

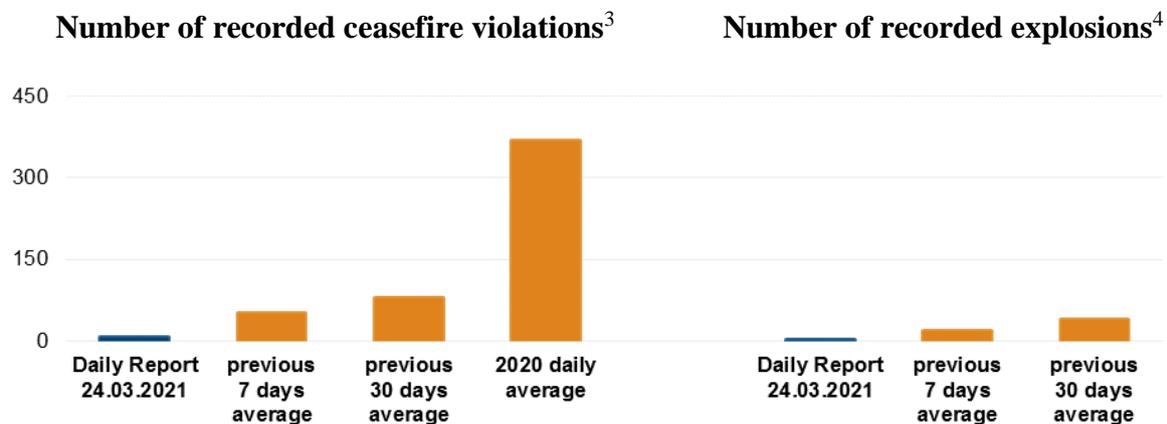
Daily Report 68/2021

24 March 2021¹

Summary

- In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded two ceasefire violations. In the previous reporting period, it recorded 65 ceasefire violations in the region.
- In Luhansk region, the Mission recorded five ceasefire violations. In the previous reporting period, it recorded no ceasefire violations in the region.
- The SMM continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske. SMM unmanned aerial vehicles spotted people inside the area near Zolote during daytime.
- The Mission facilitated and monitored adherence to localized ceasefires to enable maintenance and operation of critical civilian infrastructure.
- The SMM continued following up on the situation of civilians, including at three entry-exit checkpoints and the corresponding checkpoints of the armed formations in Luhansk region.
- The Mission's freedom of movement continued to be restricted.*

Ceasefire violations²



¹ Based on information from the Monitoring Teams as of 19:30, 23 March 2021. All times are in Eastern European Time.

² For a complete breakdown of ceasefire violations, please see the annexed table. During the reporting period, the SMM cameras in Petrivske and in Zolote were not operational, and weather conditions limited the observational capabilities of some of the other SMM cameras.

³ Including explosions.

