

# Latest from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), based on information received as of 19:30, 20 December 2017

KYIV 21 December 2017

## This report is for the media and the general public

The SMM recorded fewer ceasefire violations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions compared with the previous reporting period. The SMM followed up on reports of civilian casualties from Novoluhanske and Snizhne. The SMM continued to assess damage to civilian properties in residential areas in Novoluhanske. The Mission continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske; it recorded ceasefire violations near all three and heard an explosion assessed as an outgoing mortar round 250m north of its position near the Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area. The SMM's access remained restricted in the disengagement areas and elsewhere.\* The Mission saw a weapon in violation of withdrawal lines near Travneve. It observed military presence and mines in and around Travneve, Dolomitne, Holmivskyi and Novoluhanske. The Mission visited two border areas outside of government control.

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded fewer ceasefire violations, including about 540 explosions, compared with the previous reporting period (about 980 explosions).

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded fewer **ceasefire violations**[\[2\]](#), including about 540 explosions, compared with the [previous reporting period](#) (about 980 explosions).

On the night of 19-20 December, the SMM camera at the Donetsk Filtration Station (15km north of Donetsk) recorded, in sequence, about 70 projectiles in flight from west to east, two undetermined explosions, 90 projectiles from west to east, an undetermined explosion and three projectiles from east to west, followed by a total of 24 undetermined explosions and 257 projectiles (138 from west to east and 119 from east to west), all 0.5-1.5km south. The following day, the same camera recorded, in sequence, eight tracer rounds in flight and a projectile from east to west, an undetermined explosion, a tracer round from east to west and three undetermined explosions, followed by a total of 17 undetermined explosions, two projectiles (one from east to west and one from west to east), nine tracer rounds from east to west and an illumination flare in vertical flight, all 0.5-1.5km south.

On the night of 19-20 December, the SMM camera at the entry-exit checkpoint in government-controlled Maiorsk (45km north-east of Donetsk) recorded, in sequence, an undetermined explosion, three projectiles in flight from south to north, a projectile

from north to south and three projectiles from south to north, followed by a total of 159 projectiles (109 from south to north and 50 from north to south), all 2-4km south-east.

On the night of 19-20 December, the SMM camera 1km south-west of Shyrokyne (20km east of Mariupol) recorded an illumination flare in vertical flight and three projectiles in flight from east to west 5-8km north. The following day, the same camera recorded, in sequence, a projectile from east to west, a projectile from west to east, three projectiles from east to west, a projectile from west to east and 30 projectiles from east to west, all 5-8km north.

On the evening and night of 19-20 December, while in "DPR"-controlled Horlivka (39km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard 20 undetermined explosions and heavy-machine-gun fire 5-6km south-west.

On the evening of 19 December, while in government-controlled Svitlodarsk (57km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard 80 explosions (40 assessed as outgoing rounds of multiple launch rocket systems (BM-21 *Grad*, 122mm) 2km north-east, ten as outgoing artillery rounds 5km north-west, four as outgoing infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) (BMP-1) cannon (73mm) rounds 8-10km south-west, one as an outgoing mortar round 5-6km south-east, 15 as outgoing rounds 6-10km east and the remainder undetermined 8-10km south-west) as well as heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire 5-10km at directions ranging from east to south-west.

On the evening of 19 December, while in "DPR"-controlled Debaltseve (58km north-east of Donetsk) for about five hours, the SMM heard 77 undetermined explosions 7-10km west-north-west. During the day on 20 December, while at the same location, the SMM heard an undetermined explosion 5-7km south-west and over 50 shots and bursts of small-arms fire 3-7km north-west.

During the day on 20 December, positioned at the railway station in "DPR"-controlled Yasynuvata (16km north-east of Donetsk) for about five hours, the SMM heard about 210 undetermined explosions and about 270 shots and bursts of heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire 2-5km at directions ranging from west-south-west to north-north-west, as well as small-arms fire 1-3km east.

Positioned at the Donetsk central railway station (6km north-west of "DPR"-controlled Donetsk city centre) for about an hour, the SMM heard 18 undetermined explosions and heard and saw 12 tracer rounds in flight from west to east, all 2-5km west and north-west (assessed as fired from the southern edge of government-controlled Pisky (11km north-west of Donetsk) toward "DPR"-controlled Vesele (9km north-west of Donetsk)), as well as shots and bursts of small-arms fire 2-4km at directions ranging from west to north-east.

