

Daily Report 297/2021

18 December 2021¹

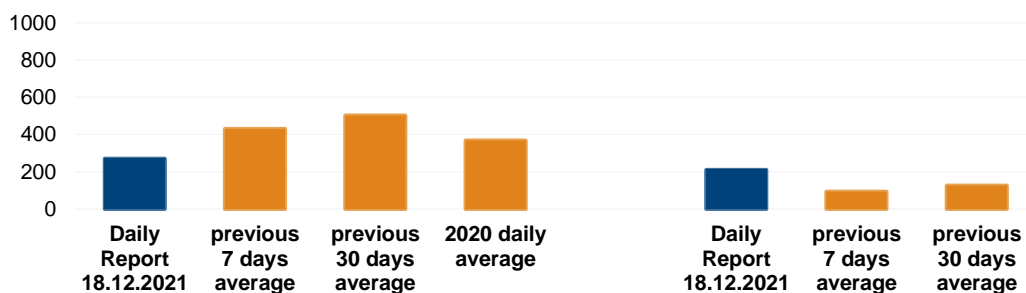
Summary

- In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded 101 ceasefire violations, including 67 explosions. Of these 101, 67 were assessed as live-fire training exercises. In the previous reporting period, it recorded 62 ceasefire violations in the region.
- In Luhansk region, the Mission recorded 169 ceasefire violations, including 143 explosions. Of these 169, 77 were assessed as live-fire training exercises. In the previous reporting period, it recorded 170 ceasefire violations in the region.
- Members of the armed formations twice denied the SMM passage near Zolote and Molodizhne, Luhansk region.*
- The SMM continued monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske.
- The Mission facilitated the operation and maintenance of critical civilian infrastructure, as well as a transfer of funds from non-government to government-controlled areas.
- The SMM continued following up on the situation of civilians, including at four entry-exit checkpoints and four corresponding checkpoints of the armed formations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.
- The Mission visited one border crossing point and monitored areas near the border outside government control in Donetsk region.
- The Mission's freedom of movement continued to be restricted, including at two checkpoints of the armed formations in southern Donetsk region. Its unmanned aerial vehicles encountered instances of GPS signal interference assessed as caused by probable jamming.*

Ceasefire violations²

Number of recorded ceasefire violations³

Number of recorded explosions⁴



¹ Based on information from the Monitoring Teams as of 19:30, 17 December 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, weather conditions limited the observational capabilities of some SMM cameras.

³ Including explosions.

