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Letter dated 19 July 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the decision of a Moscow court to continue the unlawful detention of 24 Ukrainian servicemen (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 items 34, 67, 74 (c) and 78 (a), and of the Security Council.

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



Annex to the letter dated 19 July 2019 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 decision of a Moscow court to continue the unlawful detention of 24 Ukrainian servicemen

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine resolutely protests the decision of the Moscow court to extend the unlawful detentions of the 24 Ukrainian servicemen, who were seized by the Russian Federation in the Black Sea on 25 November 2018. The detentions were extended through 24 October 2019.

Russia's detention of Ukraine's servicemen, and the three naval vessels that carried them, constitutes a serious and ongoing violation of the sovereign immunity enjoyed by both the vessels and the servicemen under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and general international law.

On 25 May 2019, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea ("ITLOS") ordered the immediate and unconditional release of the three Ukrainian naval vessels and the twenty-four servicemen onboard. Russia's failure to immediately release the vessels and the servicemen constitutes a brazen violation of this Order. Today's order by the Lefortovo court, compounds and extends Russia's violations of international law, and further aggravates the dispute between Russia and Ukraine.

As recognized in the 25 May Order of the ITLOS, "the continued deprivation of liberty and freedom of Ukraine's servicemen" interferes with Ukraine's sovereignty and its international legal rights, and also raises urgent humanitarian concerns.

Ukraine commends its international partners for their solidarity with Ukraine in its struggle for the release of the Ukrainian servicemen and naval vessels.

Kyiv, 17 July 2019
