

Daily Report 248/2020

17 October 2020¹

Summary

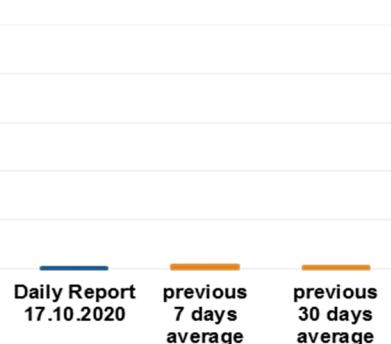
- The SMM recorded nine ceasefire violations in Donetsk region and one in Luhansk region. In the previous reporting period, it recorded 60 ceasefire violations in Donetsk region and three in Luhansk region.
- Three men were injured due to the explosion of a device while fighting a wildfire near government-controlled Syze, Luhansk region.
- The Mission lost spatial control of a mini-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) near the train station in government-controlled Rubizhne due to signal interference. The UAV was recovered undamaged.
- The SMM continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske. During evening hours, an SMM long-range UAV spotted people inside the disengagement area near Zolote.
- The Mission facilitated and monitored adherence to localised ceasefires to enable repairs to and the operation of critical civilian infrastructure.
- The SMM continued following up on the situation of civilians amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It noted that the entry-exit checkpoint in Luhansk region remained closed.
- The Mission's freedom of movement continued to be restricted.*

Ceasefire violations²

Number of recorded ceasefire violations³



Number of recorded explosions⁴



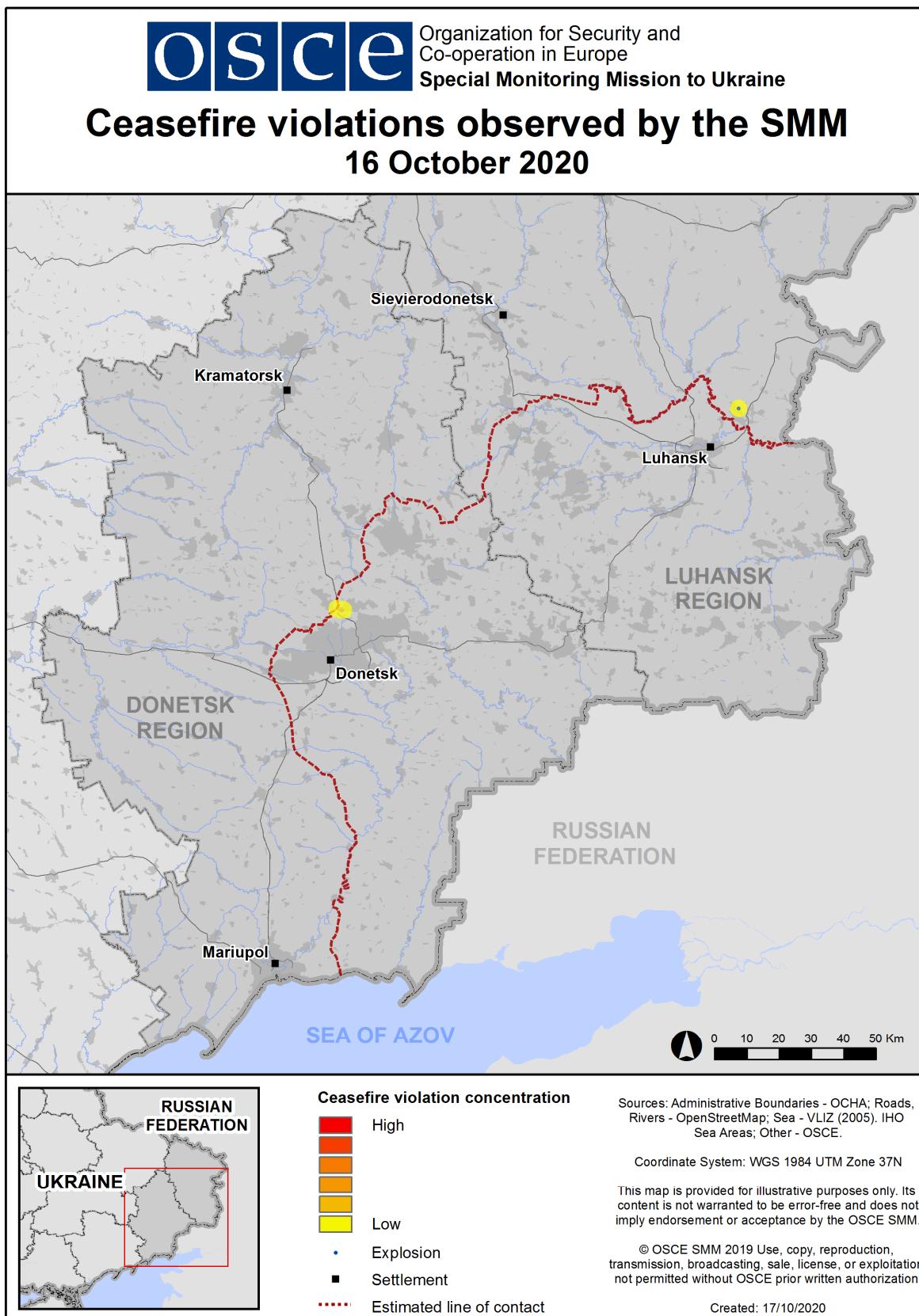
¹ Based on information from the Monitoring Teams as of 19:30, 16 October 2020. All times are in Eastern European Summer Time.

