

# THEMATIC REPORT

RESTRICTIONS TO THE SMM'S FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND  
OTHER IMPEDIMENTS TO THE FULFILMENT OF ITS MANDATE

January – June 2021

December 2021

Published by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

© OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine 2021

All rights reserved. The contents of this publication may be freely used and copied for non-commercial purposes, provided that any such reproduction is accompanied by an acknowledgement of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine as the source.

Available electronically in English, Ukrainian and Russian at:

[www.osce.org/ukraine-smm](http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Note: the deterioration of the SMM's freedom of movement in October-December 2021</i>	2
Executive summary	3
Introduction and methodology	4
Roles and responsibilities of the signatories of the Minsk agreements	5
Contribution of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC)	5
Categories of restrictions	6
The SMM's freedom of movement during the COVID-19 pandemic	6
Living and working during the pandemic	7
Crossing into non-government-controlled areas	8
Overview of restrictions	10
Denied, delayed and conditional access	13
Restrictions at checkpoints	13
Areas near the border outside government control	15
Gunfire and explosions near SMM patrols	16
Unmanned aerial vehicles	16
Targeting of UAVs by gunfire	17
GPS signal interference	19
SMM cameras	22
Disengagement areas	24
Impediments related to human dimension monitoring	24
Restrictions related to monitoring of withdrawal of weapons	25
Mines, UXO and other explosive objects	26
Conclusions	27
Annex 1: Maps	29
Annex 2: Table of instances of explosions and gunfire near the SMM	35
Annex 3: Table of incidents involving weapons aimed at SMM mini- and mid-range UAVs	36

## **Note: the deterioration of the SMM's freedom of movement in October-December 2021**

This report covers the period between 1 January and 30 June 2021. The negative trends identified in it continued during the second half of the year and they will be the subject of successive thematic reports. However, the SMM felt obliged to highlight also in this report that after the 13 October incident, the armed formations in Luhansk region began to prevent the SMM's movement across the contact line not only for operational purposes, but also for logistical, administrative and personnel movements. This level of limitations started to undermine the sustainability of the SMM's presence in those areas.

All these freedom of movement (FoM) restrictions have further narrowed the corridor for the SMM's operations in eastern Ukraine.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine's (SMM) unimpeded, unrestricted and unconditional FoM is critical to the implementation of its mandate** as enshrined in Permanent Council (PC) Decision No. 1117 of 21 March 2014, and agreed by the 57 participating States of the OSCE. The Decision obliges the SMM to report on any restrictions of its FoM or other impediments to fulfilment of its mandate.

**In the first half of 2021, the SMM's restricted operational posture in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic continued**, albeit with a higher number of patrols compared to the second half of 2020.

**In absolute numbers, the SMM faced more restrictions to its FoM and more impediments to the fulfilment of its mandate than in the previous six months**, despite fewer patrols possible in areas further away from the contact line and where the SMM has experienced longstanding and persistent restrictions.

**The pattern of FoM restrictions previously observed and reported by the SMM persisted, overwhelmingly in non-government-controlled areas (88 per cent).** These chronic restrictions and measures significantly limited the SMM's ability to implement its mandate, in contravention of PC Decision No. 1117.

**Restrictions imposed following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic again critically impacted the Mission.** Its movements across the contact line into non-government-controlled areas continued to be denied, delayed, or conditioned, which undermined the Mission's unity in operational and administrative terms. The armed formations continued to impose these restrictions despite the SMM's well-known, stringent pandemic mitigation measures.

**SMM unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) faced unprecedented levels of GPS signal interference and higher levels of targeting by gunfire.** This further limited the SMM's monitoring capability and put Mission members and technological assets at risk. Novel blanket jamming of the long-range UAVs led to temporary suspension of operations, critical for ensuring comprehensive monitoring in eastern Ukraine.

**Restrictions again considerably limited the SMM's monitoring in areas outside government control near the border with the Russian Federation.** The Mission continued its efforts to alleviate the situation, but its observations in these areas could not be categorized as unconditional.

Despite repeated requests by the Mission, by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the SMM's Chief Monitor's addresses to the OSCE PC, there was no alleviation of restrictions.

Mines continued to restrict the Mission's FoM on both sides of the contact line. While many of those reported for the first time were assessed as not recently laid, their presence or signs of their presence remained an important reminder of the dangers facing the civilian population and SMM staff.

The SMM continued to be impeded in establishing and reporting facts following specific incidents and reports of incidents in non-government-controlled areas. Demands imposed by those in control, which the Mission refused, reduced its effectiveness when corroborating civilian casualties and damage to civilian property or infrastructure.

## INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The report provides an update on the FoM restrictions and other impediments faced by the SMM between 1 January and 30 June 2021 (a period of 181 days). The SMM's observations are compared to those in the immediately preceding period of similar length (from 1 July and 31 December 2020, or 184 days). The previous report, which covered the second half of 2020, was published in April 2021.<sup>1</sup>

The SMM's unimpeded, unrestricted, and unconditional freedom of movement is critical to the implementation of its mandated tasks, as set out by [OSCE PC Decision No. 1117](#), and to the effective execution of the role stipulated in the Protocol and Memorandum of September 2014 and in the Minsk Package of Measures of February 2015 as well as its Addendum of September 2015, and also stated in the Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) on Mine Action of March 2016 and the [Framework Decision of Disengagement of Forces and Hardware](#) of 21 September 2016.

In spite of the above-mentioned commitments, the Mission's FoM was again limited by chronic restrictions in non-government-controlled areas, in particular in southern parts of Donetsk region, as well as in areas near the border outside government control. In the first half of 2021, the corridor for Mission operations narrowed further. This included unabated restrictions imposed by the armed formations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which undermined the SMM's unity; increased jamming of the SMM's UAVs, which included, for the first time, blanket jamming of the long-range UAVs at its base in Stepanivka; and the gradual loss of the Mis-

sion's arterial routes caused by the proliferation of barriers and checkpoints, contamination with mines/unexploded ordnance (UXO) and other obstacles, and the steady increase in document checks and associated bureaucratisation. Altogether, these developments continued to substantively and negatively affect the Mission's work, as well as undermined its safety.

The Mission reiterates that unrestricted and unconditional access to all areas is essential to ensuring effective monitoring and reporting of the security situation, its impact on civilians, the ceasefire, withdrawal of weapons, demining, disengagement, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The mandate obliges the SMM to report on each restriction of its freedom of movement and other impediments to fulfilment of its mandate. The SMM's FoM is neither subject to negotiation, nor can it be rendered conditional by any of the actors on the ground. Any restriction or impediment encountered by the Mission calls into question the decision of the OSCE PC, as well as the commitments by the signatories of the Minsk agreements.

Specifically, the report highlights the effects of:

- Restrictions and other impediments on the SMM's ability to monitor the security situation and implement its mandated tasks;
- Ongoing restrictions imposed on the Mission by the armed formations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Increasing impediments in using UAVs by the SMM;

---

<sup>1</sup> See SMM Thematic Reports: *Restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement and other impediments to fulfilment of its mandate (July – December 2020)* and *(January – June 2020)*.

- Restrictions faced in monitoring areas near the border outside of government control;
- Limitations to the operation of SMM cameras;
- Restrictions in disengagement areas;
- Constraints faced when following reports of incidents in order to establish facts;
- Restrictions faced in monitoring the withdrawal of heavy weapons;
- The presence and threat of mines, UXO and other explosive objects.

Operational limitations to the SMM's presence, patrolling, and UAV flights caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had an effect on the absolute numbers of FoM instances. To mitigate this obstacle, as in the previous report, the methodology applied in this report uses both numbers and percentages to compare the restrictions in the reporting period to those in the previous six months, and to compare the numbers and percentages to the number of patrols and UAV flights.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SIGNATORIES OF THE MINSK AGREEMENTS

### *The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine*

The Mission's mandate specifies that it shall have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine and tasks the SMM with reporting on any restrictions to its FoM or other impediments to the fulfilment of its mandate. Unrestricted and unconditional access to all areas is essential to ensure effective monitoring and reporting of the security situation, its impact on civilians, the ceasefire, withdrawal of weapons, demining, disengagement, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The signatories of the Addendum to the Package of Measures of 2015 and the Framework Decision on Disengagement of Forces and Hardware of 2016 agreed that the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the armed formations should ensure secure and safe access for the SMM and rapid response to specific violations reported by the Mission. Moreover, in the Protocol and Memorandum of September 2014 and the Package of Measures of February 2015 the signatories agreed to ensure monitoring and verification by the OSCE of the regime of non-use of weapons, the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

## CONTRIBUTION OF THE JOINT CENTRE FOR CONTROL AND CO-ORDINATION (JCCC)

After the withdrawal of the Russian Federation Armed Forces officers from the JCCC in December 2017, the SMM Liaison Team continued to request the assistance of the Ukrainian side of the JCCC to ensure a rapid response to impediments to the Mission's monitoring, as stipulated by the signatories of the Addendum and the Framework Decision. While there is no agreement between the

sides on the ground on the current composition of the JCCC, the SMM continued to interact with its local interlocutors to ensure their rapid response to impediments.

The SMM Liaison Team communicates with the sides on the ground to facilitate the arrangement of security guarantees which are necessary to enable essential maintenance

and repairs of civilian infrastructure without ceasefire violations. The work of the Liaison Team also enables indirect and informal

channels of communication, including on issues encountered by SMM patrols on the ground, such as FoM restrictions.

## CATEGORIES OF RESTRICTIONS

The SMM categorizes freedom of movement restrictions as the following types:

**Denial of access:** when the Mission is prevented from visiting an area of interest, including areas near the international border, or when it is prevented from following its planned patrol route and not allowed to pass through a checkpoint or cross the contact line.

**Conditional access:** when the Mission is granted access to an area only after accepting certain conditions, such as being escorted or presenting documents (e.g. the national passports of SMM monitors).

**Delay:** when the Mission faces waiting times, for instance at checkpoints, while those responsible check the SMM's documents, note vehicle licence plate numbers or seek permission from their superiors. These are reported

as FoM restrictions on occasions when the waiting time was deemed longer than reasonable and unduly limited the SMM's access.

**Other impediments:** a form of denied access reported when the SMM's means of technical monitoring are obstructed in any way, for example by jamming of or gunfire aimed at its UAVs.

Furthermore, the Mission also encounters impediments to its efforts in establishing and reporting facts following specific incidents and reports of incidents in certain locations by civilian interlocutors, including as a result of reluctance to engage with the SMM, especially due to "orders" or "lack of permission" from those in control. This type of restriction affects SMM human dimension monitoring in particular.