Positioned 1km north of "DPR"-controlled Zaichenko (26km north-east of Mariupol) for about an hour, the SMM heard 30 explosions (two assessed as outgoing and the remainder undetermined) as well as about 70 shots and bursts of heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire, all at unknown distances at south-south-west, south-west and

west.

Positioned in government-controlled Novoluhanske (53km north-east of Donetsk) for about four hours, the SMM heard ten undetermined explosions 6-8km south-west.

In Luhansk region, the SMM recorded fewer ceasefire violations, including 40 explosions, compared with the [previous reporting period](#) (about 950 explosions).

During the day on 20 December, positioned 2km north-east of “LPR”-controlled Novoselivka (16km west of Luhansk), the SMM heard 19 undetermined explosions 6-10km south-west.

Positioned in “LPR”-controlled Zymohiria (27km west of Luhansk), the SMM heard 16 undetermined explosions 5km south-east (assessed as the same as those heard near Novoselivka).

Positioned in “LPR”-controlled Kruhlyk (31km south-west of Luhansk), the SMM heard ten explosions assessed as outgoing tank rounds 5km south-east, assessed as part of a live-fire exercise.

The SMM continued to follow up on the withdrawal of **Russian Federation Armed Forces officers of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) from the territory of Ukraine**. (See [SMM Daily Report 20 December 2017](#).) Positioned in “DPR”-controlled Oleksandrivka (20km south-west of Donetsk), an “emergency service” member and another unarmed “DPR” member told the SMM that they would undertake the same duties as the previous Russian Federation Armed Forces officers of the JCCC. Positioned in government-controlled Bohdanivka (41km south-west of Donetsk), the SMM noted that no JCCC officers were present, only a Ukrainian Armed Forces officer.

The SMM followed up on reports of **civilian casualties**. At the central hospital in “DPR”-controlled Snizhne (72km east of Donetsk), medical staff told the SMM that on 15 December, a man (aged 67) had been killed after having mishandled an explosive device while at his house at 16/2 Hryboiedova Street in Snizhne. The SMM was shown the medical certificate which described the cause of death as traumatic shock and multiple wounds to internal abdominal organs from a blast. The SMM visited 16/2 Hryboiedova Street in Snizhne and saw a broken kitchen window, shattered glass and a wooden bar blocking off the kitchen door. At 14 Hryboiedova Street, the SMM spoke with the deceased man’s neighbour (a woman in her thirties), who told the SMM she had heard an explosion at around 12:00 on 15 December from the direction of her neighbour’s house and later had seen an ambulance as well as “emergency service” members and “police” arrive at his home.

At the regional clinical hospital in Kharkiv, medical staff told the SMM that a female resident of Novoluhanske (aged 71) had been transferred there from a hospital in government-controlled Bakhmut (formerly Artemivsk, 67km north of Donetsk) on 18 December. Medical staff added that she had lost her right eye due to shrapnel wounds she had sustained; she had undergone an operation and her condition was

stable. (See [SMM Daily Report 20 December 2017](#).)

The SMM followed up on reports of **damage to civilian properties in residential areas caused by shelling**. On 19 December, in Novoluhanske, an SMM mid-range unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) spotted recent shelling damage to roofs and walls of 36 houses, an apartment block and a public building. The UAV also spotted damage to a kindergarten and to a school: the kindergarten had damage to one side of its roof, where the entry point of a shell was visible, and shattered debris around it while the school had damage to a 4m section of the roof as well as debris in the courtyard. Next to the school, the UAV spotted a fire truck and a truck with an extended telescopic platform which appeared to be working on the school's roof. The UAV also spotted about 20 fresh craters in the village assessed to have been caused by artillery and mortar rounds: one of the craters was 1m from an agricultural shed and another was seen on the side of a road next to two stationary military-type trucks. Additional armoured combat vehicles (ACV), mines and indications of military-type presence were also spotted in the village (see below). The SMM confirmed civilian casualties from Novoluhanske on 19 December. (See [SMM Daily Report 20 December 2017](#).)

