

Latest from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), based on information received as of 19:30, 16 May 2018

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This report is for the media and the general public.

The SMM recorded a similar number of ceasefire violations in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions, compared with the previous reporting period. The SMM observed fresh damage caused by gunfire and shelling in residential areas of Hranitne, Kozatske and Sakhanka. The SMM continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske; it recorded ceasefire violations near the Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement areas. Its access remained restricted in all three areas and it was restricted also at a checkpoint near Novoazovsk. Two SMM long-range unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) were jammed while flying near Horlivka.* The SMM observed weapons in violation of withdrawal lines in Verkhnohyrokiivske, Pikuzy, Bezimenne, Miusynsk and Fashchivka. The SMM observed new mine hazard signs and anti-tank mines in Avdiivka. The Mission continued to facilitate access to the Donetsk Filtration Station for Voda Donbassa water company employees to keep the station operational and heard ceasefire violations in the area despite security guarantees. The SMM continued to facilitate and monitor repairs to high-voltage power lines near Almazna and to a water pipeline in Obozne.*

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded a similar number of **ceasefire violations**^[1], including, however, fewer explosions (460), compared with the [previous reporting period](#) (about 500 explosions).

On the evening of 15 May, while in Horlivka (non-government-controlled, 39km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard about 60 explosions (one assessed as an artillery round and the remainder undetermined) and two bursts of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun fire, all 3-7km at directions ranging from south-south-west to north-north-west.

On the evening of 15 May, while in Svitlodarsk (government-controlled, 57km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard five undetermined explosions and about 40 shots and bursts of small-arms fire, all 3-7km at directions ranging from east to west. During the day on 16 May, while at the same location, the SMM heard five shots of small-arms fire 3-5km south-east.

On the evening of 15 May, while in Mariupol (government-controlled, 102km south of Donetsk), the SMM heard about 50 undetermined explosions and six minutes of uncountable and overlapping explosions, assessed as outgoing artillery rounds, as well as bursts and shots of infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) cannon fire, all at undetermined distances north-east and east.

On the evening and night of 15-16 May, the SMM camera at the Donetsk Filtration Station (DFS) (15km north of Donetsk) recorded about 30 undetermined explosions and three projectiles in flight from north to south, all 1-5km west.

During the day on 16 May, positioned in Kruta Balka (non-government-controlled, 16km north of Donetsk) for about five hours, the SMM heard 45 undetermined explosions, about 70 shots and bursts of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun fire, as well as 15 minutes of uncountable bursts and undetermined explosions, all 1-4km at directions ranging from south-south-west to north-north-west.

Positioned on the south-western edge of Avdiivka (government-controlled, 17km north of Donetsk) for about two hours, the SMM heard about 100 undetermined explosions and about 100 shots and bursts of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun fire, all 2-6km south-east.

Positioned at the railway station in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km north-east of Donetsk) for about two hours, the SMM heard about 100 undetermined explosions and about 100 shots and bursts of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun fire, 2-6km west-south-west. (The SMM assessed that it heard the same explosions when positioned on the south-western edge of Avdiivka (see above)).

Positioned 2.5km south-east of Lomakyne (government-controlled, 15km north-east of Mariupol) for about 15 minutes, the SMM heard about 50 undetermined explosions and about ten shots of small-arms fire, all at undetermined distances east.

In Luhansk region, the SMM recorded a similar number of **ceasefire violations**, including about 130 explosions, compared with the [previous reporting period](#) (about 100 explosions).

During the day on 16 May, positioned in Myrne (non-government-controlled, 28km south-west of Luhansk), the SMM heard 90 undetermined explosions and about 20 bursts of heavy-machine-gun fire, all 2km west and north-west.

The SMM observed fresh **damage caused by gunfire and shelling in residential areas** of Hranitne (government-controlled, 60km south of Donetsk), Kozatske (non-government-controlled, 86km south of Donetsk) and Sakhanka (non-government-controlled, 97km south of Donetsk).

In Hranitne, at 33 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho, the SMM saw a hole in the glass of an east-facing window of a school building and assessed it as caused by a bullet fired from an easterly direction. A woman (aged 50-60), who introduced herself to the SMM as the school director, told the SMM that the school had been hit by small-arms fire on 13 May around 14:00, but no pupils had been in the building at that time.

In Kozatske, at 61 Myru Street, the SMM saw that south-west-facing parts of the roof and metal supporting beams of a church had been destroyed. It also saw fresh shrapnel damage to the south-west-facing outer walls of the building, to a gas pipeline about 10m north-west of the building, to several trees within a 25m radius, as well as to a brick fence about 15m north of the church. Inside the building, the SMM saw shrapnel damage to the south-western end of the ceiling. The SMM assessed the damage as caused by an artillery round (at least 122mm), but could not assess the direction of fire. A man (aged 40-50) told the SMM that he had heard two explosions near the church at around 04:00 on 15 May while he had been at his house in the same neighbourhood.

In Sakhanka, at 1 Vartazarovoi Street, the SMM saw fresh shrapnel damage to the west-facing outer wall of the dining hall of a school, located about 30m south-west of the

school's main building, and to the west-facing part of its roof. The SMM also saw a fresh hole in the west-facing outer wall, as well as five shattered west- and south-facing windows. It assessed the damage as caused by a round from anti-tank guided missile system fired from a westerly direction. Four residents of Sakhanka (a man and three women, all aged 30-40) told the SMM that the incident had occurred at about 11:45 on 16 May and added that pupils had been in the main school building.