## THE SMM'S FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Restrictions to the Mission's freedom of movement imposed by the armed formations in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have continued. They constitute a systematic violation of the Mission's mandated safe and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine.

Such restrictions imposed by the armed formations when crossing the contact line again negatively impacted the SMM's operations and ability to monitor. This imbalance in the monitoring activities in the three areas (government-controlled areas, non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region and non-

government-controlled areas of Donetsk region) persisted, undermining the Mission's unity and efficiency. It also meant that the SMM's coverage of some areas was limited, as tasking was prioritised based on available resources.

These restrictions degrade the SMM's ability to implement its mandate and are in contravention of PC Decision No. 1117 of 21 March 2014 agreed to by the 57 participating States of the OSCE.



## Living and working during the pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mission continued implementing stringent mitigation measures, adapting its operational posture to minimise contamination or transmission of COVID-19 to its personnel and the local communities. In line with its strict measures, the SMM limited its in-person presence on patrols and at its office premises throughout Ukraine. The Mission also enhanced its focus on remote observation (by long-range, mid-range and mini-UAVs, and by cameras) in the context of the pandemic.

Following the improving epidemiological situation during spring of 2021, the Mission gradually increased the number of patrols country-wide. Overall, though the staffing levels were still reduced, the countrywide patrol numbers increased by 31 per cent (from 6,672 to 8,141) compared to the previous reporting period, including an increase of 28 per cent (from 5,112 to 6,539) in eastern Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> That means that the average number of daily patrols increased from about 40 in the latter half of 2020 to about 60 in the first half of 2021. However, this number is still far from the average of about 90 patrols per day in the pre-COVID-19 times. The SMM retained its ability to observe the security dynamic in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, reflected in the reporting of ceasefire violations. Twice the number of ceasefire violations were recorded, compared with the previous six months (17,700 in July-December 2020 and 35,433 in January-June 2021).<sup>3</sup> However, despite the increase in the number of patrols, the Mission was still not able to fully

cover all of its operational commitments at normal levels and had to continue to prioritize its most important tasks.

For the SMM's Monitoring Teams in eastern Ukraine, this meant a focus on the security situation along the contact line, the disengagement areas, corroboration of civilian casualties, civilian freedom of movement at the contact line and the facilitation of repairs to and maintenance of civilian infrastructure. Practical limitations described above led to fewer patrols being deployed to areas further away from the contact line and to less frequent opportunities for the SMM to travel to traditionally difficult-to-access areas. Furthermore, the need to prioritize only allowed for irregular monitoring of areas near the border with the Russian Federation that are outside government control. (See also *Annex 1: Map 1 - SMM patrol routes* and *Map 2 - The Mission's presence in Donetsk and Luhansk regions*).

Throughout Ukraine, the SMM's mitigating measures also continued to limit the Mission's ability to meet interlocutors, including medical staff to corroborate reports of casualties, and monitor events in person. The Mission continued to employ alternative means of monitoring and collecting data (via tele- and videoconferences, observing various events through live internet streaming and contacting interlocutors by telephone, when establishing and reporting facts following specific incidents and reports of incidents) but continued to face difficulties.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In Donetsk region, the total number of patrols increased by 21 per cent (from 2,588 to 3,131), including an increase of 24 per cent (from 1,727 to 2,145) in the number of patrols conducted in government-controlled areas, and a 14 per cent increase (from 861 to 986) in the number of patrols in non-government-controlled areas of the region. In Luhansk region, the total number of patrols increased by 34 per cent (from 2,305 to 3,098), including a four-fold increase (from 368 to 1,817) in the number of patrols conducted in government-controlled areas. In non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region, the number of patrols decreased by about four per cent (from 1,337 to 1,281).

<sup>3</sup> During the previous reporting period, lower number of ceasefire violations was assessed as caused by ceasefire orders containing measures to strengthen the ceasefire which were issued and enacted, following the agreement reached on 22 July 2020 in the Trilateral Contact Group. During August, September and October 2020, the Mission was registering only a few hundred of ceasefire violations monthly. Since November 2020, however, it has recorded an increase in ceasefire violations and gradual erosion of the effects of the measures to strengthen the ceasefire. During the reporting period the security situation deteriorated further, resulting in higher number of recorded violations.

<sup>4</sup> Such events include public protests, political debates and court hearings.

## **Crossing into non-government-controlled areas**

One of the main operational challenges were the continued restrictions at checkpoints of the armed formations along existing crossing routes on the contact line when SMM patrols attempted to cross into non-government-controlled areas.<sup>5</sup> These restrictions led to the Mission's inability to act as a single unit, effectively fragmenting it into three operational entities: government-controlled areas, non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region, and non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk region

These limitations were partially alleviated by the summer of 2020. However, crossing into non-government-controlled areas remained possible in a limited number of cases upon prior notification, presentation of medical certificates confirming negative COVID-19 test results, and disinfection of the exterior of SMM vehicles. (See Map 1: Contact line official crossing routes). It was also only possible via selected checkpoints of the armed formations, e.g. only two of four checkpoints in Donetsk region. Even with these requirements in place, the Mission was not allowed to cross the contact line in Donetsk region in almost ten per cent of cases. Five denials of access occurred at the checkpoint near Olenivka, and three at the checkpoint near

Kreminets. On all these occasions, the Mission was requested to comply with conditions, i.e. inspection of its vehicles or trailers, which it refused, and was therefore not allowed to pass. During the last six months of 2020, the SMM was allowed to cross the contact line in Donetsk region on 81 per cent of attempts (due to similar request to comply). The Mission did not face such restrictions when it tried to cross in Luhansk region, as in the previous reporting period.

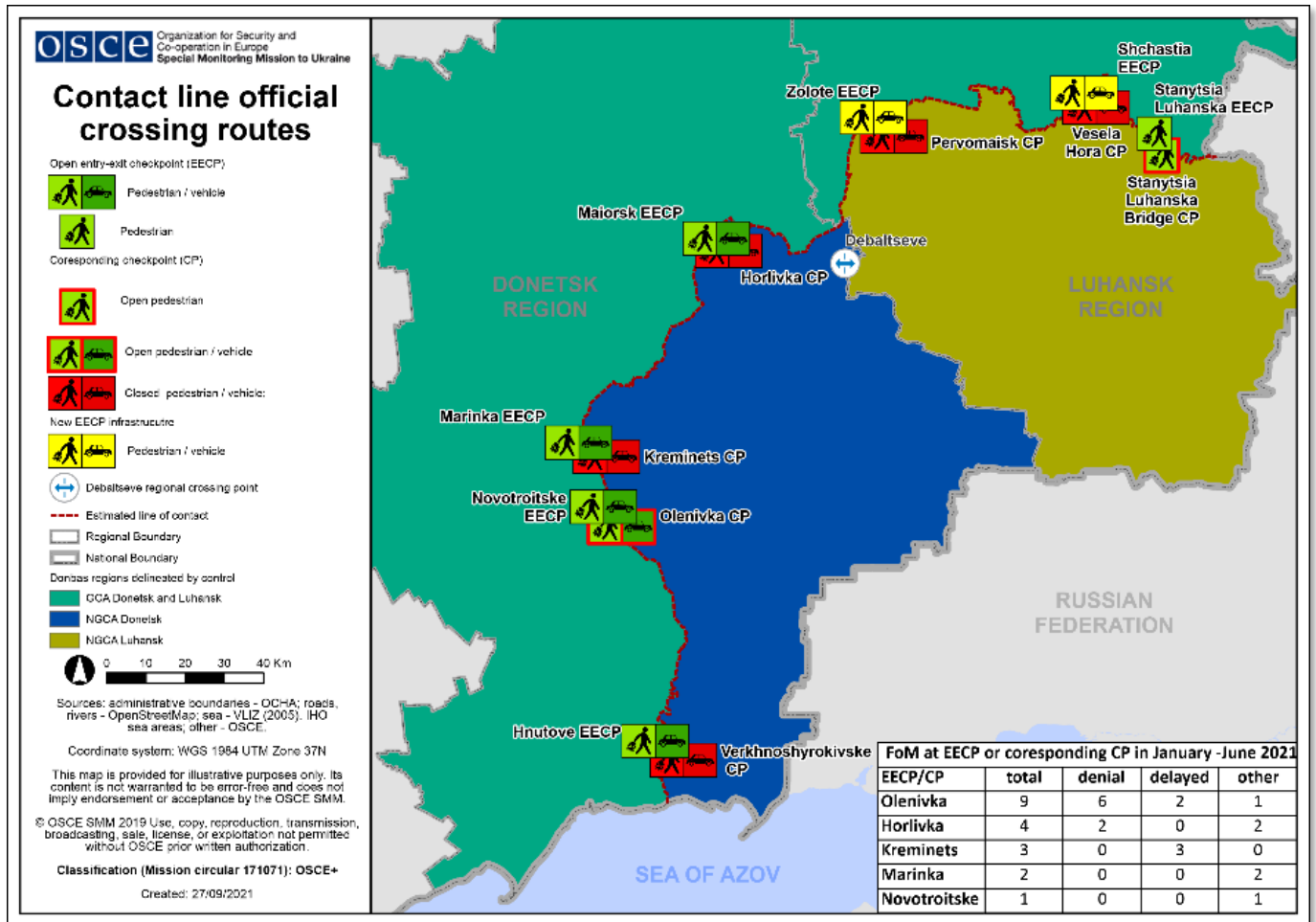
The imposition of such conditional access by members of the armed formations was again concerning. While the SMM has been willing to adhere to sanitary measures in the context of the pandemic, it again highlights that its mandate grants unimpeded, unrestricted and unconditional FoM, and notes that in government-controlled areas the Mission is exempted from such measures.

The combined effect of such restrictions and closures of the armed formations' checkpoints was pronounced. They limited Monitoring Teams' access to their area of operations and ability to monitor the security situation, caused staffing shortages, and impaired administrative and logistical support to the Mission in non-government-controlled areas. All of this resulted in a forced imbalance of monitoring activities in the three areas, undermining the Mission's efficiency.

---

<sup>5</sup> The Mission began facing repeated denials when attempting to cross into non-government-controlled areas at checkpoints of the armed formations in Donetsk region on 21 March 2020 and Luhansk region on 23 March 2020. See SMM Thematic Reports: *Restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement and other impediments to the fulfilment of its mandate (July – December 2020)* and *(January – June 2020)*.

