

# Latest from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), based on information received as of 19:30, 13 March 2018

This report is for the media and the general public.

*The SMM recorded more ceasefire violations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions compared with the previous reporting period. The Mission followed up on reports that vehicles carrying Voda Donbassa employees had been damaged by gunfire near the Donetsk Filtration Station on 12 and 13 March. The SMM continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske and spotted previously seen military hardware and mines inside the Petrivske disengagement area. Its access remained restricted in all three areas and elsewhere, including near Sosnivske, Kreminets and at a border crossing point near Izvaryne in Luhansk region, near the border with the Russian Federation.\* The SMM continued to facilitate and monitor repairs to the Petrivske water pumping station in Artema and a water pipeline near Horlivka. It monitored a religious procession of 15,000 to 20,000 people in Lviv. At the administrative boundary line between Kherson region and Crimea, the SMM noted a calm situation.*

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded more **ceasefire violations**<sup>[1]</sup>, including about 75 explosions, compared with the [previous reporting period](#) (about 40 explosions).

On the evening of 12 March, the SMM camera at the entry-exit checkpoint in Pyshevyk (government-controlled, 25km north-east of Mariupol) recorded two illumination flares in vertical flight followed by three muzzle flashes, all 1-2km east.

On the evening and night of 12-13 March, the SMM camera at the Donetsk Filtration Station (15km north of Donetsk) recorded, in sequence, an undetermined explosion, a projectile in flight from west to east, an undetermined explosion and a projectile from west to east, followed by totals of five undetermined explosions and 11 projectiles (seven from west to east and four from east to west), all 0.5-3km south.

On the evening and night of 12-13 March, the SMM camera at the entry-exit checkpoint in Maiorsk (government-controlled, 45km north-east of Donetsk) recorded two undetermined explosions 2-4km

south-east.

On the evening and night of 12-13 March, while in Svitlodarsk (government-controlled, 57km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard 30 explosions assessed as impacts 4-6km east as well as 12 undetermined explosions, about 440 bursts and shots of automatic-grenade-launcher, heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire and one minute of uncountable and overlapping bursts of small-arms fire, all 4-6km south-east. During the day on 13 March, while at the same location, the SMM heard two undetermined explosions 4-6km south-east.

During the day on 13 March, positioned at the railway station in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km north-east of Donetsk) for about four hours, the SMM heard 15 undetermined explosions and about 240 bursts and shots of heavy-machine-gun and small-arms fire, all 1-3km at directions ranging from south-east to south-west.

In Luhansk region, the SMM recorded more **ceasefire violations**, including 20 explosions, compared with the [previous reporting period](#) (one explosion).

The SMM followed up on reports that **vehicles carrying Voda Donbassa employees had been damaged by gunfire near the Donetsk Filtration Station (DFS) on 12 and 13 March**. On 14 March, the SMM visited a vehicle repair centre in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km north-east of Donetsk) where it met with three employees from the Voda Donbassa water company.

The SMM saw a modified GAZ-53 truck with two bullet holes to its rear right side, a bullet hole in the front of the truck just above the radiator, as well as smashed glass at the front of the passenger compartment, the rear of the drivers cab and a smashed windscreen. The SMM also saw a bus with a deep graze mark to the rear right side next to the window. An employee of Voda Donbassa told the SMM that between 14:15 and 14:30 on 13 March, three Voda Donbassa vehicles had been driving in convoy from the DFS along road H20 towards the M04 junction when they came under fire, causing damage to the truck (carrying one passenger) and bus (carrying 20 passengers).