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 the evening and night of 15-16 May, while on the eastern edge of Stanytsia Luhanska, the SMM heard 13 explosions assessed as mortar rounds and 22 shots and bursts of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun fire, all 5-6km south-west (assessed as outside the disengagement area) and 18 explosions assessed as outgoing artillery rounds and six bursts of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun fire 2-6km north-west (assessed as outside the disengagement area).

During the day on 16 May, positioned in Petrivske, the SMM heard a shot of small-arms fire 2-4km south-west (unable to assess whether inside or outside the disengagement area).

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

In violation of withdrawal lines in non-government-controlled areas, the SMM saw a tank (T-64) heading south near Fashchivka (60km south-west of Luhansk). An SMM long-range UAV spotted on 15 May a tank (T-64) in a residential area of Verkhnohshyrokiivske (85km south of Donetsk), a tank (T-72) in a residential area of Pikuzy (formerly Kominternove, 92km south of Donetsk), as well as two tanks (T-72) and three self-propelled howitzers (2S1 *Gvozdika*, 122mm) in Bezimenne (100km south of Donetsk). Aerial imagery available to the SMM revealed the presence on 15 May of eight multiple launch rocket systems (type undetermined) near Miusynsk (62km south-west of Luhansk) (see [SMM Daily Report of 26 April 2018](#)).

Beyond the respective withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites in government-controlled areas, an SMM long-range UAV spotted on 15 May seven tanks (T-64) near Zoria (40km north-west of Donetsk). In non-government-controlled areas, aerial imagery available to the SMM revealed the presence on 15 May of ten tanks (type undetermined) and seven towed howitzers (type undetermined) near Miusynsk (see [SMM Daily Report of 26 April 2018](#)).

The SMM observed **armoured combat vehicles[2] in the security zone**. In government-controlled areas, the SMM saw an IFV (BTR-60) near Novobakhmutivka (28km north of Donetsk), an armoured personnel carrier in Makarove (19km north-east of Luhansk). An SMM long-range UAV spotted on 15 May an IFV (BMP-1) near Trudivske (47km south of Donetsk), an IFV (BMP-1) near Vodiane (15km north-west of Donetsk) and an IFV (BMP-1) near Talakivka (90km south of Donetsk).

In non-government-controlled areas, an SMM long-range UAV spotted on 15 May an IFV (BMP-2) in a residential area of Verkhnohshyrokiyske and an IFV (BMP-1) near Nova Marivka (64km south of Donetsk).

The SMM observed the **presence of mines and mine hazard signs**. In a field on the south-western edge of Avdiivka, the SMM observed again a red-and-white mine hazard sign with “Mines” written in English and Ukrainian (see [SMM Daily Report of 11 April 2018](#)). In a field about 0.2km south of the aforementioned mine hazard sign, the SMM saw for the first time about three parallel rows of red-and-white mine hazard signs with “Mines” written in Ukrainian, as well as a row of about 15 anti-tank mines (TM-62) laid nearby. On a concrete wall surrounding a compound on the south-western edge of Avdiivka, the SMM saw again a sign with “Danger Mines” spray-painted in Ukrainian on it.

The SMM continued to **facilitate the access of Voda Donbassa water company employees** to the DFS to keep the station operational. On 15 May, positioned at the DFS, as well as in nearby areas, the SMM heard undetermined explosions as well as small-arms fire (see ceasefire violation section above), despite explicit security guarantees.

The SMM continued to **facilitate and monitor repair works** to high-voltage power lines near Almazna (non-government-controlled, 55km west of Luhansk) and the water pipeline in Obozne (non-government-controlled, 18km north of Luhansk). The SMM also facilitated the access of a team of Vodafone employees travelling from government- to non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk region.

The SMM visited a **border area outside of government control**. While at a border crossing point near Marynivka (78km east of Donetsk) for about an hour, the SMM saw 24 cars (seven with Ukrainian, nine with Russian Federation, one with Lithuanian licence plates and seven with “DPR” plates), a van with Ukrainian licence plates, three covered cargo trucks (two with Ukrainian licence plates and one with “DPR” plates) and six pedestrians (five men aged 20-30 and a woman aged 30-40) exiting Ukraine. The SMM saw 14 cars (ten with Russian Federation, three with Ukrainian and one with “DPR” plates), two mini-buses with “DPR” plates and 16 passengers on board, a van with Russian Federation licence plates, as well as nine pedestrians (two men and seven women, all aged 50-60) entering Ukraine.

The SMM continued monitoring in Kherson, Odessa, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, 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 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 (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 checkpoint on road E58 north of Novoazovsk (non-government-controlled, 102km south-east of Donetsk), three armed members of the armed formations stopped the SMM and, citing orders from their superiors, denied it passage.

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 no demining had taken place during 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 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 no demining had taken place during the previous 24 hours. The SMM did not consider it safe to proceed and informed the JCCC.[4](#)
- 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 member of the armed formations 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.

Other impediments:

- The SMM temporarily lost communication with two long-range UAVs that were flying over an area near Horlivka. The SMM assessed the loss of communication as due to jamming. The SMM managed to land the UAVs safely.

[\[1\]](#) For a complete breakdown of the ceasefire violations, please see the [annexed table](#). The SMM camera at the entry-exit checkpoint in Marinka was not operational during the reporting period.

[\[2\]](#) 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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