# Map 1: Contact line official crossing routes



## OVERVIEW OF RESTRICTIONS

Between 1 January and 30 June 2021, four per cent of patrols (i.e. 278 out of 6,229 patrols) in government- and non-government-controlled areas Donetsk and Luhansk regions faced restrictions. This represents a significant increase in absolute numbers compared to the previous six months. In relative terms, the proportion of patrols facing restrictions was similar to the previous six months, when four per cent of them recorded restrictions (193 out of 5,112 patrols).

The substantive and enduring FoM restrictions highlighted in previous thematic reports were compounded by new and worrying trends. Specifically, the Mission was faced with:

- Continuing restrictions while attempting to cross into non-government-controlled areas at checkpoints of the armed formations along existing crossing routes on the contact line imposed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020;
- Further incremental loss of key access routes, owing to the proliferation of checkpoints and restrictions faced at them;
- Lack of access to non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region, including areas near the border with the Russian Federation, and areas near the border in non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region;
- Explosions and gunfire near SMM patrols that put its members and assets at risk;
- Further significant deterioration in the operational environment for all types of SMM UAVs, essential for the Mission's tasks;
- An inadequate number of SMM cameras and difficulties to access the existing ones for maintenance in non-government-controlled areas;

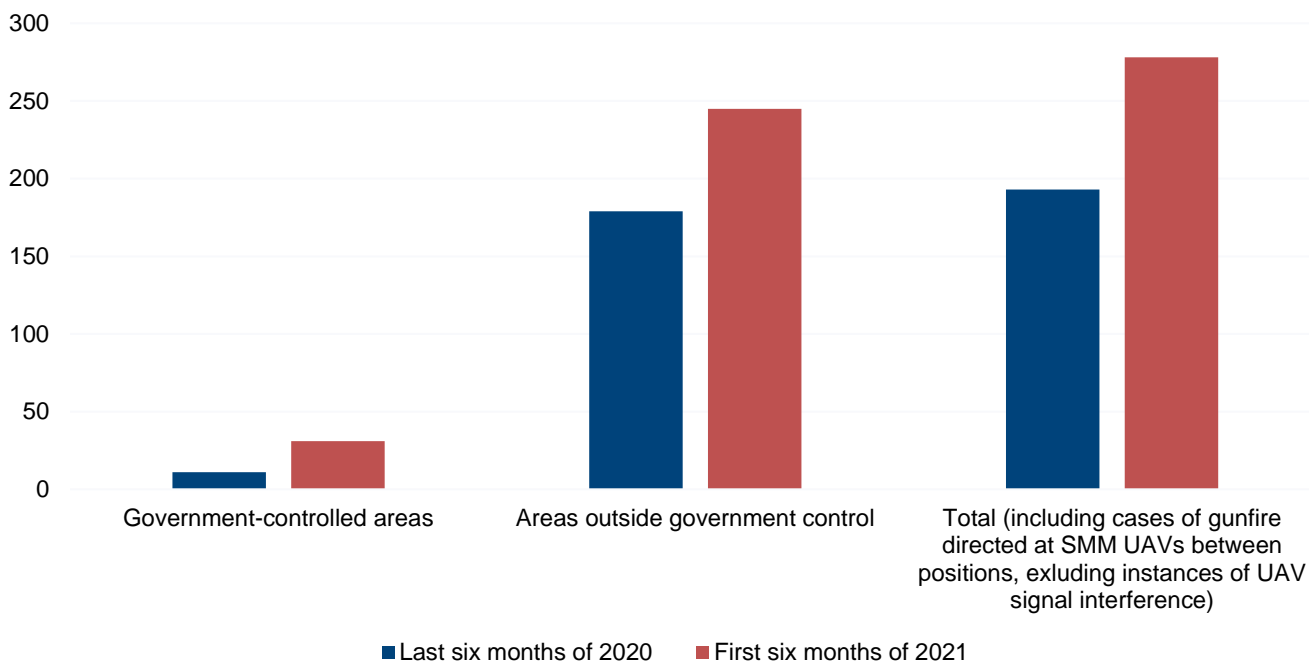
- Restrictions to monitoring the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske;
- Impediments in establishing and reporting facts following specific incidents and reports of incidents by civilian interlocutors in non-government controlled areas;
- An impeded ability to monitor withdrawal of weapons due to restrictions when accessing weapons storage sites;
- The continued presence and threat of mines, UXO and other explosive objects;
- Continued impediments related to obtaining security guarantees for establishing FPBs in non-government-controlled areas.

Overall, 88 per cent of restrictions (245 of 278 cases) experienced by patrols occurred in non-government-controlled areas, echoing previous trends. The remainder occurred in government-controlled areas. (See also *Annex 1: Map 3 - SMM FoM locations*).

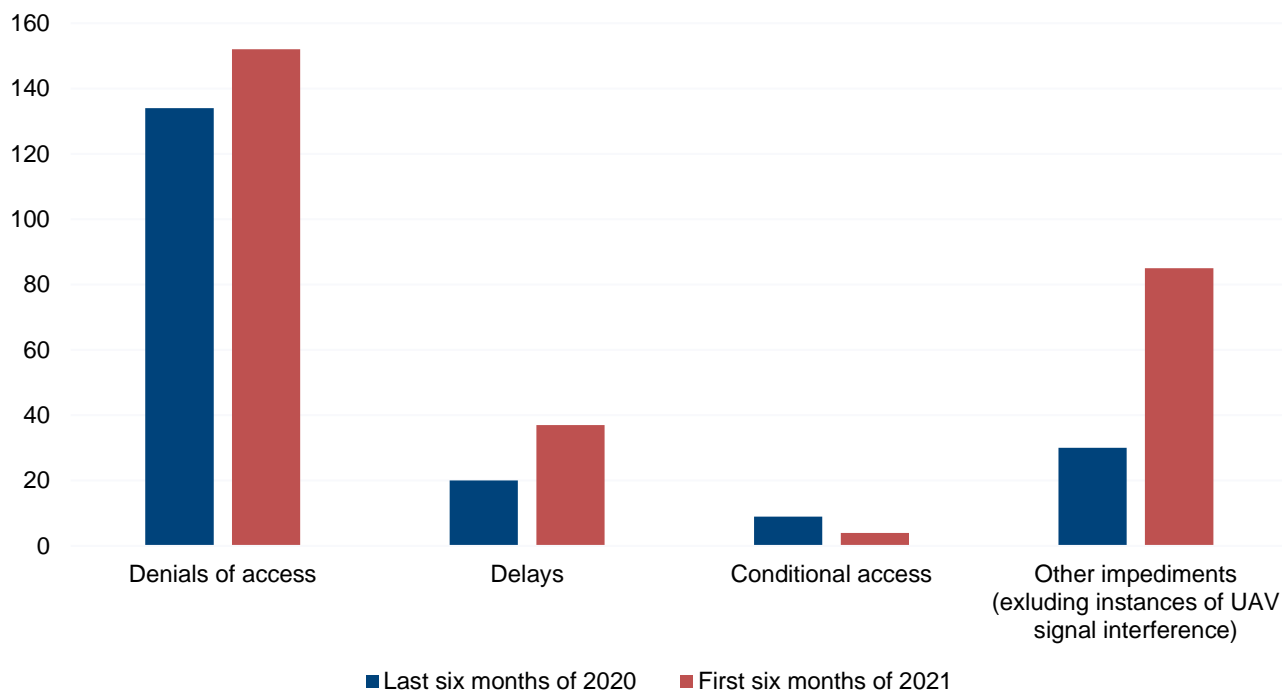
*Denials of access* made up 55 per cent of all restrictions on both sides of the contact line (152 of 278 cases). A total of 13 per cent (37 of 278 instances) of all restrictions were cases of *delayed access*. The SMM experienced *conditional access* on four occasions.

In addition, in a novel and disturbing trend that affected the Mission on both sides of the contact line, starting in early 2021, SMM UAVs experienced many more instances of signal interference, which the Mission assessed as probable jamming or jamming. This occurred on 960 occasions (299 such instances in the second half of 2020). Due to the inability to assess if jamming originated from government-controlled or non-government-controlled areas, such instances are not categorized by control throughout this report.

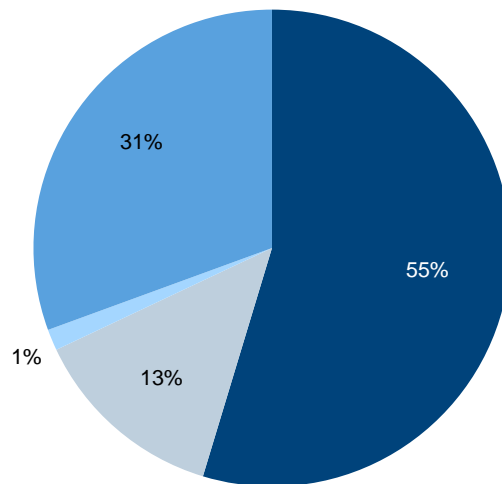
**Chart 1: Freedom of movement restrictions by area for the last six months of 2020 and the first six months of 2021**



**Chart 2: Freedom of movement restrictions by category for the last six months of 2020 and the first six months of 2021**

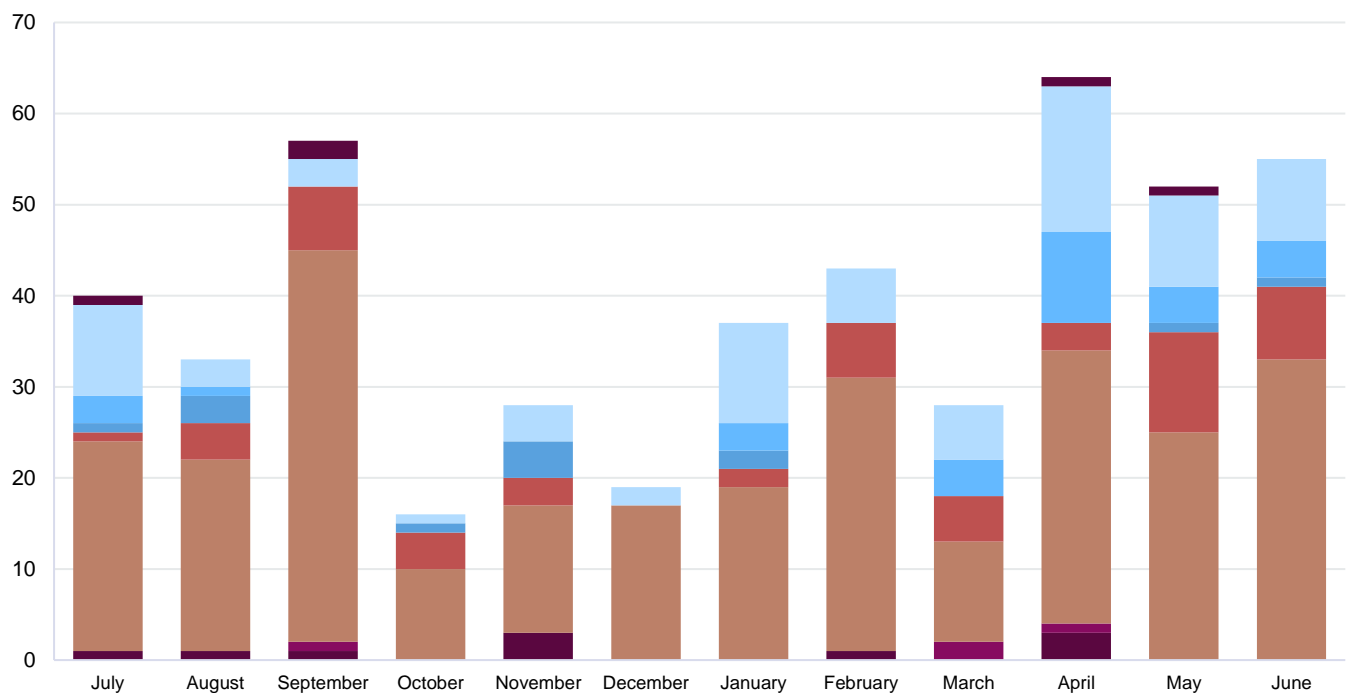


**Chart 3: Categories of restrictions, 1 January - 30 June 2021**



■ Denial of access   ■ Delay   ■ Conditional access   ■ Other impediments (excluding UAV signal interference)