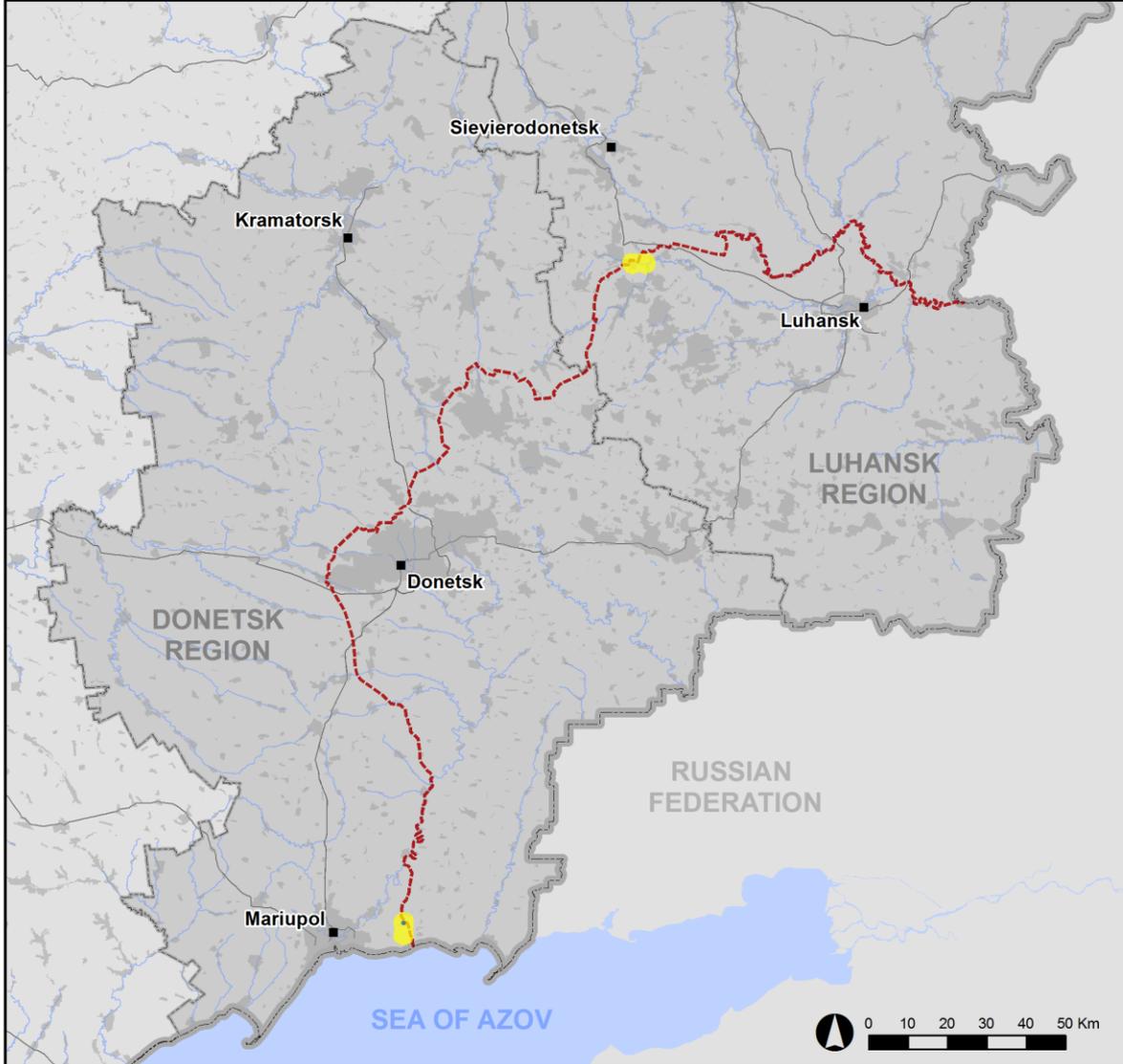
⁴ Including from unidentified weapons.

Map of recorded ceasefire violations

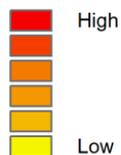


Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Ceasefire violations observed by the SMM 23 March 2021



Ceasefire violation concentration



- Explosion
- Settlement
- Estimated line of contact

Sources: Administrative Boundaries - OCHA; Roads, Rivers - OpenStreetMap; Sea - VLIZ (2005). IHO Sea Areas; Other - OSCE.

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 37N

This map is provided for illustrative purposes only. Its content is not warranted to be error-free and does not imply endorsement or acceptance by the OSCE SMM.

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Created: 24/03/2021

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded two ceasefire violations, including one undetermined explosion, both of which occurred in areas north of Shyrokyne (government-controlled, 100km south of Donetsk). In the [previous reporting period](#), the Mission recorded 65 ceasefire violations.

In Luhansk region, the Mission recorded five ceasefire violations, all bursts and shots of undetermined weapons in areas north-east and east of the disengagement area near Zolote (government-controlled, 60km west of Luhansk). In the [previous reporting period](#), the Mission recorded no ceasefire violations.