Another Voda Donbassa employee told the SMM that at around 07:00 on 12 March, a convoy of three vehicles, including the abovementioned truck and bus carrying the company's employees, had been travelling from road H20 towards the DFS when they came under fire. He said the truck had been impacted by one bullet and its radiator had been damaged. On 12 March, the SMM camera at the Donetsk Filtration Station recorded a convoy of three vehicles at around 06:50 on 12 March moving from road H20 towards the DFS. The driver of the truck told the SMM that around 06:50 on 12 March, he had

heard bullets flying, one of which struck the front of the truck damaging the radiator, and that between 14:15 and 14:30 on 13 March, two bullets had struck the back of the truck, smashing the windscreen. A Voda Donbassa employee had previously told the SMM that a truck delivering fuel had been shot while driving towards the DFS. (See [SMM Daily Report 8 March 2018](#).)

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.\*

The SMM observed armoured combat vehicles and military positions inside and near the Petrivske disengagement area, as well as previously observed mines (for previous observations in this area, see [SMM Daily Report 28 February 2018](#), [SMM Daily Report 27 December 2017](#) and [SMM Daily Report 28 November 2017](#)). On 10 March, inside the disengagement area, an SMM mid-range unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) spotted an infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) (BMP-2) located inside the disengagement area 1.2km from its western edge. In the same area, it also spotted tracks assessed as fresh, some of which appeared to be leading to a tree line about 600m east, as well as at least three underground bunkers, east-facing trenches connected to firing positions and a Ukrainian national flag. On 12 March, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted five IFVs (BMP-2) about 700m south and a probable IFV (BMP-1) about 1km south of the disengagement area. On 12 March, an SMM mid-range UAV also spotted an IFV (BMP-2) inside the south-eastern edge of the disengagement area.

On 10 March, an SMM mid-range UAV again spotted at least 115 anti-tank mines on the north-eastern edge of the Petrivske disengagement area (about 80 of them were inside the eastern edge of the disengagement area and the remainder were outside the disengagement area). On 12 March, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted 36 anti-tank mines (TM-62) laid across the road between Bohdanivka (government-controlled, 41km south-west of Donetsk) and Viktorivka (government-controlled, 42km south-west of Donetsk), about 170m north of the Petrivske disengagement area.

On 13 March, positioned near all three 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.

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites in government-controlled areas, the SMM saw a tank (T-72) being transported south on a flatbed truck near Sievierodonetsk (74km north-west of Luhansk) and a tank (T-72) being transported east on a flatbed truck near Novoaidar (49km north-west of Luhansk).

The SMM observed weapons that could not be verified as withdrawn, as their storage did not comply with the criteria set out in the 16 October 2015 notification from the SMM to the signatories of the Package of Measures on effective monitoring and verification of the withdrawal of heavy weapons. In government-controlled areas beyond the respective withdrawal lines, the SMM saw six anti-tank guns (MT-12 *Rapira*, 100mm) and noted that 12 anti-tank guns (MT-12) continued to be missing.

The SMM observed **armoured combat vehicles and an anti-aircraft gun<sup>[2]</sup> in the security zone**. In government-controlled areas, on 12 March an SMM mini-UAV spotted three armoured personnel carriers (APC) (an MT-LB and two BTR-80) west of the bridge near Shchastia (20km north of Luhansk) and five IFVs (two BMP-1, a BMP-2 and two BMP variants) near Mykolaivka (40km south of Donetsk). On 13 March, the SMM saw ten IFVs (four BMP-1, two BMP-2 and four BMP variants), two armoured reconnaissance vehicles (a BRM-1K and a BRDM-2) and two armoured combat vehicles (type undetermined) near Popasna (69km west of Luhansk) and an IFV (BMP-1) near Luhanske (59km north-east of Donetsk).

In non-government controlled areas on 12 March, an SMM mid-range UAV spotted four IFVs (BMP-2) in Bohdanivka as well as three APCs (an MT-LB and two BTR variant) and three IFVs (two BMP-1 and a BMP-2) in the yards of residential buildings in Petrivske (all outside the disengagement area). On 13 March, the SMM saw two APCs (MT-LB), one with a mounted with an anti-aircraft gun (ZU-23, 23mm), near Molodizhne (63km north-west of Luhansk).

On 10 March and 12 March, SMM UAVs spotted a total of eight IFVs inside the Petrivske disengagement area (see above).