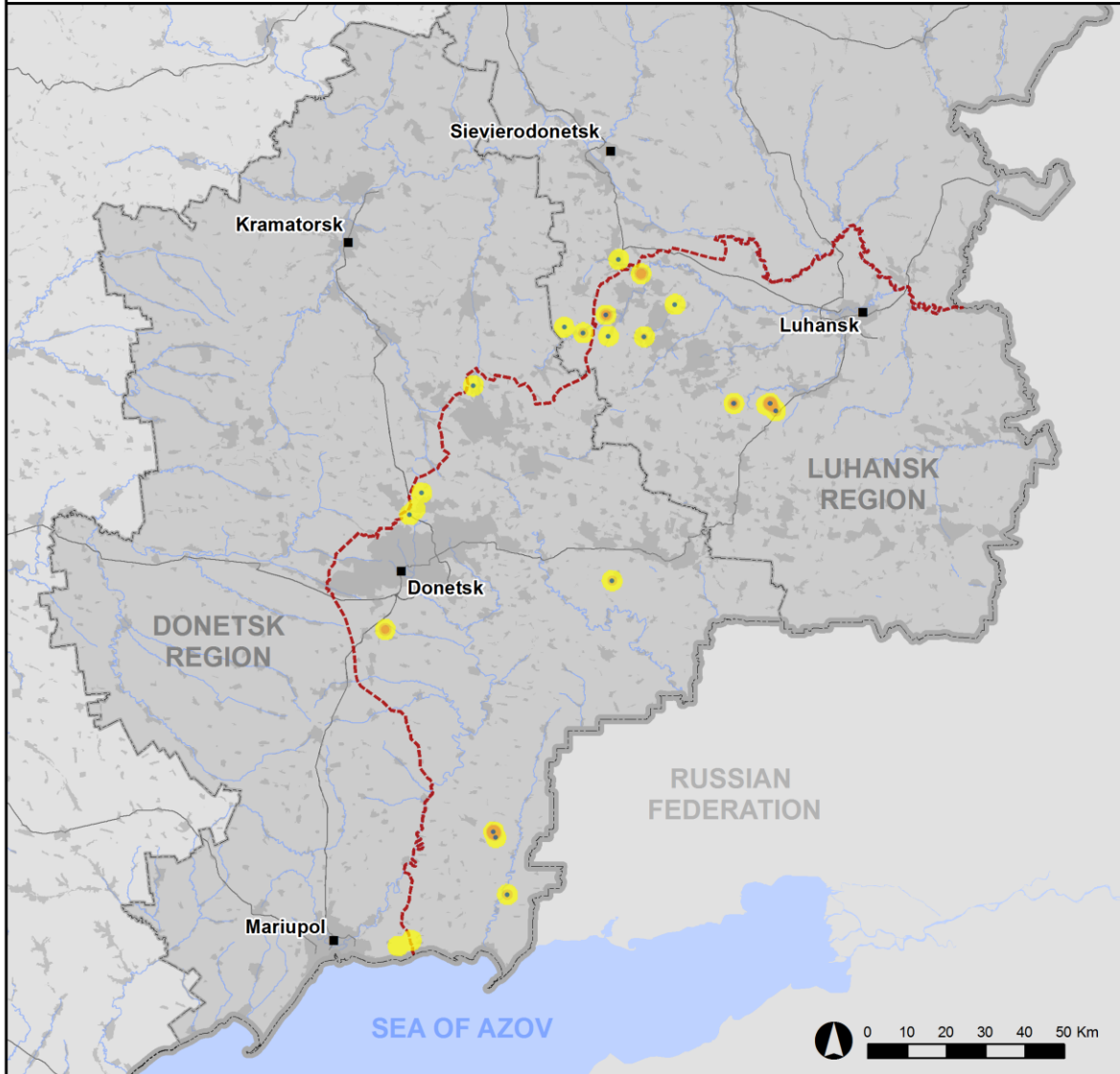
⁴ Including from unidentified weapons.

Map of recorded ceasefire violations

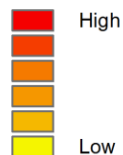


Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Ceasefire violations observed by the SMM 17 December 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: 18/12/2021

In Donetsk region, the SMM recorded 101 ceasefire violations, including 67 undetermined explosions. Most ceasefire violations occurred in areas south-south-east of Zernove (non-government-controlled, 70km south of Donetsk). The Mission assessed 67 ceasefire violations as live-fire training exercises outside the security zone. This includes all 54 ceasefire violations heard near Zernove, as well as 13 ceasefire violations heard north-north-east of Oleksandrivske (formerly Rozy Liuksemburh, non-government-controlled, 90km south-east of Donetsk). In the [previous reporting period](#), the Mission recorded 62 ceasefire violations in the region.

In Luhansk region, the SMM recorded 169 ceasefire violations, including 143 explosions (15 outgoing and 128 undetermined). The majority of ceasefire violations occurred in areas east-north-east and west-north-west of Yelyzavetivka (non-government-controlled, 35km south-west of Luhansk) and south-east and south of Berezivske (non-government-controlled, 53km north-west of Luhansk). The Mission assessed 77 ceasefire violations (all 62 ceasefire violations heard near Yelyzavetivka and 15 heard in a training area near Myrne (non-government-controlled, 28km south-west of Luhansk) as live-fire training exercises outside the security zone. In the [previous reporting period](#), the Mission recorded 170 ceasefire violations in the region, some of which it also assessed as live-fire training exercise.

Following agreement reached at the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group on 22 July 2020 regarding measures to strengthen the ceasefire, from 00:01 on 27 July 2020 until the end of the reporting period, the SMM has recorded at least 95,756 ceasefire violations in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions (including 25,961 explosions, 23,126 projectiles in flight, 416 muzzle flashes, 407 illumination flares and at least 45,846 bursts and shots).

