Between 5 and 18 October, the SMM recorded 215 ceasefire violations, compared with 429 in the previous two-week period.

The recent reduction in violence, following the Trilateral Contact Group’s adoption of additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire on 22 July, shows once again that with political will, concrete results can be achieved on the ground, said Yaşar Halit Çevik, Chief Monitor of the SMM, in his address to the OSCE Permanent Council on 8 October.

The Mission continued monitoring the security situation in and around the three pilot disengagement areas, recording no ceasefire violations, but noting the regular presence of people within, or close to, former military and military-type positions inside the areas near Zolote and Petrivske.

The SMM corroborated reports of eight civilian casualties – including one fatality – all resulting from the detonation of explosive devices. This brings the total number of civilian casualties since the beginning of 2020 to 87: 14 fatalities and 73 injuries. For the twelfth consecutive week, the Mission received no reports of civilian casualties due to shelling or small-arms fire.

The Mission continued to facilitate and monitor adherence to localized ceasefires to enable repairs to and maintenance of critical civilian infrastructure on both sides of the contact line. This included repairs to water infrastructure near Pankivka and Krasnyi Lyman providing water to around 250,000 civilians, and inspection of power lines near Zolote-4/ Rodina and between Travneve and Hladosove, providing electricity to several thousand civilians.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the SMM continued to note reduced numbers of civilians crossing the contact line at Stanytsia Luhanska bridge and observed that some civilians continued to stay overnight near the entry-exit checkpoint (EECP). From 15 October onwards, the Mission noted that the EECP was closed, with crossing allowed only in exceptional circumstances.

In Donetsk region, where EECPs remain operational, the only corresponding checkpoint that is operational is the one near Olenivka and it is open only two days a week, resulting in severely restricted movement and hardship for the civilian population.

The Mission’s freedom of movement was restricted seven times on the ground, all in non-government-controlled areas. SMM unmanned aerial vehicles experienced signal interference assessed as caused by probable jamming on 10 occasions while flying on both sides of the contact line, including twice over the disengagement area near Petrivske.

Crossing difficulties at the contact line continue to hinder the SMM’s monitoring of non-government-controlled areas.

The SMM’s daily reports are available in three languages (English, Ukrainian and Russian) on the OSCE website: www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/reports.