

Latest from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), based on information received as of 19:30, 12 March 2018

KYIV 13 March 2018

This report is for the media and the general public.

The SMM recorded more ceasefire violations in Donetsk region and fewer in Luhansk region compared with the previous 24 hours. The Mission continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske and observed a ceasefire violation near the Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area. Its access remained restricted in all three areas and elsewhere, including again in Kozatske, at the Chervona Mohyla railway station and a border crossing point near Voznesenivka in Luhansk region – near the border with the Russian Federation – and to a compound in Kremenivka. The SMM observed weapons in violation near Lobacheve. The Mission observed anti-tank mines in Verkhnotoretske and Betmanove. The SMM continued to facilitate and monitor repairs to the Petrivske water pumping station in Artema. In Kyiv, the Mission followed up on reports of a fire at a chapel of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.*

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded more **ceasefire violations**[1], including about 40 explosions, compared with the [previous 24 hours](#) (about 20 explosions).

In continuation of ceasefire violations recorded in the early evening of 11 March (see [SMM Daily Report 12 March 2018](#)), on the evening and night of 11-12 March, the SMM camera at the Donetsk Filtration Station (15km north of Donetsk) recorded, in sequence, three projectiles in flight from west to east and eight projectiles from east to west, followed by totals of eight undetermined explosions and 38 projectiles (35 from west to east, one from east to west, one from south to north and one from north-west to south-east), all 0.5-3km south.

During the day on 12 March, positioned at the railway station in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km north-east of Donetsk) for about four hours, the SMM heard eight undetermined explosions and five shots and bursts of small-arms fire, all 3-8km west and north-west. The same day, positioned on the south-western edge of Yasynuvata for about an hour, the SMM heard ten undetermined explosions 5-8km north-west.

Positioned on the north-western edge of Horlivka (non-government-controlled, 39km north-east of Donetsk) for about six hours, the SMM heard seven undetermined explosions 2-4km north-west.

On the evening of 11 March, while in Svitlodarsk (government-controlled, 57km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard over 120 shots and bursts of heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire and three minutes of uncountable and overlapping bursts of small-arms fire, all 1-3km at directions ranging from east to south.

In Luhansk region, the SMM recorded fewer **ceasefire violations**, including the same number of explosions (one), compared with the [previous 24 hours](#).

The SMM continued to **monitor the disengagement process and to pursue full access to the disengagement areas** near Stanytsia Luhanska (government-controlled, 16km north-east of Luhansk), Zolote (government-controlled, 60km west of Luhansk) and Petrivske (non-government-controlled, 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.*

On 12 March, while on the eastern edge of Stanytsia Luhanska, the SMM heard an undetermined explosion 3km south, assessed as outside the disengagement area.

Positioned near the Zolote and Petrivske disengagement areas, the SMM observed calm situations.

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 in areas outside of government control, an SMM mini-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) on 12 March spotted three tanks (T-64) about 1.5km north-west of Lobacheve (13km east of Luhansk).

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites in areas outside government control, the SMM saw four tanks (T-64) in firing positions in Myrne (28km south-west of Luhansk) (for previous observations in this area, see [SMM Daily Report 12 March 2018](#)).

The SMM observed **armoured combat vehicles[2] in the security zone**. In government-controlled areas on 9 March, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted two armoured personnel carriers (APC) (one BTR-80 and one BTR variant) in Verkhnotoretske (23km north-east of Donetsk). On 12 March, the SMM saw three armoured reconnaissance vehicles (two BRM-1K and one BRDM-2) and eight infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) (five BMP-1 and three undetermined) near Popasna (69km west of Luhansk) and two IFVs (BMP-2) on the northern edge of the Zolote disengagement area.

In non-government-controlled areas on 12 March, an SMM mini-UAV spotted nine IFVs (BMP-1) and two APCs (MT-LB) near Lobacheve.

The SMM observed **anti-tank mines** in Verkhnotoretske and Betmanove (non-government-controlled, formerly Krasnyi Partyzan, 23km north-east of Donetsk), none of which were present in imagery from 4 December 2017. On 9 March, on the south-eastern edge of Verkhnotoretske, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted nine anti-tank mines (type undetermined) laid at the intersection of a main road leading to Betmanove and a secondary road leading south-west. About 2km further south-south-east on the south-eastern edge of Betmanove, the SMM UAV spotted 18 anti-tank mines (type undetermined) in a field about 50m east of the abovementioned main road. On the north-eastern edge of Betmanove, the same UAV also spotted six anti-tank mines (type undetermined) laid across Chervona Street.