Armed formations twice denied the SMM's passage near Zolote and Molodizhne, Luhansk region

On the morning of 17 December, the armed formations in Luhansk region twice denied the Mission passage to non-government-controlled areas.

The first denial occurred at 09:24 about 350m north of the southern edge of the disengagement area near Zolote. The second occurred at 11:07 at a checkpoint of the armed formations on road T-0504 about 1.5km south-west of Molodizhne. Members of the armed formations cited “the SMM’s safety” on the first occasion and “orders from their superiors” on the second.

Additionally, earlier in the morning, at 09:06, at a checkpoint near the southern edge of the disengagement area near Zolote, members of the armed formations denied another SMM patrol passage inside the disengagement area citing “the SMM’s safety”. The patrol was to assist the SMM patrol crossing to non-government-controlled areas mentioned above.

In all instances, the SMM had preannounced its passage as a temporary, COVID-19 related courtesy. (See SMM [Spot Report 43/2021](#).)

Disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske⁵

Inside the **disengagement area near Stanytsia Luhanska** (government-controlled, 16km north-east of Luhansk), the Mission saw five 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).

While positioned at two locations near the **disengagement area near Zolote** (government-controlled, 60km west of Luhansk) the SMM heard two undetermined explosions and 25 bursts and shots of small-arms fire, all assessed as outside the area but within 5km of its periphery. It also saw, inside the area, about 100m south of the area’s northern edge, two soldiers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces carrying a roll of wire.

Near the checkpoint of the armed formations south of the disengagement area, the Mission saw four members of the armed formations (wearing armbands with “JCCC” written on them). The Mission again saw the seven previously observed containers located south of the area’s southern edge and inside the disengagement area. It saw that the previously reported road barriers across road T-1316, on the area’s southern edge, continued to be closed.

An SMM mini-UAV experienced GPS signal interference, assessed as caused by probable jamming, on two occasions, while flying over the **disengagement area near Petrivske** (non-government-controlled, 41km south of Donetsk) .*

Weapons that the SMM could not verify as withdrawn⁶

At two heavy weapons holding areas in government-controlled areas of Luhansk region
17 December

The SMM noted that eight self-propelled howitzers (2S1 *Gvozdika*, 122mm) and five tanks (T-64) were present. It last visited these sites on 25 August 2021.

At one permanent storage site in government-controlled areas of Luhansk region
17 December

The SMM noted that one towed mortar (PM-38, 120mm) was missing since its last visit to this site on 25 August 2021.

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.

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

The Mission saw one armoured reconnaissance vehicle in a government-controlled area in Donetsk region. (For further information, see the table below.)

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

⁶ 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.

Presence of mines near government-controlled Slavne and non-government-controlled Olenivka, and presence of mine hazard signs near government-controlled Novotroitske, all Donetsk region

On 14 December, about 4km east of Slavne (government-controlled, 26km south-west of Donetsk), an SMM mini-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) spotted seven anti-tank mines (previously reported) laid across a road leading east towards Olenivka (non-government-controlled, 23km south-west of Donetsk), assessed as not recently laid and as belonging to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. (For previous observations in the area, see [SMM Daily Report of 27 August 2021](#).)

About 400m west of Olenivka, the same UAV spotted seven anti-tank mines (previously reported) laid across a road leading west towards Slavne. About 80m further west on the same road, it spotted another 11 anti-tank mines (six of which were burned out), and about 120m further east on the same road, it spotted ten anti-tank mines (previously reported). All the aforementioned mines were assessed as not recently laid and as belonging to the armed formations. (For previous observations in the area, see [SMM Daily Report of 5 August 2021](#) and [SMM Daily Report of 20 April 2021](#)).

Also, in a field about 500m east of Olenivka, the same UAV spotted four anti-tank mines (not previously reported and not seen in imagery from 4 August 2021), assessed as belonging to the armed formations.

About 3km south-east of Novotroitske (government-controlled, 36km south-west of Donetsk), and about 2m east of road C-050563, the Mission observed two mine hazard signs (both not previously reported and assessed as recent): a yellow rectangular sign with a white skull and crossbones and pictures of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) (with “*Caution! Entry into this area is hazardous. Danger of Mines.*” written in Ukrainian), and a red rectangular one with a white skull and crossbones (with “*Stop Mines!*” written in both Ukrainian and Russian).