The SMM continued to **monitor the disengagement process and to pursue full access to the disengagement areas** near Stanytsia Luhanska (16km north-east of Luhansk), Zolote (60km west of Luhansk) and Petrivske (41km south of Donetsk), as foreseen in the [Framework Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group relating to disengagement of forces and hardware](#) of 21 September 2016. The SMM's access remained restricted but the Mission was able to partially monitor them.\*

During the day on 20 December at about 12:30, positioned at the Prince Ihor monument 1km south-east of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge (15km north-east of Luhansk), the SMM heard an explosion assessed as an outgoing mortar (82mm) round 250m north (assessed as outside the disengagement area). At around the same time, the SMM saw a man in military-style clothes in a firing position on the southern edge of the disengagement area.

While on the eastern edge of government-controlled Stanytsia Luhanska, the SMM heard ten shots of heavy-machine-gun fire 5km south (unable to assess whether inside or outside the disengagement area).

Positioned 2km east-north-east of Bohdanivka, the SMM heard five undetermined explosions at unknown distances south-south-west and small-arms fire at unknown distances east (all assessed as outside the Petrivske disengagement area).

On the evening of 18 December, the SMM camera in government-controlled Zolote recorded an undetermined explosion 4-6km east-north-east and two undetermined explosions 4-9km south-east (all assessed as outside the disengagement area). On 20 December, positioned in Zolote, the SMM saw that the vegetation along both sides of the road leading to Pervomaisk had not been cleared.

The SMM continued to monitor the **withdrawal of weapons** in implementation of the Package of Measures and its Addendum, as well as the Memorandum.

In violation of withdrawal lines, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted, on 13 December, a probable mortar (120mm) 2.6km east of a military camp about 2km north of Travneve. (See [SMM Daily Report 7 December 2017](#).)

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites, in a government-controlled area, the SMM saw a tank (T-72) being transported on a truck near Stepanivka (54km north of Donetsk).

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites, in areas outside of government control, the SMM saw three stationary tanks (T-64) near Myrne and ten stationary tanks near Kruhlyk.

The SMM revisited a permanent storage site in an area outside government control in Luhansk region, whose location was beyond the respective withdrawal lines, and noted that one tank (T-64) was again missing.

The SMM observed **ACVs, [3] mines and indications of military presence in the security zone**. In an area outside of government control, the SMM saw a military-type engineering vehicle digging a trench (20m long and 2m deep) 5m south of the eastern side of a junction on road T0519 near Vedenske (33km north-east of Mariupol). On the western side of the same junction, the SMM saw two recently excavated firing positions, assessed to be for IFVs.

An SMM mid-range UAV, on 13 December, spotted nine anti-tank mines (TM-62) in a trench on the southern street in Travneve, a stationary military-type truck (GAZ-66) carrying a probable generator parked next to a yard on the main street in the village and a stationary ambulance in the eastern part of the village. Additionally, on 13 December, the SMM heard that a power company had brought two generators to the village. (See [SMM Daily Report 15 December 2017](#).) A series of trenches on the southern street in the village emanating from residential houses and six craters assessed to have been caused by artillery and mortar rounds were spotted. On the road east of Travneve toward Dolomitne (53km north-east of Donetsk), the UAV spotted two trenches, two rows of anti-tank mines (TM-62) (18 mines in total) as well as two rows of probable anti-tanks mines in a field north of the road. Further east along the same road, two sets of new trenches were spotted as well as a crater.

In Dolomitne, on 13 December, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted trenches under the railway tracks, recently dug trenches, vehicle revetments, weapon impacts to the roof of a warehouse building and shelling damage to the roof of another nearby building, all in the southern part of the village. On the road leading north of the village, the UAV spotted two rows of anti-tank mines (TM-62) – one with seven mines and the other with nine – laid across the road, and a total of five mines on either side of the road. At the northern edge of the village, several trenches were spotted cutting across the road, assessed as rendering it impassable for wheeled vehicles. About 300m north of the trenches, the UAV spotted ten anti-tank mines that had been laid across the road and, 300-400m further north, it spotted a trench, a series of tyres forming a roadblock and two IFVs (BMP-1). East of the road block, the UAV spotted an extensive position and, further north along the road, it spotted an IFV (BMP-1), an armoured personnel

carrier (APC) (Kozak-variant), several trenches and vehicle revetments.

In “DPR”-controlled Holmivskiy (49km north-east of Donetsk), on 13 December, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted trenches and firing positions north of the village. (See [SMM Daily Report 7 December 2017](#).)