Following agreement reached at the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group on 22 July 2020 regarding additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire, from 00:01 on 27 July 2020 until the end of the reporting period, the SMM has so far recorded at least 12,792 ceasefire violations in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions (including 4,591 explosions, 1,522 projectiles in flight, 154 muzzle flashes, 63 illumination flares and at least 6,462 bursts and shots).

Disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske⁵

On 23 March, while positioned inside the **disengagement area near Stanytsia Luhanska** (government-controlled, 16km north-east of Luhansk), the SMM saw four members of the armed formations (wearing armbands with “JCCC” written on them) south of the repaired span of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge (15km north-east of Luhansk).

During the day on 22 March, inside the **disengagement area near Zolote**, an SMM mini-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) spotted two people inside a former position of the armed formations on its western edge, about 580m north-north-east of its south-western corner. (For previous observations, see [SMM Daily Report of 23 March 2021](#).) On the same day, an SMM long-range UAV spotted two people inside a former position of the Ukrainian Armed Forces near the area’s north-eastern corner and three people inside a former position of the armed formations near its eastern edge, about 1.5km north of its south-eastern corner.

On 23 March, while positioned at two locations near the area near Zolote, the SMM heard five bursts and shots of undetermined weapons, all assessed as outside the disengagement area but within 5km of its periphery.

While positioned near the checkpoint of the armed formations south of the area, the Mission again saw five containers inside a fenced perimeter south of its southern edge, on the southern edge of the road leading eastwards towards Zolote-5/Mykhailivka (non-government-controlled, 61km west of Luhansk). The Mission also again saw another container on the area’s southern edge. Inside the area, it again saw a container about 60–70m north of the other five and another one about 350m north of its southern edge, both on the western edge of road T-1316.

On 22 March, while positioned near the same checkpoint, the SMM saw five members of the armed formations (wearing armbands with “JCCC” written on them).

⁵ Disengagement is foreseen in the Framework Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group relating to disengagement of forces and hardware of 21 September 2016.

On 23 March, from the same location, the SMM saw three members of the armed formations (wearing armbands with “JCCC” written on them), two of whom walked inside the area to about 350m north of its southern edge and then returned.

Also on 23 March, while positioned at three locations near the **disengagement area near Petrivske** (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.

In violation of withdrawal lines, the SMM observed a surface-to-air missile system in a residential government-controlled area of Donetsk region.

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites, the SMM observed four tanks in a government-controlled area of Donetsk region. (For further information, see the tables below.)

Indications of military and military-type presence in the security zone⁶

The SMM saw armoured combat vehicles in government-controlled areas of Donetsk region and on both sides of the contact line in Luhansk region, including in residential areas. (For further information, see the table below.)

Anti-tank mines near Vodiane, Opytne, Vesele and Lozove, Donetsk region

On 22 March, an SMM mini-UAV again spotted 23 anti-tank mines laid across a road about 1.9km north of Vodiane (government-controlled, 94km south of Donetsk), assessed as belonging to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. (For previous observations in the area, see [SMM Daily Report of 23 September 2020](#).)

On the same day, an SMM mini-UAV again spotted 81 anti-tank mines laid across and next to road T-0505, about 2.8km east of Opytne (government-controlled, 12km north-west of Donetsk). (For previous observations in the area, see [SMM Daily Report of 25 August 2020](#).) About 300m further north-east, it spotted for the first time 75 anti-tank mines (assessed as not recently laid) laid across and next to a local road. All these mines were assessed as belonging to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Also on 22 March, an SMM mini-UAV spotted for the first time about 100 anti-tank mines about 1.5km north-north-east of Pisky (government-controlled, 11km north-west of Donetsk), assessed as belonging to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Additionally, the same UAV spotted for the first time 13 probable anti-tank mines (assessed as not recently laid) on a road about 2.4km south-west of Vesele (non-government-controlled, 9km north-west of Donetsk), assessed as belonging to the armed formations.

⁶ The hardware mentioned in this section is not proscribed by the provisions of the Minsk agreements on the withdrawal of weapons.