**Chart 4: Freedom of movement restrictions, 1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021**



■ Other impediments between positions (excl. signal interference)  
 ■ Other impediments in areas outside government control (excl. signal interference)  
 ■ Other impediments in government-controlled areas (excl. signal interference)  
 ■ Conditional in areas outside government control  
 ■ Conditional in government-controlled areas  
 ■ Delay in areas outside government control  
 ■ Denial in areas outside government control  
 ■ Delay in government-controlled areas  
 ■ Denial in government-controlled areas

## Denied, delayed and conditional access

### *Denials of access*

Denials of access made up 55 per cent of all restrictions (152 of 278 cases), less in percentage terms but double the number of cases compared to the previous reporting period (69 per cent of all restrictions, 134 cases). Four of these 152 denials of access happened in government-controlled areas (all in Donetsk region), while 102 and 46 occurred in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, respectively.<sup>6</sup>

The percentage of denials of access in non-government-controlled areas was 60 per cent (148 of 245 instances).<sup>7</sup> This echoes an established trend. In the previous 184 days, 93 per cent of all restrictions (179 cases) happened in non-government-controlled areas, of which 66 per cent of total restrictions (128 instances) were denials of access.

### *Delayed and conditional access*

Thirteen per cent (37 of 278 occasions) of all restrictions experienced by the Mission were cases of delayed access, representing almost double the number but similar percentage compared to the previous 184 days (20 cases, ten per cent). Of these, two were recorded in government-controlled areas of Donetsk region, 33 in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk region and two in a non-government-controlled area of Luhansk region.

The Mission's freedom of movement was conditioned on four occasions, all at checkpoints

in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk region (compared to nine such occasions in the previous 184 days). Two of those instances occurred in southern Donetsk region. In three instances, SMM patrols were followed by members of the armed formations during their movement. Such restrictions were imposed on SMM patrols at checkpoints near Staromykhailivka, Donetsk city, and Starolaspa. In one instance, an SMM patrol was only allowed to proceed in one direction.<sup>8</sup>

The data above shows that all categories of FoM restrictions are most commonly encountered in non-government controlled areas of Donetsk region. This trend, combined with difficulty in corroborating information with civilian interlocutors (see below), had a significant impact on the ability of the Mission to monitor the security situation comprehensively in these areas. (See also *Annex 1: Map 3 - SMM FoM locations*).

## Restrictions at checkpoints

Also in line with previous trends, almost all FoM restrictions (122 of 127) occurred at checkpoints of the armed formations in Donetsk region. Three – all denials – occurred at a checkpoint of the armed formations in Diakove, Luhansk region, in areas near the border.

A similar trend was observed in the previous 184 days, when almost all FoM restrictions at checkpoints (116 of 120) occurred in non-government-controlled areas. Most of these restrictions constituted denials, and the majority (104 of 116 cases) was recorded in Donetsk region.

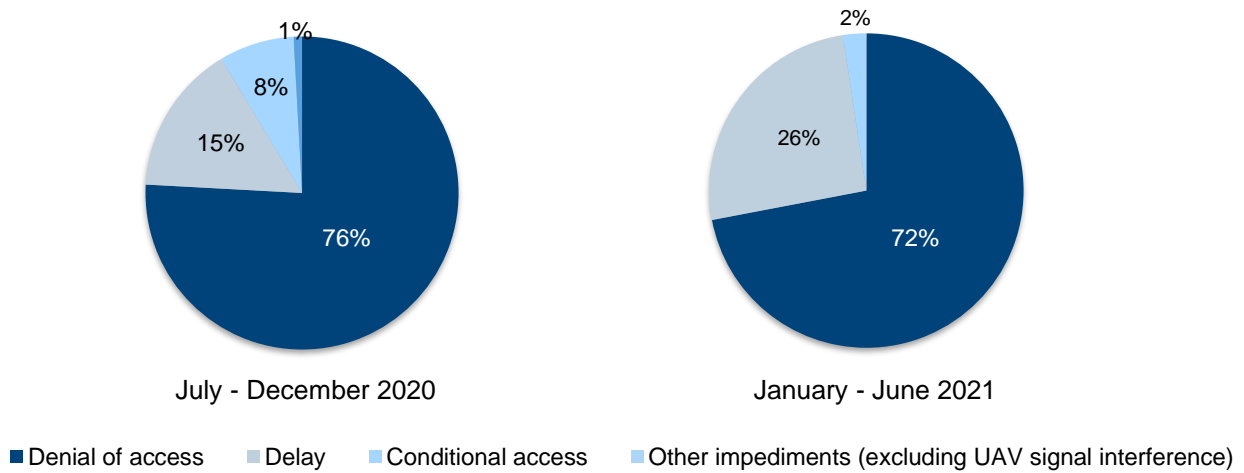
---

<sup>6</sup> In the previous reporting period, the Mission also experienced restrictions four times at a checkpoint near Debaltsevo on the boundary line between non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the context of COVID-19 quarantine measures.

<sup>7</sup> For such restrictions encountered on a regular basis, see SMM Daily Reports.

<sup>8</sup> See SMM Daily Reports of 4 January, 25 January, 11 May and 7 June 2021.

## Chart 5: Restrictions at checkpoints of the armed formations, July 2020 to June 2021



### Restrictions in non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region

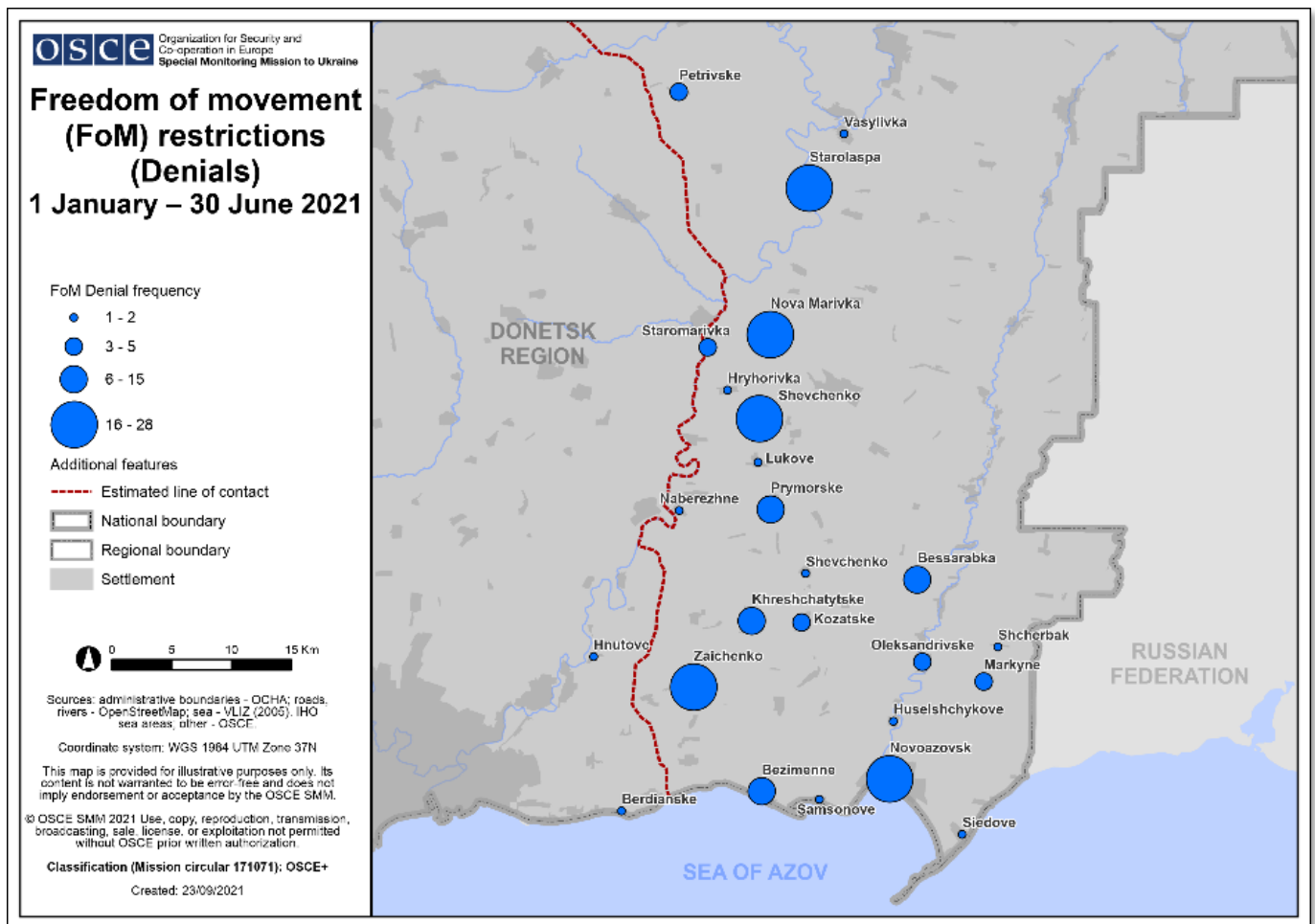
Systematic FoM restrictions when attempting to access non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region, a trend well evidenced in previous thematic reports, continued. Once again, 61 per cent of all patrols deployed in these areas faced restrictions (i.e. 85 times during 139 patrols). Such restrictions impacted not only SMM monitoring of areas near the border, but also monitoring of the withdrawal of weapons and other hardware from these areas, including in the zone where deployment of heavy armaments and military equipment is further proscribed according to Point 5 of the Memorandum of 19 September 2014 (see below).

