman the column split up: 6 Ural vehicles continued on the road to Inkerman, the rest of the vehicles, together with the two APCs, headed off in the direction of Sapun-Hora.

Apart from this, at 21.18 on 27 February 4 KamAZ vehicles without number plates carrying some 150 people left the 7th BSF RF training detachment base and set off in the direction of Novofedorivka.

Individual armed units composed of two to five vehicles each headed toward the location of facilities of the Naval Forces of Ukraine in Sevastopol.

At around 21.30 on 27 February unknown armed men in uniforms without any insignia (approximately 300 men in 17 Ural-type vehicles and two APCs) drove up from the direction of the Kacha Highway to the entrance gate of the conference-room facilities for official delegations located on the territory of the civilian airport, which is next to the Belbek military airfield. After negotiations

with some of their representatives it was established that their aim was to seize control of the exit from the Belbek civilian airport and to stop the movement of top Ukrainian government officials, who according to their information were about to arrive in Crimea by air to travel to Sevastopol. The aforementioned group of armed men spread out along the perimeter of the civilian airport and a field radio station was set up in one of the APCs. By 16.00 the airport's runways had been blocked by three Ural vehicles and a machine-gun post was set up. The leadership of the tactical aviation brigade was warned that in the event of any plane attempting to take off from the airport they would open fire.

From 28 February other units began to be blocked.

At 8:45 the Sevastopol naval detachment of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine was blocked by a group of about 30 armed men in 4 trucks, who were subsequently identified as soldiers of the 810th Marine Brigade of the RF BSF commanded by Captain I rank Oleksandr Vicheslavovych Tolmachov. They stated that the purpose of their arrival was to execute a decision of the Security Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to prevent the seizure of arms and ammunition by extremists.

After negotiations the aforesaid group stationed itself at a distance of 25 metres on either side of the control post at the entrance to the military unit's territory. At the same time snipers were seen to be put in place on raised territory adjacent to the maritime security detachment's territory.

At 11:00 on February 28 units of the Ukrainian Air Force in Crimea began to be blocked.

At around 13:00 an Ural vehicle pulled up at the command post of the 1st and 3rd anti-aircraft missile division Artillery Brigade based in Cape Fiolent and 21 men armed with automatic weapons from the 810th Marines Brigade of the BSF (based in Kozacha Bay in Sevastopol). Commanders of the aforementioned Ukrainian Armed Forces in Crimea detachments spoke with the men.

Also on 28 лютого at 14:45 Russian Federation soldiers who arrived in a KamAZ vehicle blocked the control post of the anti-aircraft missile regiment in Evpatoria and the radar reconnaissance unit. During discussions with representatives of the anti-aircraft missile regiment the group leader explained that he had received orders to protect the perimeter of all units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to thwart the approach of "radicals".

A KamAZ vehicle drove up to the control post of the Evpatoria Aircraft Repair Plant, later it entered the territory of the plant from the rear side in the vicinity of the runway. No one exited from the vehicle. It is unknown how many people are inside.

In the town of Dzhankoy near the control post of military unit A1387 of the Defence Forces of Ukraine and roadblock has been set up with 10-15 men and a KamAZ vehicle, which is prepared at any moment to block the exit from the

military unit base. According to the person in charge of the roadblock they belong to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

On the morning of February 28, 2014 the RF Black Sea Fleet missile boat "Ivanovets" stopped within 5 cables from shore in Balaklava Bay, allegedly because of a broken engine.

On February 28, 2014 at 15:38 Kyiv time four IL-76 aeroplanes of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (2 aircraft from a base in Pskov, 2 from Taganrog) violated the state borders of Ukraine and landed between 16.06 and 16.26 at the airport of Hvardiyske in Simferopol District of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine.

The aeroplanes were accompanied by a group of aircraft (up to 10 aircraft of a type not identified) providing passive obstruction at altitudes of 900-5000 m.

According to its tactical and technical characteristics the IL-76 aircraft has the capability to transport up to 225 personnel, or up to three armoured vehicles, or a cargo of up to 45 tons.

The garrison commander of Hvardiysky Airport and representatives of the Russian border unit were told that the services of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine were not required and they planned to land an aeroplane every 15 minutes.

As at 18:45 six planes had already landed and two more more coming in to land.

The Russian side was sent a diplomatic note as a result of this illegal crossing of the state border, demanding an explanation and requesting that they cease committing hostile actions toward Ukraine

Up to 150 soldiers of the Russian Armed Forces arrived at Simferopol Airport without any military insignia and began patrolling the territory around the VIP zone.

On February 28, 2014 over a dozen Russian military helicopters flew into Ukraine from Russia. At Kacha Airport paperwork was provided for three of the helicopters which has been registered under the Russian Black Sea Fleet. The other helicopters which crossed the border of Ukraine, entered Ukraine illegally.

On 1 March, 2014 the "Kirovske" State Research Testing Center airfield was blocked around the perimeter by soldiers bearing guns, who arrived in four Ural vehicles. At around 1.00 am on 1 March about 20 vehicles (Ural and Tigr types) entered the territory of Kirovske Airfield. An armed group of soldiers of the Armed Forces of the RF entered the control tower, forced the duty personnel face down onto the floor, seized all mobile telephones and disabled the communications and radio equipment.

At 10:55 on 1 March 100 soldiers of the Russian Armed Forces entered the territory of the separate Evpatoria radar company and confined the entire company to barracks.

Armed units of the Russian Armed Forces arrived at the base of the separate radar company in Cape Mehanom, blocking the operation of the radio equipment and sealing the weapons storage room.

Staff at the aviation command headquarters at Dzhankoy Airport were captured by soldiers of the Russian Armed Forces.

The base of 204th Tactical Aviation Brigade (at Belbek Airport) was blocked by soldiers of the Russian Armed Forces, who issued an ultimatum that they come over to the side of the Armed Forces of the RF and those who refused were told to leave the base without their weapons.

At 10:40 a KamAZ with Russian Armed Forces servicemen inside drove up to the control post of the Evpatoria Artillery Regiment, and then drove inside and blocked the exit from the base.

As a result of the majority of these violations by The Russian side has been sent official official notes covering most of these violations with a demand that the illegal actions cease.

At the same time, according to a number of media reports, on 26 February, 2014 the Armed Forces of Russia "suddenly" started to test the fighting capability of their Western and Central Military Districts, and involving paratroopers and airborne units. Given that such military exercises were being conducted in an area covered by the Vienna Document on confidence and security-building measures (WA-11), the Russian Federation through OSCE channels circulated an announcement CBM/RU/14/0018/F25/O (see attached), confirming the military exercises.

In particular, the Russian side has stated that the exercises will last from 26 February to 3 March (after which troops will return to their permanent bases by 7 March this year). The total number of troops involved is up to 38,000. In addition, military exercises will include up to 760 battle tanks, 1200 armored combat vehicles, up to 720 artillery systems and multiple launch rocket systems, 130 helicopters, etc.

Based on information supplied by the Russian side, the military exercises do not exclude such actions as the creation of tactical strike groups; as this is close to the borders of Ukraine, it cannot but cause concern.

In view of the above, by way of OSCE channels, based on the provisions of the Vienna Document on confidence and security-building measures, a communication was sent to clarify the purpose of the exercise, its intentions, the areas it would be held in and so on.

According to the Vienna Document the Russian side was obliged to provide a response within 48 hours, i.e. by midday on 2 March, 2014.