In Novoluhanske, on 19 December, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted trenches, vehicle revetments and firing positions around the perimeter and inside an agricultural area, as well as an IFV (BMP-1). In the village, the UAV spotted an APC (BTR-variant), a reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM-variant) and eight military-type trucks and, close to the damaged school (see above), the UAV spotted two APCs (BTR-variant and Saxon) and six military-type trucks (Ural and Kamaz). In a field south-west of Novoluhanske, the UAV spotted at least 56 anti-tank mines.

The SMM visited two **border areas outside government control**. At the border crossing point near Izvaryne (52km south-east of Luhansk), during one hour, the SMM saw ten cars (two with “LPR” plates), two buses and about 120 pedestrians (60 per cent men, aged 45-65 and 40 per cent women, aged 25-60) exiting Ukraine and three covered cargo trucks, two buses and 60 pedestrians (60 per cent women and 40 per cent men, aged 40-60) entering Ukraine.

At a border crossing point near Voznesenivka (formerly Chervonopartyzansk, 65km south-east of Luhansk), during one hour, the SMM saw 13 cars, two buses and 28 pedestrians (16 men and 12 women, aged 30-70) exiting Ukraine and 25 cars, a bus and four pedestrians (two men and two women, aged 30-35) entering Ukraine.

The SMM continued monitoring in Kherson, Odessa, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Dnipro, Chernivtsi and Kyiv.

### ***\*Restrictions of SMM’s freedom of movement or other impediments to fulfilment of its mandate***

*The SMM’s monitoring and freedom of movement are restricted by security hazards and threats, including risks posed by mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and other impediments – which vary from day to day. The SMM’s mandate provides for safe and secure access throughout Ukraine. All signatories of the Package of Measures have agreed on the need for this safe and secure access, that restriction of the SMM’s freedom of movement constitutes a violation, and on the need for rapid response to these violations. They have also agreed that the JCCC should contribute to such response and co-ordinate mine clearance. Nonetheless, the armed formations in parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions frequently deny the SMM access to areas adjacent to Ukraine’s border outside control of the Government, citing orders to do so. (See, for example, [SMM Daily Report 2 December 2017](#).) The SMM’s operations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions remained restricted following [the fatal incident of 23 April near Pryshyb](#); these restrictions continued to limit the Mission’s observations.*

Denial of access:

*Related to disengagement areas and mines/UXO:*

- The SMM was prevented from accessing secondary roads south of the Zolote disengagement area due to the possible presence of mines and UXO. Armed “LPR” members positioned on the southern side of the Zolote disengagement area told the SMM that no demining had taken place during the previous 24 hours. The SMM did not consider it safe to proceed.
- The SMM was prevented from accessing secondary roads in the Zolote disengagement area due to the possible presence of mines and UXO. Ukrainian Armed Forces officers of the JCCC at a checkpoint on the northern side of the Zolote disengagement area told the SMM that no demining had taken place during the previous 24 hours. The SMM did not consider it safe to proceed and informed the JCCC.
- The SMM was prevented from accessing parts of the Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area, with the exception of the main road, due to the possible presence of mines and UXO. A Ukrainian Armed Forces officer of the JCCC told the SMM that no de-mining had taken place during the previous 24 hours. The SMM did not consider it safe to proceed and informed the JCCC.
- The SMM could not travel across the bridge in government-controlled Shchastia due to the presence of mines. A Ukrainian Armed Forces officer of the JCCC said there were mines on the road south of the bridge. The SMM informed the JCCC.

**[1] Please see [the annexed table](#) for a complete breakdown of the ceasefire violations as well as a map of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions marked with locations featured in this report.** Four SMM cameras continue to be tested until the end of December 2017.

**[2]** This hardware is not proscribed by the provisions of the Minsk agreements on the withdrawal of weapons.

## Contacts

### **Mariia Alekseyevych**

Senior Press Assistant

OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

26 Turhenievskaya Street

01054 Kyiv

Ukraine

Office: +380 44 392 0849

Mobile: +380 50 381 5192

Mobile: +380 93 691 6790

[mariia.alekseyevych@osce.org](mailto:mariia.alekseyevych@osce.org)

[smm-media@osce.org](mailto:smm-media@osce.org)