The SMM continued to observe **remnants of war** near Sakhanka (non-government-controlled, 24km north-east of Mariupol). (See [SMM Daily Report 12 March 2018](#).) About 150m south of the southern-edge of Sakhanka, the SMM saw, for the first time, an 82mm mortar tailfin in a field about 30cm west of a road. About 2km further south, near the intersection of the aforementioned road and road E58, the SMM saw, for the first time, a 120mm mortar tailfin 120m east and an 82mm mortar tailfin 1km east of the intersection, both of which were embedded in the asphalt. The SMM assessed all tailfins to be remnants of mortar rounds fired from a south-south-easterly direction.

The SMM continued **to facilitate and monitor repairs** to the Petrivske water pumping station in Artema (government-controlled, 26km north of Luhansk).

The SMM visited **four border areas not under government control**. At a border crossing point near Voznesenivka (formerly Chervonopartyzansk, 65km south-east of Luhansk), the SMM saw four cars (three with Ukrainian and one with Russian Federation licence plates) in a queue to exit Ukraine and three cars (with Ukrainian licence plates) entering Ukraine. After seven minutes, an "LPR" member told the SMM to leave the area.*

At the Chervona Mohyla railway station near Voznesenivka, the SMM saw about ten stationary railway wagons, some of which were carrying timber. After two minutes, an "LPR" member told the SMM to leave the area.*

While at a border crossing point near Uspenka (73km south-east of Donetsk) for one hour, the SMM saw 20 cars (seven with Ukrainian, seven with Russian Federation and one with Georgian licence plates; five with "DPR" plates), five covered cargo trucks (three with Ukrainian licence plates; two with "DPR" plates) and a bus (with "DPR" plates) in a queue to exit Ukraine, and eight cars (four with Russian Federation licence plates; four with "DPR" plates) and a covered cargo truck (licence plates not visible) entering Ukraine.

While at a pedestrian border crossing point near Ulianivske (61 km south-east of Donetsk) for half an hour, the SMM saw no pedestrians.

In Kyiv, the SMM followed up on reports of a **fire at a chapel of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church**. At 68 Avtozavodska Street, the Mission saw one of the chapel windows covered by wooden planks, under which burned wood and glass debris were scattered on the ground. Through other windows, it also saw a charred ceiling inside the chapel. A priest of the church told the SMM by telephone that at around 02:30 on the night of 10 March, a fire fighter onsite informed him that a fire had occurred at the chapel at around 02:00 that day. The priest also told the SMM that the fire had damaged parts of the floor and ceiling and that the chapel had reopened on 11 March. According to a statement posted on the police website, the fire was caused by a plastic bottle containing flammable substances thrown into the chapel by unidentified individuals on 10 March. The police added that it had launched an investigation under Article 194.2 of the Criminal Code (intentional damage to property).

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

****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 Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (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 below). The SMM's operations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions remain restricted following [the fatal incident of 23 April 2017 near Pryshyb](#); these restrictions continued to limit the Mission's observations.

Denial of access:

- At a "DPR" checkpoint on the eastern edge of Kozatske (non-government-controlled, 36km north-east of Mariupol), an armed man prevented the SMM from proceeding further east towards Porokhnia (non-government-controlled, 40km north-east of Mariupol), saying that there were minefields along a road leading to Porokhnia. (On 5 March, at the same checkpoint, an armed man pointed an assault rifle at the SMM and threatened to shoot. See [SMM Spot Report 5 March 2018](#).)
- At a border crossing point near Voznesenivka, an "LPR" member, citing "orders" from her superiors, told the SMM to leave the area. She added that any questions should be addressed to her superiors in Luhansk city.
- At the Chervona Mohyla railway station in Voznesenivka, an "LPR" member, citing "orders" from her superiors, told the SMM to leave the area. She added that any questions should be addressed to her superiors in Luhansk city.
- Two Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers denied the SMM access to a compound in Kremenivka (government-controlled, 27km north-west of Mariupol).

Related to disengagement areas and mines/UXO:

- 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 he had no information regarding demining activities over the previous 24 hours. The SMM did not consider it safe to proceed and informed the JCCC.[\[3\]](#)
- The SMM was prevented from accessing secondary roads south of the Zolote disengagement area due to the possible presence of mines and UXO. An armed formation member 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. A Ukrainian Armed Forces officer of the JCCC told the SMM by phone that he had no information regarding de-mining in the area during the previous 24 hours. The SMM did not consider it safe to proceed and informed the JCCC.[\[3\]](#)

- The SMM did not travel across the bridge in Shchastia (government-controlled, 20km north of Luhansk) 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.[3]

[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.

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

[3] The SMM informed Ukrainian Armed Forces officers of the JCCC. Russian Federation Armed Forces officers of the JCCC have withdrawn from the JCCC as of 18 December 2017.

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