SMM facilitation of the operation and maintenance of critical civilian infrastructure

The Mission continued to facilitate the operation of the Donetsk Filtration Station (DFS) (15km north of Donetsk). While positioned at two locations near the DFS, the Mission heard eight undetermined explosions and two shots of small-arms fire, all assessed as within a 5km radius of the station.

The SMM also facilitated and monitored adherence to localized ceasefire to enable repairs to the sewage pipeline near Novoluhanske (government-controlled, 53km north-east of Donetsk) and transfer of funds from non-government- to government-controlled areas across the bridge in Shchastia (government-controlled, 20km north of Luhansk), reportedly related to water payments. At the time of the transfer, three preannounced SMM mini-UAV flights could not be conducted due to poor weather conditions and decreased visibility.

Situation at entry-exit checkpoints and corresponding checkpoints

In Donetsk region, the Mission observed that the entry-exit checkpoint (EECP) near Novotroitske (government-controlled, 36km south-west of Donetsk) and the corresponding checkpoint of the armed formations near Olenivka (non-government-controlled, 23km south-west of Donetsk) were open, with people queueing to travel in both directions.

In Luhansk region, the SMM observed that the 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 queuing to travel in both directions.

The Mission noted that the EECPs near Zolote and Shchastia (government-controlled, 20km north of Luhansk) were open, 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. Between the EECP near Zolote and the intersection between road T-1316 and the road leading east towards Zolote-4/Rodina (government-controlled, 62km west of Luhansk), the SMM observed 15 workers (men, between their thirties and forties) conducting construction work, some of them using heavy equipment, reportedly to construct new facilities.

Areas near the border outside government control⁷

While at a border crossing point near Uspenka (73km south-east of Donetsk) for about 60 minutes, the SMM observed 25 cars (including 15 with “DPR” plates), 17 covered cargo trucks (including six with “DPR” plates), one bus (with “DPR” plates) and 40 people (17 women and 22 men of mixed ages, and one child) entering Ukraine. At the same time, it saw 31 cars (including 15 with “DPR” plates), 24 covered cargo trucks (including 11 with “DPR” plates), as well as four buses and one minibus (all with “DPR” plates) exiting Ukraine.

The SMM also monitored areas close to the border with the Russian Federation near Nyzhnokrynske (non-government-controlled, 66km east of Donetsk), Serhiieve-Krynka (non-government-controlled, 69km east of Donetsk), Zhytenko (non-government-controlled, 70km east of Donetsk), Semenivske (non-government-controlled, 73km east of Donetsk), Hryhorivka (non-government-controlled, 75km east of Donetsk) and Manych (non-government-controlled, 76km east of Donetsk) and observed no change in the security situation.

The SMM continued monitoring in Kherson, Odessa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, 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 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 a rapid response to these violations. They have also agreed that the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) should contribute to such a 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 16 December 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.

Denial:

⁷ According to decisions in 2014 by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, operations are officially designated as suspended at these and other border crossing points located outside government control.

- At a checkpoint on the northern edge of Novoazovsk (non-government-controlled, 102km south-east of Donetsk), two visibly armed members of the armed formations denied the Mission passage east, south and west, citing "orders from superiors", thus preventing the SMM from visiting a heavy weapon holding area and a permanent storage site. While at the checkpoint, the Mission observed civilian traffic passing through.
- At a checkpoint on the eastern edge of Oleksandrivske (formerly Rozy Liuksemburh, non-government-controlled, 90km south-east of Donetsk), a visibly armed member of the armed formations [again](#) denied the SMM passage east, citing "ongoing training activities", thus also preventing the SMM from visiting the aforementioned heavy weapon holding area and a permanent storage site.

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.

Delay:

- At the EECP near Novotroitske ((government-controlled, 36km south-west of Donetsk), a visibly armed soldier of the Ukrainian Armed Forces allowed the Mission passage north towards its camera site near Berezove (government-controlled, 31km south-west of Donetsk), only after 95min of waiting, citing "lack of prior notification."