² For a complete breakdown of ceasefire violations, please see the annexed table. During the reporting period, the SMM camera in Petrivske was not operational.

³ Including explosions

⁴ Including from unidentified weapons

Map of recorded ceasefire violations



In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded nine ceasefire violations, mostly bursts and shots of small-arms fire during daytime, all at southerly directions of the Donetsk Filtration Station (DFS) (15km north of Donetsk) (see below). In the [previous reporting period](#), it recorded 60 ceasefire violations – almost all at southerly and westerly directions of the DFS.

In Luhansk region, the Mission recorded one ceasefire violation – an undetermined explosion in an area north of the disengagement area near Stanytsia Luhanska (government-controlled, 16km north-east of Luhansk) (see below). In the [previous reporting period](#), it recorded three ceasefire violations in the region.

Following agreement reached at the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group on 22 July regarding additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire, from 00:01 on 27 July until the end of the reporting period, the SMM has so far recorded a total of 1,694 ceasefire violations in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions (including 450 explosions, 20 projectiles in flight, 15 muzzle flashes, 22 illumination flares and 1,187 bursts and shots).

Three men injured due to the explosion of a device near government-controlled Syze, Luhansk region.

The SMM followed up on reports of two employees of the Stanytsia Luhanska State Forestry Enterprise and an employee of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) injured on 9 October by the explosion of a device while attempting to extinguish a wildfire between the villages of Bolotene (government-controlled, 22km north-east of Luhansk) and Syze (government-controlled, 23km north-east of Luhansk).

On 15 October, two employees of the Stanytsia Luhanska Forestry Services separately told the SMM by phone that on 9 October, while patrolling an area between Bolotene and Syze during a wildfire, their truck had hit an explosive device. One of them (a man in his thirties), who had been driving the truck, said that, after jumping out of the car, he had found himself in a 1m-wide crater and saw that the front of his vehicle was destroyed. He added that he had sustained an injury to his left foot. His colleague (a man in his forties) told the Mission that he had felt a blast when their vehicle had been driving across a grassy area to approach a truck of SESU. He added that he was suffering from shock and was being treated in hospital.

On 9 October, medical staff at a hospital in Stanytsia Luhanska told the SMM by phone that on the same day three men had been admitted – one (in his thirties) with injuries to his foot, one (in his forties) with severe shock and short-term amnesia and one (also in his forties) with a minor concussion. Also on 9 October, a spokeswoman of the SESU told the Mission that on the same day, a truck of the Stanytsia Luhanska State Forestry Enterprise had driven over a device that exploded and that the two men inside the truck, as well as an employee of SESU standing near the road, had been injured as a result. Also on the same day, a police officer at the Stanytsia Luhanska police department told the Mission that on 9 October three men had been injured when a truck had driven over a device that exploded near Syze.

Loss of spatial control of SMM mini-UAV near the train station in Rubizhne, Luhansk region

On 16 October, an SMM mini-UAV experienced strong signal interference while flying in areas south-east of the train station in Rubizhne (government-controlled, 84km north-west of Luhansk). This interference led to the loss of spatial control over the aircraft. Shortly thereafter, the UAV made a landing that was not commanded by the SMM. Subsequently,

three representatives of the Ukrainian Armed Forces returned the UAV to the Mission with no visible damage.*

Disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petriivske

On the evening of 15 October, while on the eastern edge of Stanytsia Luhanska, the SMM heard an undetermined explosion at an assessed range of 3-4km north-west, assessed as outside the **disengagement area near Stanytsia Luhanska** but within 5km of its periphery.