An SMM mini-UAV again spotted 75 anti-tank mines laid across a road about 3km north of Lozove (non-government-controlled, 13km west of Donetsk) and about 330 anti-tank mines (assessed as not recently laid) in fields about 2.5km north-north-east of Lozove. All these mines were assessed as belonging to the armed formations. (For previous observations, see [SMM Daily Report of 17 August 2020](#).)

SMM facilitation of maintenance and operation of critical civilian infrastructure

The Mission continued to facilitate the operation of the Donetsk Filtration Station (15km north of Donetsk).

The Mission also monitored adherence to localized ceasefires to enable railway track inspection, maintenance and vegetation clearance in Vilkhove (government-controlled, 22km north-east of Luhansk).

Situation at entry-exit checkpoints and corresponding checkpoints

In Luhansk region, the Mission noted that the entry-exit checkpoint (EECP) near Stanytsia Luhanska and the corresponding checkpoint of the armed formations south of the repaired span of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge were open, with people queueing to travel in both directions.

The Mission also noted that the EECPs near Zolote and Shchastia (government-controlled, 20km north of Luhansk) were operational but that the corresponding checkpoints of the armed formations south of the disengagement area near Zolote and 3km south-east of the bridge in Shchastia were closed.

***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, 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 Minsk agreements 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 of 23 March 2021](#).) 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:⁷

- On 22 March, an SMM long-range UAV experienced dual GPS signal interference, assessed as caused by jamming, while flying over areas between Troitske (government-controlled, 69km west of Luhansk) and Lohvynove (non-government-controlled, 59km north-east of Donetsk), and between Bulavyne (non-government-controlled, 54km north-east of Donetsk) and Stepanivka (government-controlled, 54km north of Donetsk), as well as GPS signal interference, assessed as caused by probable jamming, while flying over areas between Stepanivka and Troitske, and between Lohvynove and Bulavyne.

⁷ The interference could have originated from anywhere within the radius of kilometres from the UAV's position.

Table of weapons

Weapons in violation of withdrawal lines

Date	No. of weapons	Type of weapon	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
22/3/2021	1	Surface-to-air missile system (9K35 <i>Strela-10</i>)	In a residential area of Novotroitske (36km south-west of Donetsk)	Mini-UAV

Weapons beyond withdrawal lines but outside designated storage sites

Date	No. of weapons	Type of weapon	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
22/3/2021	4	Tank (undetermined variant)	In a compound in Kostiantynivka (60km north of Donetsk)	Long-range UAV

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

Date	No.	Type	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
22/3/2021	2	Armoured personnel carrier (MT-LB)	In residential areas of Novotroitske (36km south-west of Donetsk)	Mini-UAV
	1	Armoured reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM variant)		
	3	Armoured personnel carrier (MT-LB)	In a compound in Popasna (69km west of Luhansk)	Long-range UAV
Non-government-controlled areas				
22/3/2021	11	Armoured personnel carrier (MT-LB)	In a compound in Kalynove (60km west of Luhansk)	Mini-UAV
	3	Infantry fighting vehicle (BMP-1)	Near Novoselivka (16km west of Luhansk)	
	4	Armoured personnel carrier (MT-LB)	Near Kalynove-Borshchuvate (61km west of Luhansk)	Long-range UAV