Other impediments:⁸

- SMM mini-UAVs experienced GPS signal interference, assessed as caused by probable jamming, during six flights: twice while flying over the disengagement area near Petrivske (non-government-controlled, 41km south of Donetsk) and once each while flying over areas near Petrivske, Styla (non-government-controlled, 34km south of Donetsk), Novotroitske and Olenivka (non-government-controlled, 23km south-west of Donetsk).

⁸ For cases of probable jamming and jamming mentioned in this section, the interference could have originated from anywhere within the radius of tens of kilometres from the UAVs' positions.

Table of weapons

Table of military and military-type presence in the security zone⁹

Date	No.	Type of weapon	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
17/12/2021	1	Armoured reconnaissance vehicle (BRDM-2)	Near Popasna (69km west of Luhansk)	Patrol

⁹ The hardware mentioned in this section is not proscribed by the provisions of the Minsk agreements on the withdrawal of weapons.

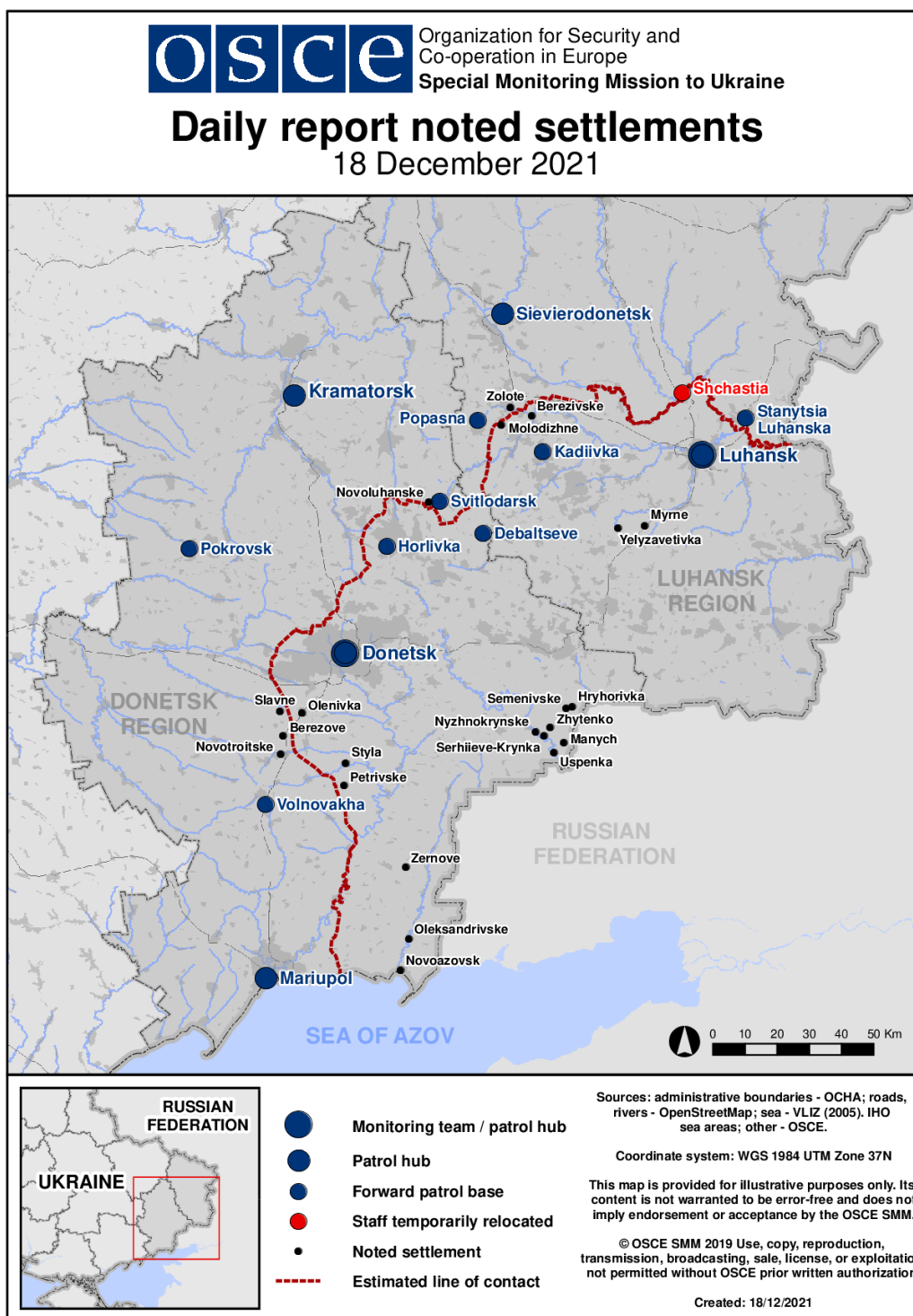
Table of ceasefire violations as of 16 December 2021¹⁰

