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**Prevention of armed conflict: prevention of
armed conflict**

**Security Council
Seventy-second year**

**Letter dated 18 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the unilateral decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw its military officers from the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 18 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the unilateral decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw its military officers from the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination

18 December 2017

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its indignation over the unilateral decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw on 19 December 2017 officers of the Russian Armed Forces from the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination of issues related to the ceasefire regime and the stabilization of the situation on the contact line (JCCC, city of Soledar, Donetsk oblast).

We regard this unprecedented step of the Russian side as yet another provocation which considerably undermines the Minsk agreements and as an endeavor to exonerate itself from any responsibility, as a party to the conflict, for the consequences of the armed aggression against our state.

This step is yet another testimony that Moscow does not quit its attempts to force Ukraine and the international partners to launch a so called “direct dialogue” with militants of the illegal armed groups operating at the temporary occupied certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine under full control and with support of Russia.

By this decision Kremlin considerably increases security risks for OSCE SMM in order inter alia to impose on Ukraine and its international partners its unacceptable vision on deployment of the UN peacekeepers in Donbas.

As a party to the conflict the Russian Federation bears full responsibility for the development of the security situation and ensuring security for the OSCE SMM monitors on the territory currently not under control of the Government of Ukraine.

Ukrainian part of the JCCC will continue to operate as usual by working together with the OSCE SMM in bilateral format and applying all possible efforts to ensure the security of the Mission's personnel during their monitoring activities as it foreseen by its mandate.

Ukraine calls on international partners to strengthen diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin in order to avoid steps that can lead to the failure of the Minsk agreements.