In the evening of 15 October, inside the **disengagement area near Zolote** (government-controlled, 60km west of Luhansk), an SMM long-range unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) spotted a person inside a former position of the Ukrainian Armed Forces near the area's north-eastern corner. The same UAV spotted one person inside a former position of the armed formations near the disengagement area's eastern edge, about 1.4km north of its south-eastern corner.

On the day of 16 October, inside the disengagement area, about 1.2km south of its northern edge and about 70m west of road T-1316, the SMM observed for the first time a piece of unexploded ordnance (UXO), assessed as a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG-22) round, as well as, 200m further south and about 5m west of the same road, two pieces of UXO, assessed as grenades. On the same day, also inside the area, about 500m north-north-west of the area's southern edge, near road T-1316, the Mission saw seven people, three of whom were carrying metal detectors.

During the day on 16 October, near the checkpoint of the armed formations south of the disengagement area, the Mission saw five members of the armed formations (wearing armbands with "JCCC" written on them), all of whom walked inside the disengagement area up to about 350m north of its southern edge and then returned.

Also on the same day, about 500m south of the disengagement area's southern edge, the Mission saw about 14 workers with heavy equipment laying asphalt on both sides of road T-1316, reportedly in preparation of the construction of two parking areas.

While positioned at one location near the **disengagement area near Petriivske** (non-government-controlled, 41km south of Donetsk), the Mission observed a calm situation.

Withdrawal of weapons

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

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites, the SMM saw an anti-aircraft and a surface-to-air missile system in government-controlled areas of Luhansk region (for further information, see the table below).

Indications of military and military-type presence in the security zone⁵

⁵ The hardware mentioned in this section is not proscribed by the provisions of the Minsk agreements on the withdrawal of weapons.

The SMM observed armoured combat vehicles and anti-aircraft guns in government-controlled areas of Luhansk and Donetsk region (for further information, see the table below).

Anti-tank mines near Lohvynove

On the same day, 4km north-west of Lohvynove (non-government-controlled, 59km north-east of Donetsk), an SMM long-range UAV again spotted at least 38 anti-tank mines laid in 3 rows across a road between Lohvynove and Luhanske (government-controlled, 59km north-east of Donetsk), assessed as belonging to the armed formations (for previous observations in the area, see [SMM Daily Report 7 August 2020](#)).

SMM facilitation of repairs to and operation of critical civilian infrastructure

The SMM facilitated and monitored adherence to localised ceasefires to enable construction work south of the southern edge of the disengagement area near Zolote, north of Shchastia (government-controlled, 20km north of Luhansk), and near Vesela Hora (non-government-controlled, 16km north of Luhansk), south of the bridge in Shchastia.

About 200m north-west of the Ukrainian Armed Forces checkpoint north of the bridge in Shchastia, on the eastern side of road H-21 at the junction with road T-1309, the SMM observed 12 workers with heavy equipment conducting groundworks, reportedly for the construction of an administrative centre. About 200m north-west of the checkpoint of the armed formations, located about 3km south-east of the aforementioned bridge, the Mission observed 35 workers with heavy equipment conducting roadworks on road H-21.

The Mission also facilitated and monitored adherence to localised ceasefires to enable railway inspection, maintenance and vegetation clearance near Vilkhove (government-controlled, 22km north-east of Luhansk); repairs to water infrastructure near Pankivka (non-government-controlled, 16km north of Luhansk); and maintenance of road T-1316 north, inside and south of the disengagement area near Zolote and of road H-21 near Vesela Hora.

The SMM continued to facilitate the operation of the DFS. During the day on 16 October, while near the station, the Mission heard eight ceasefire violations, all shots and bursts of small-arms fire, within a 5km radius of the DFS.

Measures taken at entry-exit checkpoints and corresponding checkpoints to counter the COVID-19 pandemic

In Luhansk region, the Mission observed that the entry-exit checkpoint (EECP) in Stanytsia Luhanska remained closed.⁶

While at the EECP at about 09:10, 10:30, 13:20 and 15:30, the Mission saw in total 280 people (80 men and 200 women, mixed ages) queuing to travel towards non-government-controlled areas. Ten people (six women and four men, in their sixties) shared with the SMM their concerns about not being able to travel to non-government-controlled areas, where they needed to be because they had to undergo medical treatment, look after a sick relative or send their children to school.

⁶ The EECP's temporary closure, in the period from 15 October to 31 October 2020, was published on the [website](#) of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 13 October.