The SMM continued to observe **mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO)**. On 12 March, an SMM mini-UAV again spotted at least two rows of anti-tank mines (at least 18 mines in total) laid out across the road south-east of the bridge near Shchastia.

About 2.5km west of Verkhnohyrokiivske (formerly Oktiabr, non-government-controlled, 29km north-east of Mariupol), the SMM saw, for the first time, an unexploded rocket-propelled grenade embedded in soft ground 10m north of the road together with the rear section of a hand-held grenade-launcher. The SMM

assessed the round as fired from an easterly direction. On the western edge of Verkhnohshyrovskivske, the SMM saw an unexploded projectile and four anti-tank mines (TM-62) 5m north of the road.

The SMM continued to observe **mine hazard signs and demining activities**. On 13 March, the SMM observed three previously seen red mine hazard signs with skull-and-crossbones reading “mines” in Russian language on the gates of an abandoned factory on the north-eastern edge of Mykolaivka (non-government-controlled, 15km east of Luhansk).

The SMM saw two Ministry of State Emergency Service cars and a demining team consisting of five people in a field about 200m west of road M03, near a junction south-east of Luhanske.

The SMM continued **to facilitate and monitor repairs** to the Petrivske water pumping station in Artema (government-controlled, 26km north of Luhansk) and a water pipeline near Horlivka (non-government-controlled, 39km north-east of Donetsk).

The SMM visited **two border areas not under government control**. At a border crossing point near Izvaryne (52km south-east of Luhansk), the SMM saw three cars (licence plates not visible) exiting Ukraine and 11 pedestrians (seven men and four women, aged 35-45) entering Ukraine. After ten minutes, an armed “LPR” member told the SMM to leave the area.\*

Positioned at a border crossing point near Verkhnoharasymivka (57km south-east of Luhansk) for about 20 minutes, the SMM saw seven pedestrians (five men and two women, aged 25-60) exiting Ukraine and two pedestrians (men, aged 15-30) entering Ukraine.

On 11 March, **the SMM monitored a gathering in Lviv**. The SMM saw a religious procession in honour of the third week of Lent of between 15,000 and 20,000 people (men and women, mixed ages) from St. Michael the Archangel Church on 22 Vynnychenka Street to Saint George’s Cathedral on 5 Saint George Square. Religious representatives from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and regional political officials were present. The SMM saw two police cars and police officers present and noted a calm situation.

On 11 March, the SMM continued to **monitor the administrative boundary line between Kherson region and Crimea. The SMM monitored a crossing point near Chonhar (162km south-east of Kherson)** and found the situation to be calm. It observed an increase in the number of cars and pedestrians coming towards Kherson region, and three people (two men and a woman, all middle-aged) told the SMM that they had waited for four to five hours to cross the administrative boundary line towards Kherson region. The SMM noted that compared with the end of February, the number of personnel at the

Ukrainian Armed Forces position had returned to levels previously observed (see [SMM Daily Report 28 February 2018](#)).

The SMM continued monitoring in Odessa, 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, 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:

- Four armed persons on the eastern edge of Sosnivske (non-government-controlled, 35km north-east of Mariupol) prevented the SMM from entering the village, citing “orders” from their “superiors”.
- At a border crossing point near Izvaryne, an armed “LPR” member told the SMM to leave the area adding that “a restriction on the SMM's presence was still in force”.
- At a checkpoint on road H-15 east of Kreminets (non-government-controlled, 16km south-west of Donetsk), an armed person told the SMM that it had to park its vehicles at least 350m from the checkpoint. Shortly afterwards, an unarmed man in military-type attire who introduced himself as the “shift leader” of the checkpoint told the SMM that it had to move at least 500m from the checkpoint, citing “orders” from his “superiors”. The SMM left the area.

*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.<sup>[3]</sup>

- 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.<sup>4</sup>

**[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.**

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

<sup>[3]</sup> 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.

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <http://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/375337>

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