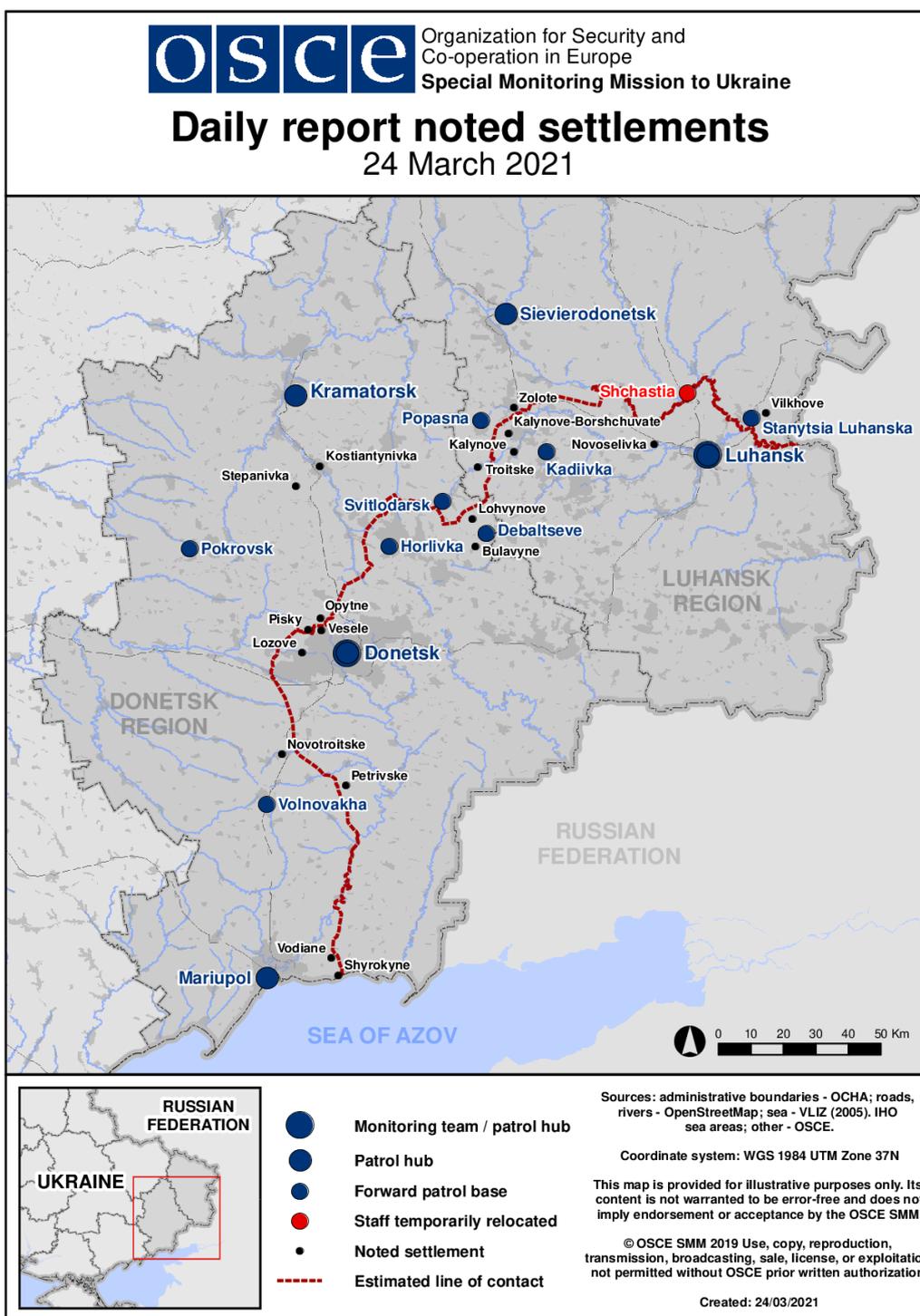
⁸ The hardware mentioned in this section is not proscribed by the provisions of the Minsk agreements on the withdrawal of weapons.

Table of ceasefire violations as of 23 March 2021⁹

SMM position	Event location	Means	No.	Observation	Description	Weapon	Date, time
SMM camera 1km SW of Shyrokyne (government-controlled, 100km S of Donetsk)	6-8km N	Recorded	1	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	22-Mar, 20:50
	3-5km N	Recorded	1	Projectile	E to W	N/K	22-Mar, 21:03
About 3km N of Pervomaisk (non-government-controlled, 58km W of Luhansk)	3-4km NE	Heard	2	Burst	Assessed as outside the Zolote disengagement area	N/K	23-Mar, 10:30-10:42
W edge of Berezivske (non-government-controlled, 53km NW of Luhansk)	1-2km N	Heard	3	Shot	Assessed as outside the Zolote disengagement area	N/K	23-Mar, 13:39

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).