SMM position	Event location	Means	No.	Observation	Description	Weapon	Date, time
SMM camera 1km SW of Shyrokyne (government-controlled, 100km S of Donetsk)	4-6km NNE	Recorded	1	Illumination flare	In vertical flight	N/K	16-Dec, 22:12
About 1km E of Holmivskiyi (non-government-controlled, 49km NE of Donetsk)	5-6km W	Heard	2	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 08:55-08:56
About 1.8km SSE of Kamianka (government-controlled, 20km N of Donetsk)	3-4km E	Heard	5	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 08:55
About 1km NW of the railway station in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km NE of Donetsk)	1-2km SW	Heard	2	Shot		Small arms	17-Dec, 10:24
	3-4km SW	Heard	3	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:46
Liubivka (non-government-controlled, 20km S of Donetsk)	3km NW	Heard	20	Burst		HMG	17-Dec, 10:55-10:57
About 600m SSW of Zernove (non-government-controlled, 70km S of Donetsk)	3-4km SSE	Heard	7	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:38-10:48
	1-3km SSE	Heard	37	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:50-11:10
	1-3km SSE	Heard	10	Burst		Small arms	17-Dec, 10:50-11:10
About 2.3km SE of Lebedynske (government-controlled, 99km S of Donetsk)	1-2km NE	Heard	1	Burst		Small arms	17-Dec, 13:15
About 1km SE of Oleksandrivske (formerly Rozy Liuksemburh, non-government-controlled, 90km SE of Donetsk)	4-5km NNE	Heard	13	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 13:20-13:40
W edge of Kadiivka (formerly Stakhanov, non-government-controlled, 50km W of Luhansk)	12-15km W	Heard	23	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	16-Dec, 21:10-21:31
Berezivske (non-government controlled, 53km NW of Luhansk)	0.8-1km W	Heard	25	Shot	Undetermined (assessed as outside the disengagement area near Zolote)	Small arms	17-Dec, 10:39-10:56
	15-17km S	Heard	9	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:39-10:56
	10-12km SE	Heard	4	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:39-10:56
Myrne (non-government-controlled, 28km south-west of Luhansk)	0.5-0.8km NW	Heard and saw	15	Explosion	Outgoing	Tank (type N/K)	17-Dec, 11:47
Molodizhne (non-government controlled, 63km NW of Luhansk)	15-17km SW	Heard	4	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:17-10:23
	12-15km S	Heard	1	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:17-10:23
	5-8km NNE	Heard	2	Explosion	Undetermined (assessed as outside the disengagement area near Zolote)	N/K	17-Dec, 10:25
SE outskirts of Molodizhne (non-government controlled, 63km NW of Luhansk)	10-15km SSW	Heard	12	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 11:05-11:16
NNW edge of Sofiiivskiyi (non-government controlled, 51km SW of Luhansk)	30-50km SW	Heard	12	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 11:13-11:20
	5km ENE	Heard	30	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:23-10:24
	5km WNW	Heard	8	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:26-10:27

¹⁰ 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.

Yelyzavetivka (non-government-controlled, 35km south-west of Luhansk)	5km ENE	Heard	6	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:40
	5km WNW	Heard	6	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:41
	5km ENE	Heard	5	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:26
	5km WNW	Heard	4	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:23
	5km ENE	Heard	1	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:43
	5km WNW	Heard	1	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	17-Dec, 10:37
	3-5km ENE	Heard	1	Burst		HMG	17-Dec, 10:44

Map of Donetsk and Luhansk regions¹¹



¹¹ 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).