Between 13 and 26 July, the SMM recorded about 8,000 ceasefire violations, including about 2,100 explosions, compared with approximately 5,200 and 1,700, respectively, in the previous two weeks.

The Mission corroborated reports of five civilian casualties, all injuries, bringing the total number since the beginning of 2020 to 60 – eight fatalities and 52 injuries.

The Mission continued monitoring the security situation in and around the three disengagement areas. While it observed a calm situation inside the disengagement area near Stanytsia Luhanska, it recorded ceasefire violations and continued spotting the presence of people inside the disengagement areas near Zolote and Petrivske. The SMM also saw a new military position and improvements to a former military-type position in the latter area.

On 20 July, explosions occurred close to SMM patrols near Zalizne (see Spot Report 38/2020) and Berezovske as they were monitoring adherence to localized ceasefires to enable repairs to civilian infrastructure.

The SMM continued to facilitate and monitor adherence to localized ceasefires to enable repairs to, as well as construction and maintenance of, critical civilian infrastructure in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This included repairs to power lines between Novoazernya and Troitske, as well as repairs to water infrastructure near Pankivka and Yashchynove, benefitting around 460,000 civilians on both sides of the contact line.

Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the SMM observed limited numbers of civilians crossing the contact line at Stanitsya Luhanska bridge, with many refused entry because of residency requirements, the operation of a list system or difficulties in downloading a self-isolation application. In Donetsk region, where entry-exit checkpoints are mostly open, corresponding checkpoints of the armed formations – except one, which operated only two days a week – remained closed, resulting in severely restricted movement and hardship for the civilian population.

The Mission’s freedom of movement was restricted 13 times, all but two times in non-government-controlled areas. SMM unmanned aerial vehicles were subjected to signal interference on both sides of the contact line on 36 occasions, and were targeted by small-arms fire six times (four times in non-government-controlled areas and twice in 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.

** Kotykove, benefitting around 460,000 civilians on both sides of the contact line.**