Seventy-nine of these FoM restrictions in the southern part of the region occurred at 13 checkpoints. Specifically, the SMM faced restrictions on 18 occasions near Nova Marivka, 15 of which were denials of access; on 11 occasions near Zaichenko, nine of which were denials of access; on nine occasions near Starolaspa, eight of which were denials of access; and on eight occasions near Shevchenko, seven of which were denials of access. The checkpoint near non-government-controlled Verkhnoшыrokiyske (formerly Oktiabr) remained closed during the entire reporting period (and since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic).<sup>9</sup> (See *Map 2: FoM restrictions (denials) in non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region*, below).

<sup>9</sup> The Mission's passage through the checkpoint of the armed formations near Verkhnoшыrokiyske (which is the corresponding checkpoint to the entry-exit checkpoint near government-controlled Hnutove) is of key importance in accessing non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region. From Verkhnoшыrokiyske, the SMM can access settlements in the northern vicinity of the checkpoint, in the east towards areas along the international border not under government control and in the south towards the Sea of Azov.



## Map 2: Freedom of movement (FoM) restrictions (Denials) in southern Donetsk region (1 January – 30 June 2021)



### Areas near the border outside government control

The SMM's comprehensive monitoring and reporting mandate by definition includes areas near the sections of the border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation that are currently not under the control of the government. The Mission thus requires safe and secure access to all areas near this international border. Nonetheless, frequent FoM restrictions and impediments (signal interference) when trying to access such areas continued.

The SMM dispatched 29 per cent more patrols (i.e. 206 in total - 115 in Donetsk and 91

in Luhansk) to border areas outside government control, including to border crossing points.<sup>10</sup> At least three patrols were deployed per week in total. In the previous reporting period, there were 160 such visits (105 in Donetsk and 55 in Luhansk regions).

In Donetsk region, the Mission again faced FoM restrictions when monitoring areas near the border in southern parts of the region. For example, the SMM was only occasionally able to reach the border crossing point near Novoazovsk as well as surrounding areas due to chronic restrictions the Mission faced *en route* (see *Restrictions at checkpoints in non-gov-*

<sup>10</sup>According to decisions in 2014 by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, operations are suspended at these and other border crossing points located outside government control.

ernment-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region above). The Mission's ability to reach these areas was also affected by the closure of the Hnutove-Verkhnohyrokiwske crossing route.<sup>11</sup> On one of the eight occasions when the SMM was able to reach the border crossing point, its patrol was denied access.

In Luhansk region, the Mission faced FoM restrictions during 45 per cent of visits (41 of 91) to areas near the border, including at border crossing points, all of which were denials of access. In the previous reporting period, it experienced such restrictions during 58 per cent of visits (32 of 55 instances). Most of these restrictions continued to persist near border crossing points including near Voznesenivka (in 23 instances, including 11 at a railway station nearby), Izvaryne (in 11 instances) and Dovzhanske (in four instances).

From 1 January to 30 June 2021, 29 long-range UAV flights (32 during the previous reporting period) and 21 mini-UAV flights (eight during the previous reporting period) were conducted over areas near the border outside government control. Almost all long-range UAV flights in those areas (25 out of the total of 29) experienced GPS signal interference (see also the section on *Unmanned Aerial Vehicles* below).

Overall, the Mission's observations in these areas were again limited. They were compounded by long travel times, particularly on routes traversing several checkpoints, poor road and weather conditions, and limited daylight hours, predominantly during the winter months. Since early 2015, the SMM has pursued efforts to enhance its ability to monitor these areas by opening FPBs in settlements near the border. This step would alleviate the

operational challenges by reducing driving time for ground patrols to reach key areas, thereby enhancing the number of daylight hours available for monitoring, including the employment of patrol-launched UAVs for longer periods during the day. During the reporting period, the SMM achieved no progress on the issue. The opening of FPBs was again precluded by the lack of security guarantees from those in control in non-government-controlled areas.

As a measure to partially compensate for the lack of such FPBs, the Mission continued deploying patrols in Donetsk region with an overnight stay in areas closer to the border. However, no suitable accommodation was found in non-government-controlled areas in Luhansk region or in southern Donetsk region, also as a result of the lack of suitable premises and the persistent refusal of proprietors to accommodate the SMM.

## **Gunfire and explosions near SMM patrols**

Explosions or gunfire again occurred in close vicinity of SMM patrols, putting Mission members and assets at risk. Six such serious security incidents (three in government-controlled and three non-government-controlled areas) took place during the reporting period, in comparison to two (once each in government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas) in the previous 184 days.

## **Unmanned aerial vehicles**

The SMM's UAVs are an inseparable part of the Mission's operational infrastructure; as such, they are also protected by the provisions of OSCE PC Decision No. 1117.

---

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 10

The Mission operates three types of UAVs: long-range, mid-range and short-range (or mini-UAVs). The Mission enhanced its focus on remote observation in the context of the pandemic. Overall, within the reporting period, the SMM conducted 43 per cent more UAV flights than in the previous 184 days (i.e. 2,286 in comparison to 1,603).<sup>12</sup> These platforms had a key role in complementing observations from ground patrols which enabled the Mission to observe more violations of the Minsk agreements. Footage from UAVs revealed 67 percent of all weapons in violation of withdrawal lines, and often spotted the presence of mines and trenches.

As of late March 2021, increased levels of signal interference affected all SMM UAV platforms, despite agreements explicitly supporting the Mission's use of technical equipment to fulfil its mandate.<sup>13</sup> The severity of jamming was such that, for the first time, the take-off and landing of the long-range UAVs at its base in government-controlled Stepanivka was affected (see below).

### **Targeting of UAVs by gunfire**

Incidents involving gunfire increased in spite of commitments made by the signatories of the Minsk agreements, the provision of security guarantees, and advance UAV flight notification by the SMM. The Mission again noted that the sides continued to show reluctance to assume responsibility or take action to avoid similar incidents.

Between January and June 2021, the Mission registered 65 cases of gunfire assessed as targeting its UAVs, almost a fourfold increase as compared to 17 cases in the previous 184 days. Nineteen were recorded in government-controlled areas of Donetsk (17) and Luhansk (two) regions, 44 in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk (34) and Luhansk (ten) regions, and two in areas between positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the armed formations. Of the 17 cases in the previous reporting period, nine took place in government-controlled- and eight in non-government-controlled areas. The Mission noted a spike in such cases in April and May, at a time when it also recorded higher levels of ceasefire violations. Two SMM mini-UAVs were lost to gunfire (compared with none in the preceding six months). (See *Photo 1 and 2: Small-arms fire directed at SMM UAVs*, below, and *Annex 1: Map 5 - Gunfire targeting Mission's UAVs* and *Annex 3 - Table of incidents involving weapons aimed at SMM mini- and mid-range UAVs*.)

All such incidents put SMM mission members and its technological assets at risk and contravene the Mission's mandate. SMM mini-UAVs have a flight range of only up to 5km and patrols operating them are at a risk due to their proximity to the UAVs when the UAVs are targeted by gunfire. These incidents effectively deny SMM access, as every patrol has been instructed – in these cases – to immediately abort the flight, recover the UAV if possible, and immediately leave the area in order to ensure the safety of its personnel.

---

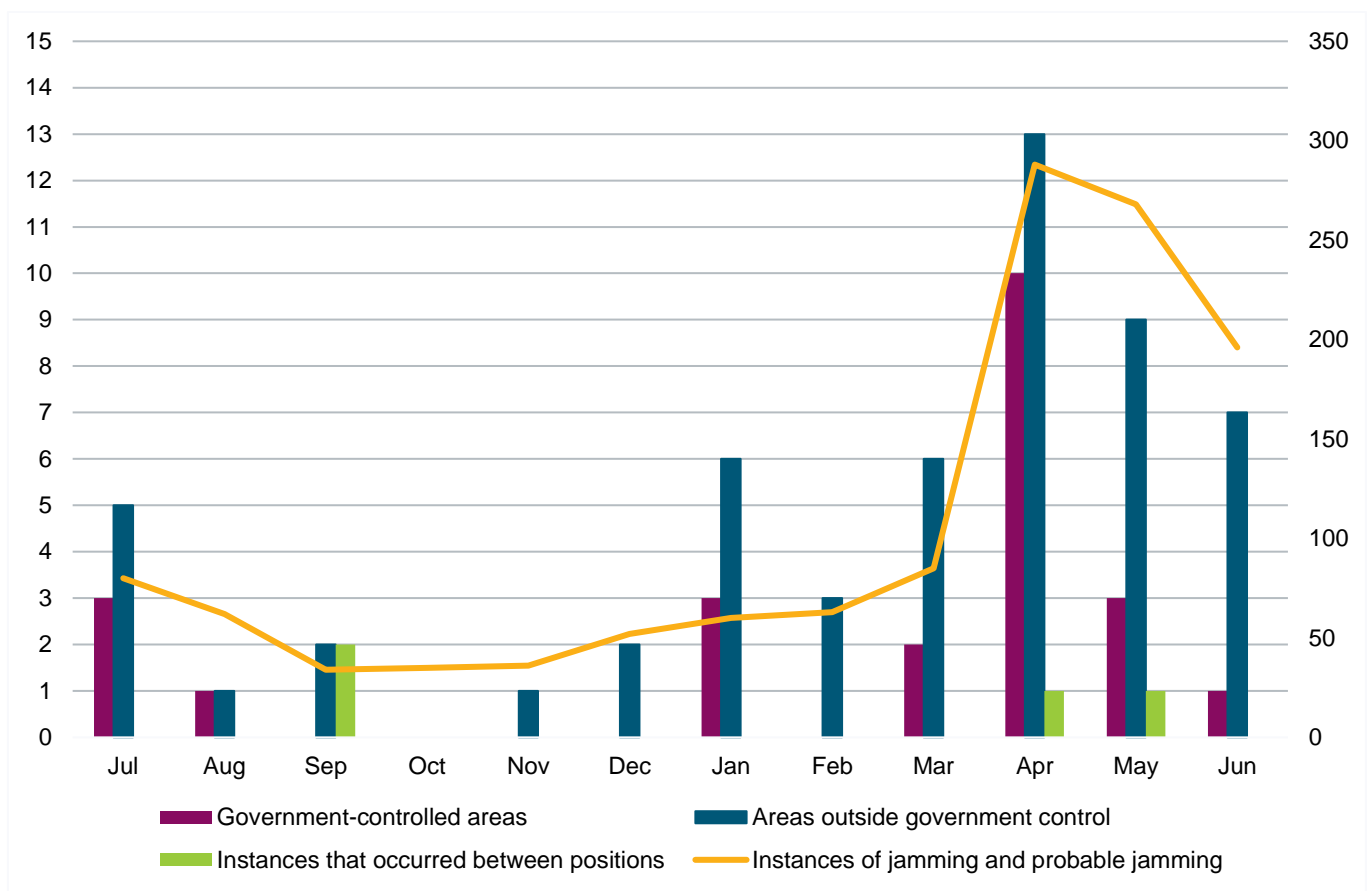
<sup>12</sup> From 1 January to 30 June 2021, the Mission conducted 2,286 UAV flights. Of these, 89 were long-range, 134 mid-range and 2,063 short-range flights. In the previous reporting period, 1,603 flights took place (141 long-range, 111 mid-range and 1,351 short-range).