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

***Restrictions of the 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 (for example, see [SMM Daily Report 12 October 2020](#)). 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.

Regular restrictions related to disengagement areas and mines/UXO:

- The sides continued to deny the SMM full access, as well as the ability to travel certain roads previously identified as important for effective monitoring by the Mission and for civilians' movement, through failure to conduct comprehensive clearance of mines, UXO and other obstacles.

Other impediments:

- On the evening of 15 October, an SMM long-range UAV experienced signal interference, assessed as caused by probable jamming, while flying over areas between Maiorsk (government-controlled, 45km north-east of Donetsk) and Molodizhne (non-government-controlled, 63km north-west of Luhansk), as well as signal interference, assessed as caused by jamming, while flying over areas near Myronivskyi (government-controlled, 62km north-east of Donetsk).⁷
- On 16 October, an SMM mini-UAV experienced strong signal interference while flying in areas south-east of the train station in Rubizhne (government-controlled, 84km north-west of Luhansk). This interference led to the loss of spatial control over the aircraft. Shortly thereafter, the UAV made a landing that was not commanded by the SMM. Subsequently, three representatives of the Ukrainian Armed Forces returned the UAV to the Mission with no visible damage.

⁷ The interference could have originated from anywhere within a radius of kilometres from the UAVs' positions.

Table of weapons

Weapons beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites

Date	No. of weapons	Type of weapon	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
15/10/2020	1	Self-propelled anti-aircraft system (2K22 <i>Tunguska</i>)	At an airfield near Syrotyne (71km north-west of Luhansk)	Long-range UAV
	1	Surface to-air missile system (9K35 <i>Strela-10</i>)	At the railway station near Rubizhne (84km north-west of Luhansk)	Mini-UAV

Table of military and military-type presence in the security zone⁸

Date	No.	Type of weapon	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
15/10/2020	2	Armoured personnel carrier (MT-LB)	Near Raihorodka (34km north-west of Luhansk)	Long-range UAV
	2	Anti-aircraft gun (ZU-23, 23mm)		
	3	Armoured personnel carrier (two BTR-80 and one BTR-variant)	Near Heivka (27km north-west of Luhansk)	
15/10/2020	1	Infantry fighting vehicle (BMP-1)	Near Bohdanivka (41km south-west of Donetsk)	
16/10/2020	1	Infantry fighting vehicle (BMP-1)	Near Novohnativka (40km south of Donetsk)	Long-range UAV
	1	Armoured reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM-2)	Near Slavne (26km south-west of Donetsk)	
	2	Armoured combat vehicle		
	1	Armoured reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM-2)	Near Novomykhailivka (28km south-west of Donetsk)	
16/10/2020	1	Armoured reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM-2)	In a residential area of Orlivka (22km north-west of Donetsk)	Patrol