<sup>13</sup> The Memorandum prohibits flights of combat aircraft and foreign UAVs, with the exception of those of the SMM, in the security zone, while the Package of Measures stipulates that its signatories will ensure effective monitoring and verification of ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons by the OSCE, using all technical equipment necessary. The Addendum provides that the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the armed formations will rapidly respond to specific violations registered by the SMM, including interference aimed at impeding the use of technical equipment necessary for monitoring and verification of withdrawal of weapons. Measures to strengthen the ceasefire signed on 22 July 2020 include a ban on the operation of any type of aerial vehicles of the sides.

## Photo 1 and 2: Small-arms fire directed at SMM UAVs



**Chart 6: SMM UAVS targeted by gunfire and affected by signal interference, 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021**



**GPS signal interference**

Increased intensity and frequency of signal interference (assessed as caused by jamming or probable jamming) also negatively affected operations of the Mission’s UAVs.<sup>14</sup>

An increase in signal interference was first noted by the SMM in January, and the number of such cases continued to increase in the next months. Between March and April, the incidence of signal interference almost tripled, tapering off slightly in May and June. For the first time, the long-range UAVs experienced signal interference upon take-off and landing

at its base. Overall, between January and June 2021, the SMM registered 960 instances of signal interference compared to 299 in the previous 184 days. (See *Annex 1, Map 6 - SMM long range UAV signal interference incidents* and *Map 7 - Mission’s mid- and short-range UAV signal interference incidents*.)

The SMM continued to observe the presence of electronic warfare systems on both sides of the contact line in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (one in government-controlled areas and two in non-government-controlled areas during the reporting period). (See *Photo 3 and 4: Electronic warfare systems*, below)

<sup>14</sup> Signal interference assessed as jamming or probable jamming could have originated from anywhere within a radius of tens of kilometres from the UAVs’ positions. Since UAVs often fly near the contact line, the Mission is unable to assess if jamming originated from government-controlled or non-government-controlled areas.

### Photo 3 and 4: Electronic warfare systems



### *Long-range UAVs*

Long-range UAVs are a key asset for ensuring more comprehensive monitoring. They are the only means of mobile night-time monitoring and the only asset that is able to regularly monitor areas near the border in non-government controlled areas.

From 21 March 2021, for the first time since the beginning of long-range UAV operations in 2014, signal interference was registered during the long-range UAV's take-off and landing, in areas near its launch site in Stepanivka.<sup>15</sup> In one instance, on 6 April, an SMM long-range UAV was unable to take off due to signal interference at ground level. On three other occasions (9 April, 23 April and 17 May)<sup>16</sup> emergency landing procedures had to be initiated; the aircraft was damaged in the two latter attempts. The Mission also lost two long-range UAVs after they crashed having experienced signal interference – one on 7 March near government-controlled Romanivka, and the other on 29 June near Stepanivka.<sup>17</sup> After the 7 March crash, long-range UAV flights resumed on 13 March. On 8 April, signal interference forced a long-range UAV to make an emergency landing resulting in damage to the aircraft. In total, three aircraft were damaged beyond repair.

The last temporary suspension of long-range UAV flights followed the 29 June crash and continued until 20 September when flights were resumed in test mode from a new site in government-controlled Varvarivka. The long-range UAVs have continued to experience in-flight jamming when flying on both side of the contact line; however, no jamming was registered at take-off or landing. Full resumption of operational tasking flights is to be considered

once these test flights are complete (at the time of writing, flights continue in test mode).

The protracted suspension of operations affected the number of long-range UAV flights. Thus, within the reporting period, the SMM conducted only 89 long-range flights, which represents a 37 per cent reduction when compared with the previous reporting period. At the same time, signal interference occurred more frequently (on 226 occasions) during these 89 flights, often multiple times per flight. During the previous 184 days, jamming and probable jamming of long-range UAV flights occurred 98 times during 141 flights, including multiple instances of jamming during a single flight. (See footnote 24, *Annex 1, Map 6 - SMM long range UAV signal interference incidents.*)

### *Mid-range and mini-UAVs*

From 1 January to 30 June 2021, the SMM conducted 2,197 mini- and mid-range UAV flights, 33 per cent of them (734 flights) experienced signal interference. This is significantly more in terms of both numbers and percentage points compared to the previous 184 days, when 14 per cent of flights (201 of 1,462 flights) were affected. (See *Annex 1, Map 7 - Mission's mid- and short-range UAV signal interference incidents.*)

The SMM lost spatial control over twice as many mini-UAVs that experienced jamming compared to the previous six months. From 1 January to 30 June 2021, during 2,197 flights, ten mini-UAVs were lost due to signal interference and none of these were later recovered. Losses due to jamming in the previous 184 days (and during 1,462 flights) amounted to three mini-UAVs.

---

<sup>15</sup> See SMM Spot Reports [6/2021](#), [8/2021](#), [11/2021](#), [13/2021](#), [14/2021](#) and [16/2021](#).

<sup>16</sup> See SMM Spot Reports [8/2021](#), [11/2021](#) and [13/2021](#).

<sup>17</sup> See SMM Spot Reports [2/2021](#) and [16/2021](#).

## SMM cameras

The SMM's cameras are also an inseparable part of the Mission's operational infrastructure; as such, they are protected by the provisions of OSCE PC Decision No. 1117.<sup>18</sup>

Since 2015, to ensure continuous day and night monitoring, the SMM has been deploying cameras in key areas on both sides of the contact line, including near critical civilian infrastructure, at crossing points, and in or near disengagement areas. The SMM continued to operate 26 cameras deployed to 22 locations – 18 in government-controlled areas, four in non-government-controlled areas, and four between government- and non-government-controlled areas. (See *Map 4: Locations of SMM cameras*, below). The lower number of SMM cameras in non-government-controlled areas is a consequence of the refusal of those in control of these areas to offer the necessary support and assistance for their installation.

Despite the SMM's repeated efforts to minimize the disparity in camera emplacement, requests have been rejected or are still pending.

For example, the SMM camera in government-controlled Krasnohorivka, Donetsk region, dismantled in early February 2021, has remained offline since then pending redeployment.<sup>19</sup> An alternative deployment location was identified in Krasnohorivka and a request was submitted to the Ukrainian Armed Forces on 24 February, who rejected it arguing for a more balanced camera placement in the area. To address this, a new location was identified in non-government controlled Oleksandrivka and the SMM approached the armed formations on 30 March. Negotiations with the Ukrainian Armed Forces were still ongoing by the end of the reporting period, and a response from the armed formations was also still pending.

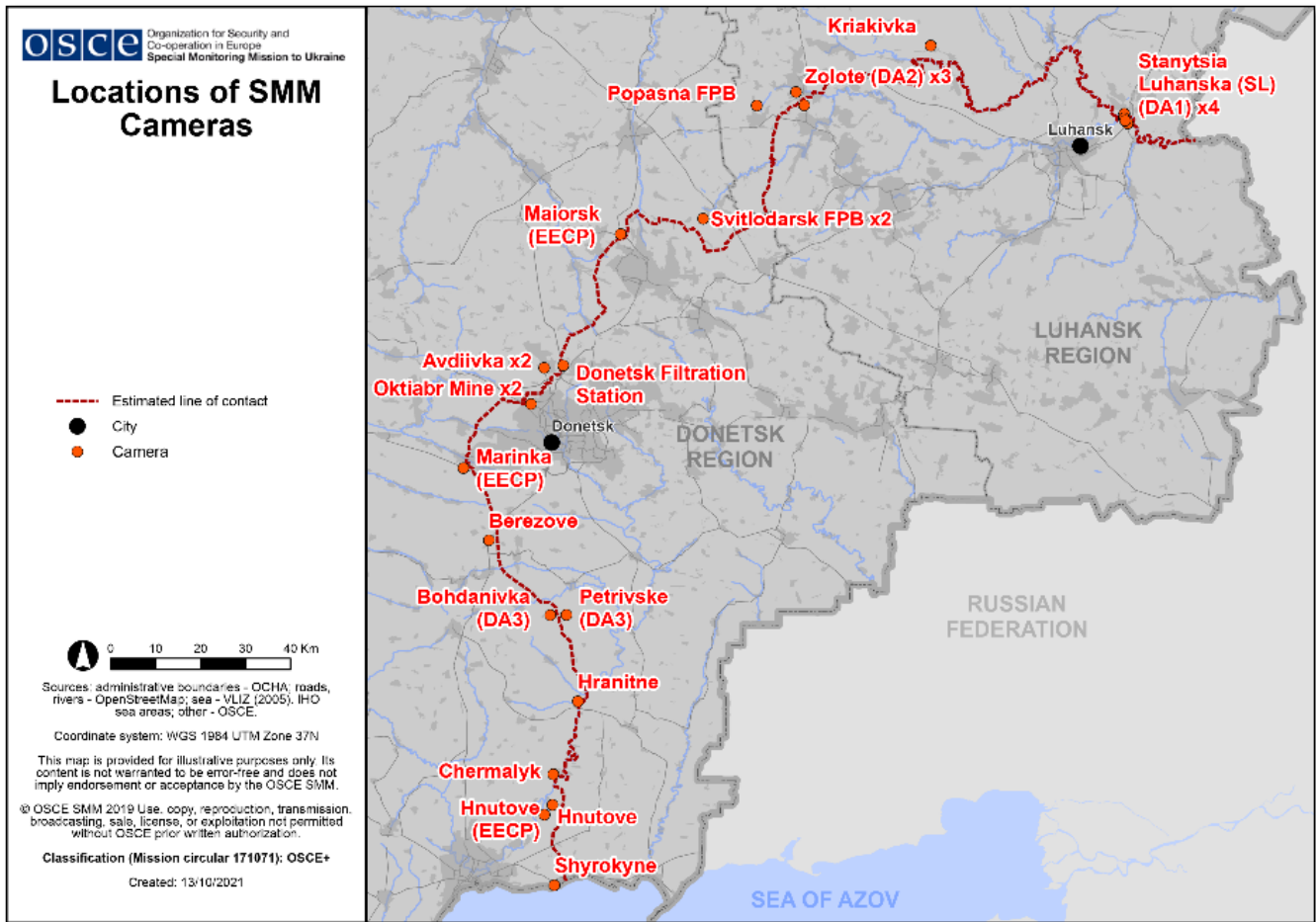
---

<sup>18</sup> Just outside the reporting period, on 2 July 2021, during a regular maintenance visit to the Oktiabr mine site, damage due to small-arms fire was observed to one of the camera systems. The Mission immediately replaced the damaged equipment. See [SMM Spot Report 17/2021](#) and [SMM Daily Report of 3 July 2021](#).