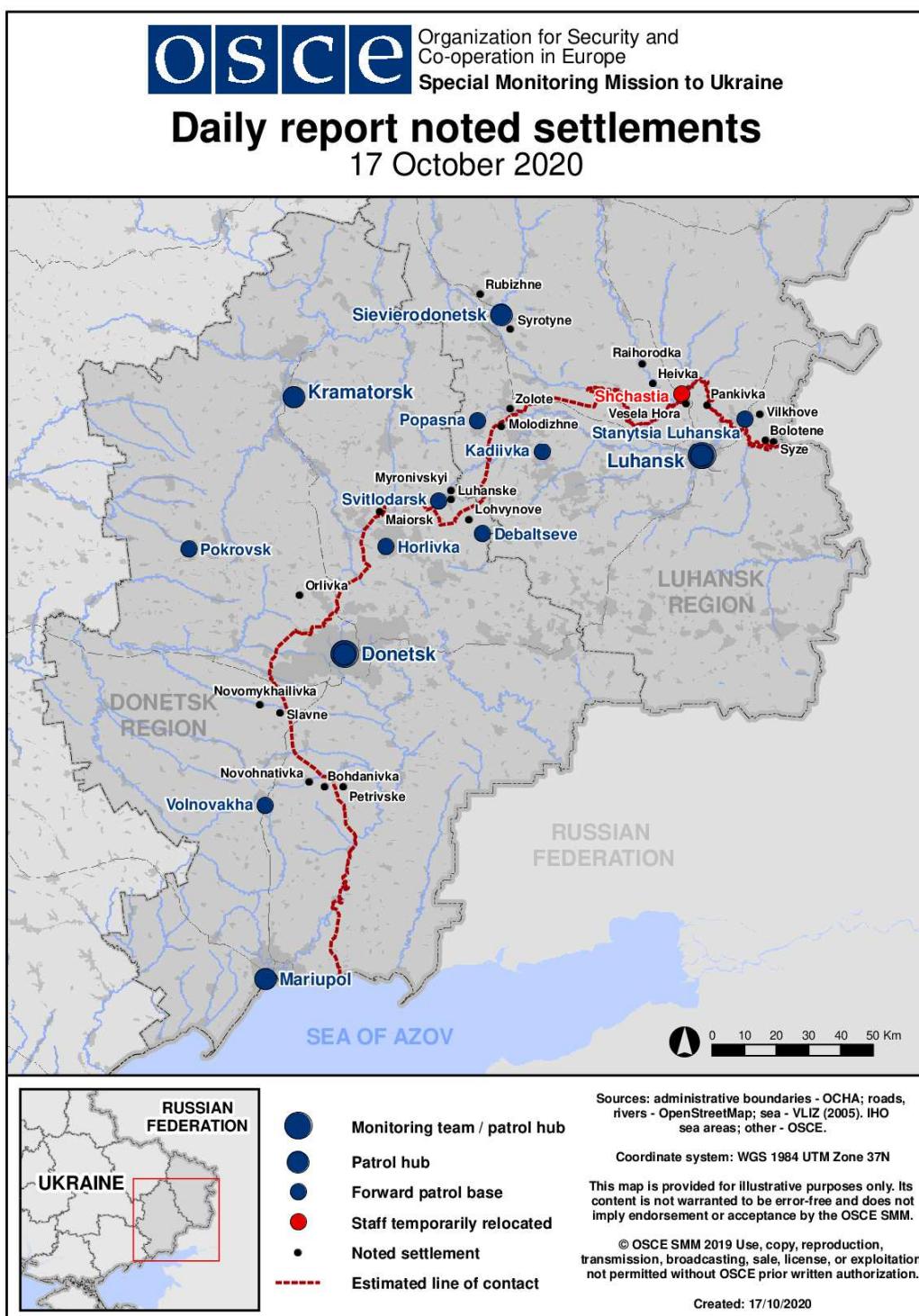
⁸ The hardware mentioned in this section is not proscribed by the provisions of the Minsk agreements on the withdrawal of weapons.

Table of ceasefire violations as of 16 October 2020⁹

SMM position	Event location	Means	No.	Observation	Description	Weapon	Date, time
SMM camera at Donetsk Filtration Station (15km N of Donetsk)	1-2km SSW	Recorded	1	Illumination flare	In vertical flight (also recorded by the SMM camera in Avdiivka)	N/K	15-Oct, 23:11
About 1km NW of the railway station in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km NE of Donetsk)	1-2km SSW	Heard	2	Burst		Small arms	16-Oct, 10:25
	1-3km SW	Heard	3	Shot		Small arms	16-Oct, 13:29
	1-3km SW	Heard	3	Burst		Small arms	16-Oct, 13:29
E edge of Stanytsia Luhanska (government-controlled, 16km NE of Luhansk)	3-4km NW	Heard	1	Explosion	Undetermined (assessed as outside the disengagement area)	N/K	15-Oct, 21:52

⁹ The table only includes ceasefire violations directly observed by SMM patrols or recorded by the SMM cameras, and it may include those also assessed to be live-fire exercises, controlled detonations, etc. Details provided – in terms of distance, direction, weapons-type, etc. – are based on assessments provided by monitors on the ground and technical monitoring officers, and are not always necessarily precise. When information is not known (indicated with an “N/K”), the SMM was unable to ascertain such information due to distance, weather conditions technical limitations and/or other considerations. Ceasefire violations recorded by more than one patrol/camera and assessed to be the same are entered only once.

Map of Donetsk and Luhansk regions¹⁰



¹⁰ The SMM is deployed to ten locations throughout Ukraine – Kherson, Odessa, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnipro, Chernivtsi, Luhansk and Kyiv – as per Permanent Council Decision 1117 of 21 March 2014. This map of eastern Ukraine is meant for illustrative purposes and indicates locations mentioned in the report, as well as those where the SMM has offices (monitoring teams, patrol hubs and forward patrol bases) in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. (In red: a forward patrol base from which SMM staff have temporarily relocated based on recommendations of security experts from participating States, as well as SMM security considerations. The SMM uses the premises during daylight hours and also patrols in this settlement during daylight hours).