<sup>19</sup> The landowner's consent to extend the lease of the site could not be secured.



### Map 3: Locations of SMM cameras



The SMM also initiated efforts to deploy new camera systems to government- and non-government-controlled areas near Shchastia, aimed at ensuring effective monitoring of the new entry-exit checkpoint and the corresponding checkpoint of the armed formations (not yet opened). Suitable locations were assessed and recommended on both sides of the contact line. The Mission submitted a request to the armed formations on 19 February 2021; however, its deployment was still on hold by the end of the reporting period due to the armed formations’ reluctance to engage with the request. As a result, SMM plans for a camera deployment in a government-controlled area near Shchastia are also on hold.

SMM cameras require regular maintenance and replacement of spare parts by specialist technicians, who need access to the camera sites, for which the Mission needs obtain security guarantees. A failure to provide such security guarantees results in an interruption of maintenance processes and, over time, degrades the operability and reliability of these cameras. For instance, the SMM camera site in non-government-controlled Petrivske remained out of service throughout the reporting period due to a lack of security guarantees necessary to conduct maintenance and repair work. The camera was eventually replaced in July 2021 (outside the reporting period), more than a year after it was destroyed by small-arms fire on 2 June 2020.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See [SMM Spot Report of 3 June 2020](#). The camera was damaged by small arms fire on 2 June 2020. It was replaced in July 2021, outside the reporting period, and resumed streaming on 18 July 2021.

SMM cameras also continued to be tampered with. On 17 April, non-SMM equipment (assessed as a camera dome attached to a metal frame) was installed on the Mission's camera mast in Oktiabr, Donetsk region, by unknown individuals. On 19 April, the SMM disabled its cameras at that location to avoid potential interference with its monitoring. The non-SMM equipment was finally taken down after repeated requests on 4 May 2021. An object (assessed as a camera dome) was later installed on a separate metal mast located on the same Oktiabr mine tower, about four meters from the SMM camera mast. On 5 May, the Mission re-established connection with both camera systems.<sup>21</sup>

## Disengagement areas

The SMM continued to monitor the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske on both sides of the contact line through regular patrolling and remote observation.<sup>22</sup>

From 1 January to 30 June 2021, the SMM did not experience any FoM restrictions when accessing the disengagement areas near Stanytsia Luhanska and Zolote. The Mission's access to the disengagement area near Petrivske was delayed on one occasion, on 28 January.<sup>23</sup> In the previous reporting period, the SMM did not experience any FoM restrictions inside or near any of the three disengagement areas.

Nonetheless, despite demining activities carried out by the sides in the context of repair works to the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge, large parts of the disengagement area remained contaminated with mines. Parts of the area

near Zolote are also contaminated. In both areas, Mission patrols can only monitor the roads traversing both areas and rely on UAVs to monitor the rest of the disengagement areas.

The situation is different in the disengagement area near Petrivske. There is no road traversing it and Mission patrols can only monitor from locations near its northern corners, approaching on a road that leads from Bohdanivka to Petrivske. The presence of mines on the road, together with a trench of the armed formations that cuts across it, continued to limit SMM monitoring of the disengagement area.

## Impediments related to human dimension monitoring

The Mission again encountered impediments to its efforts in establishing and reporting facts following specific incidents and reports of incidents in non-government controlled areas. This type of restriction affects SMM human dimension monitoring; in particular, the corroboration of civilian casualties and the confirmation of conflict-related damage to civilian property or critical infrastructure. As in previous reporting periods, civilian interlocutors such as hospital staff or other personnel were at times reluctant to engage with the SMM. Such restrictions are concerning as they prevent the Mission's ability to corroborate facts.

Between 1 January and 30 June 2021, the Mission encountered such restrictions on seven occasions, all of them in non-government-controlled areas (compared to nine in the second half of 2020). They occurred at medical facilities in Donetsk region, where

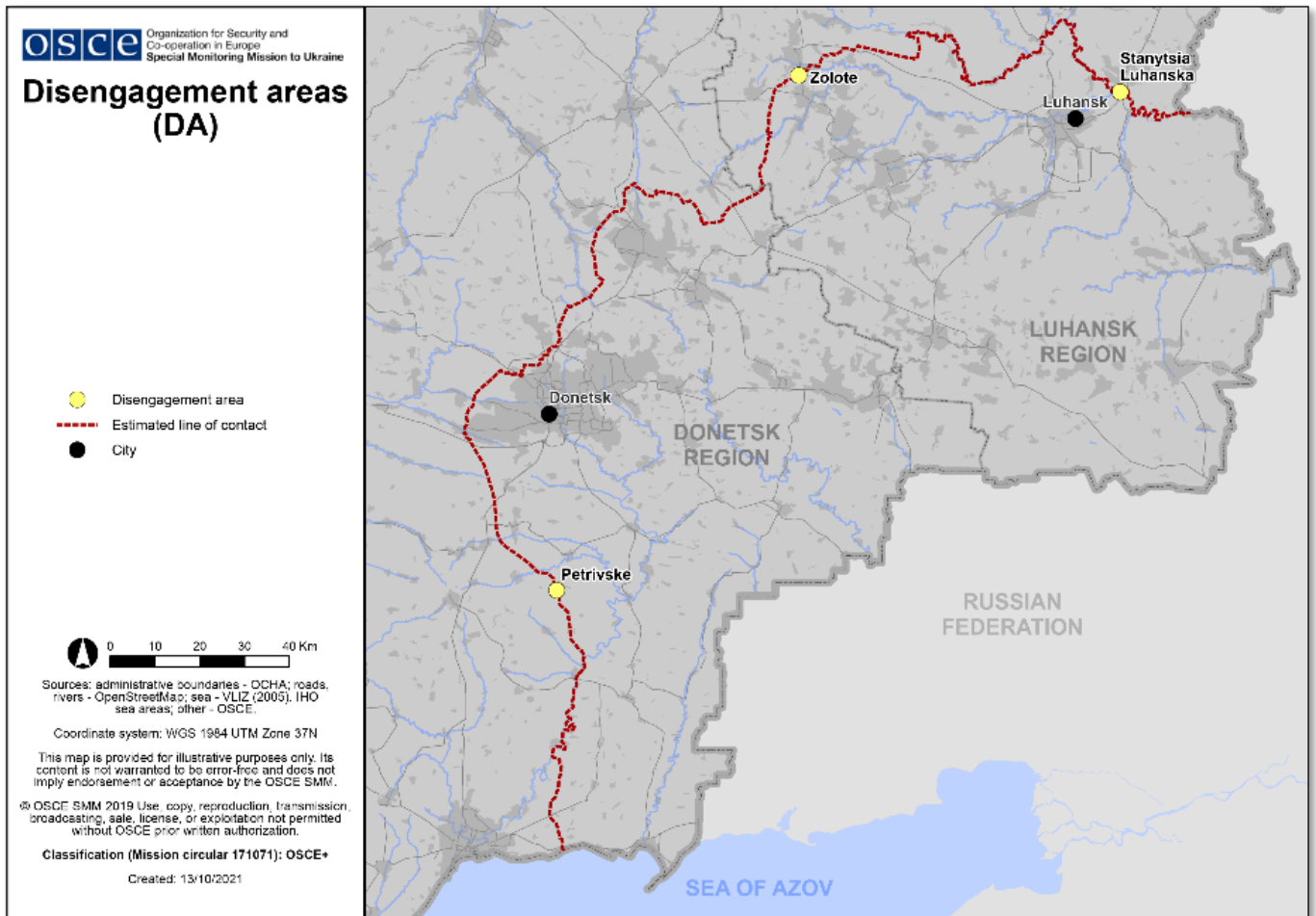
---

<sup>21</sup> See [SMM Spot Report 10/2021](#) and SMM Daily Reports of [20 April](#), and [6 May 2021](#).

<sup>22</sup> As envisioned in the Framework Decision of the TCG relating to disengagement of forces and hardware.

<sup>23</sup> See [SMM Daily Report of 29 January 2021](#).

## Map 4: Disengagement areas



staff refused to provide the SMM with information that would have helped confirm civilian casualties (referring to the need for “permission” from those in control in these areas).<sup>24</sup> The Mission also faced impediments when following up on reports of alleged damage: once to a school in non-government-controlled Zolote-5/Mykhailivka, and on one occasion when small-arms fire near an SMM patrol forced the Mission to abort a mini-UAV flight which was tasked with assessing reported damage to civilian houses in Donetsk city.<sup>25</sup>

### Restrictions related to monitoring of withdrawal of weapons

The Mission conducted almost three times more inspections at heavy weapons holding areas (HWA) and permanent storage sites (PSS) on both sides of the contact line, in comparison to the previous reporting period (92 and 32 respectively).

Nonetheless, its ability to monitor the withdrawal of weapons continued to be hampered. It was affected by denials when accessing weapons storage sites. The Mission faced restrictions during four per cent of inspections (two in non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region and one on each side of the contact line in Donetsk region) during

<sup>24</sup> Three happened in Donetsk city and one in Snizhne. See SMM Daily Reports of 2 February, 10 and 27 April 2021.

<sup>25</sup> See SMM Daily Reports of 11, 29 May and 5 June 2021.

92 inspections in HWHAs and PSSs (54 inspections in government-controlled areas and 38 in non-government-controlled areas). In the previous reporting period, the SMM faced such restrictions during six per cent of inspections (two restrictions, both in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk region) during 32 inspections in HWHAs and PSSs on both sides of the contact line in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As mentioned above, the SMM's monitoring ability was also affected by denials of access at various checkpoints as described above, including in the zone within which deployment of heavy armaments and military equipment is prohibited, according to Point 5 of the Memorandum of 19 September 2014.<sup>26</sup>

## **Mines, UXO and other explosive objects**

Between 1 January and 30 June 2021, the SMM spotted about 9,400 anti-tank mines for the first time.<sup>27</sup> About 3,730 were spotted in government-controlled areas and about 5,600 in non-government-controlled areas. The widespread and uncharted presence of mines and UXO, compounded by limited mine clearance activities, continued to hinder the Mission's work. The SMM is prevented from patrolling numerous areas along the contact line, including critical routes, and from accessing a number of settlements due to security considerations related to the presence of mines.

In addition to mines, UXO and other explosive objects, the Mission also encountered various signs, i.e. verbal allegations or warnings, official and unofficial mine signs, indicating the presence of such dangers. Roads and areas allegedly closed due to demining activities further impeded or constrained the SMM's movements. For example, the Mission faced 29 FoM restrictions due to alleged "demining activities", all of which were in the form of denials of access at checkpoints of the armed formations in non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region.<sup>28</sup> The SMM's FoM was also limited twice by the presence of road blocks with mine warning signs on both sides of the contact line in Luhansk region.<sup>29</sup>

The Mission again observed little progress on the removal of mines, UXO and other explosive objects, despite the provisions of the Minsk agreements and the conclusions of the Normandy Four leaders at their meeting in Paris in December 2019. In his role as Co-ordinator of the TCG's Working Group on Security Issues (WGSII), as well as through his letters to the signatories of Minsk agreements, the SMM Chief Monitor has repeatedly called on the sides to respect the commitments they have made by carrying out demining activities, especially near civilian crossing points.

---

<sup>26</sup> Prohibition of deployment of heavy armaments and military equipment in the area delimited by the population centres of Kalmiiske (formerly Komsomolske), Kumachove, Novoazovsk and Sakhanka, to be monitored by the OSCE.

<sup>27</sup> This is not equivalent to "recently laid". In some cases, the SMM imaged the areas for the first time.

<sup>28</sup> Specifically, SMM patrols faced denials most frequently at the following checkpoints: seven times near Starolaspa, five times near Nova Marivka, four times near Khreshchatytske, three times near Zaichenko, Shevchenko, and near Bezimenne respectively.

<sup>29</sup> Once on the outskirts of government-controlled Popasna and once near non-government-controlled Tsvitni Pisky.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the first half of 2021, all previously identified trends relating to the Mission's FoM remained the same. Almost all FoM restrictions occurred in non-government-controlled areas. These chronic restrictions were compounded by restrictions imposed by the armed formations in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak which again limited its operational capabilities, despite the Mission's stringent pandemic mitigation measures. New and worrying limitations also emerged as Mission UAVs faced increasingly frequent instances of being targeted by gunfire and unprecedented levels of jamming, which led to a number of instances of forced landings and subsequent temporary suspensions of long-range UAV operations. All of these developments, when taken in aggregate, are a further strong indication of the narrowing corridor for the Mission's activities and function and an erosion of its monitoring ability in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

In light of the above, the SMM reiterates that:

**1. The Mission's safe and unimpeded access is essential to the implementation of its mandate and to objective and accurate monitoring and reporting.**

Operating under the principles of impartiality and transparency as mandated by the OSCE Permanent Council, it is essential for the Mission to carry out fact-based, impartial, accurate, and timely reporting of the security situation to ensure the effective implementation of its mandated tasks, for which safe and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine is required.

The Mission again calls on the sides of the conflict to take action to ensure the Mission's unrestricted FoM throughout Ukraine necessary for the implementation of its mandate.

**2. Systematic restrictions to the Mission's FoM, overwhelmingly in non-government-controlled areas, critically affected its monitoring capabilities.**

Again, almost all FoM restrictions occurred in non-government-controlled areas, with frequent restrictions in southern Donetsk region. The Mission continued to face denials of access at checkpoints of the armed formations on the contact line. In March and April, the Mission faced persistent pressure by the armed formations in Donetsk region to submit its vehicles and trailers to inspections, which precluded the passage of SMM patrols and disrupted the Mission's re-supply and logistics operations. Taken as a whole, these restrictions again undermined the Mission's efficiency and unity by fragmenting it into three distinct operational areas.

The Mission also highlights an incremental loss of key access routes in non-government-controlled areas owing to the proliferation of checkpoints and restrictions faced there. It also notes growing attempts by the armed formations to impose document checks and other bureaucratic burdens at their checkpoints.

**3. Sharply increased levels of signal interference, including blanket jamming of the long-range UAV and increased incidence of gunfire targeting SMM UAVs.**

The Mission recorded 960 instances signal interference, assessed as caused by jamming and probable jamming. The frequency of such interference increased exponentially from March onwards, including blanket jamming – for the first time – of the long-range UAV at its base.

This led to damage and loss of aircraft and ultimately resulted in a temporary suspension of long-range UAV operations. Each such suspension meant the Mission could not conduct night-time monitoring along the contact line, in areas near the border outside government control, and in disengagement areas.

The SMM also lost 12 mini-UAVs – ten due to signal interference and further two due to gunfire. In total, SMM UAVs were targeted by small-arms fire 65 times.

The Mission reiterates that signal interference and targeting of SMM assets limit the Mission's monitoring capacity and put its members at risk.

#### **4. The Mission's monitoring of border areas outside government control continued to be significantly impaired.**

The SMM conducted over 200 visits to areas near the border outside government control, however, many patrols were again restricted at their destination or *en route* and were thus unable to monitor these areas, particularly in non-government-controlled areas of southern Donetsk region. Monitoring also continued to be impeded by the unwillingness of those in control to provide security assurances to open FPBs near these border areas. The Mission responded to these limitations by increasing the use of its UAVs and deploying overnight patrols where it was possible to do so.

Overall, existing limitations, compounded by the pandemic, meant that the SMM's monitoring of border areas could again not be categorized either as unconditional or comprehensive.

#### **5. In non-government-controlled areas, the Mission continued to face impediments in establishing and reporting facts following specific incidents and reports of incidents.**

The SMM faced restrictions in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions while trying to corroborate cases of civilian casualties or damage to civilian infrastructure.

The Mission highlights that the sides need to ensure that SMM patrols do not face impediments in following up on conflict-related incidents, in particular regarding civilian casualties or damage to civilian property.

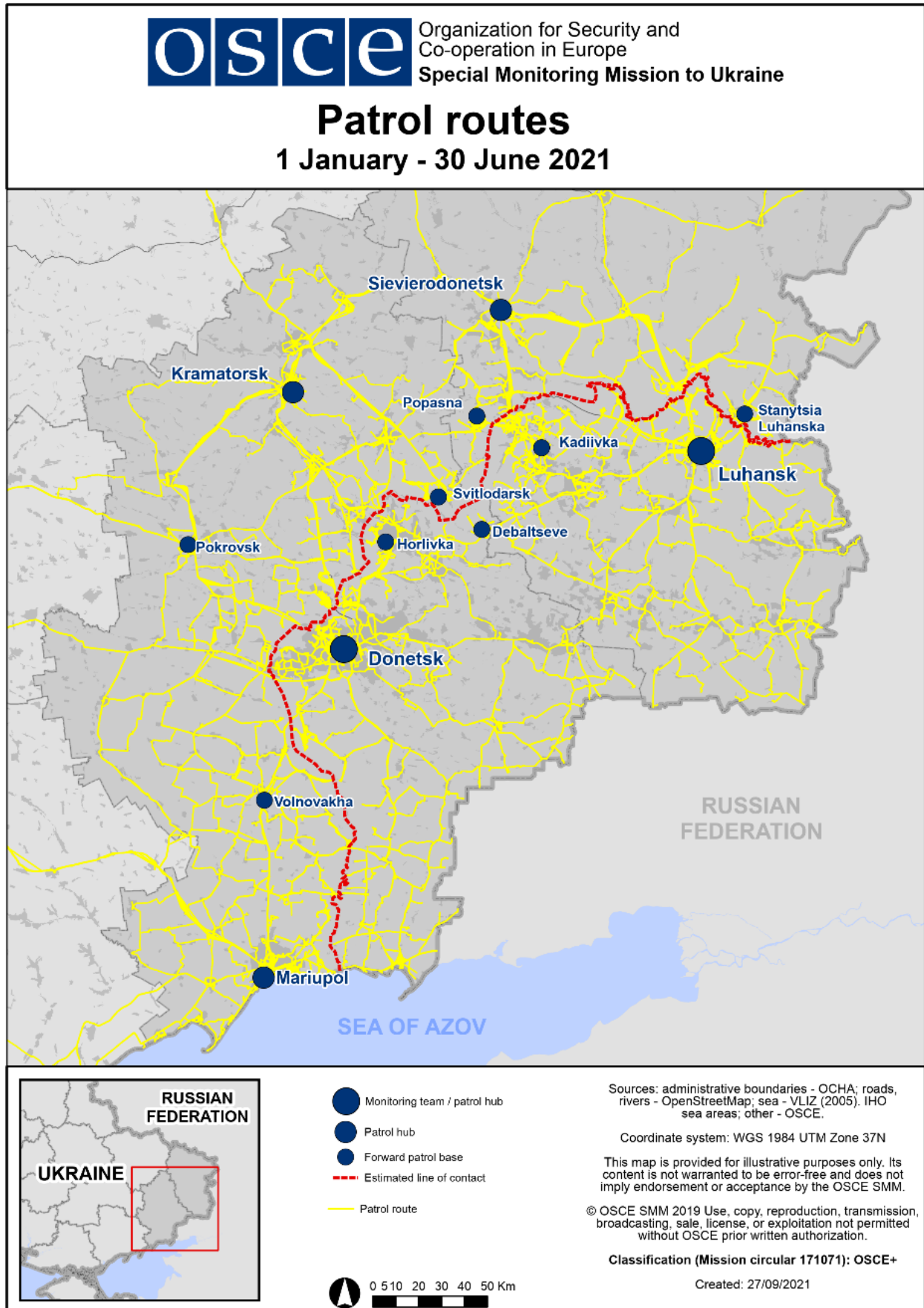
#### **6. Mines, UXO and other explosive objects continued to pose risks to mission members and civilians crossing the contact line.**

The SMM's FoM was again repeatedly restricted by mines, UXO and other explosive objects in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions, especially near the contact line. Mine contamination affecting residential areas, local roads, and crossing routes continued to be a challenge. The failure to remove mines, UXO and other explosive objects rendered many areas inaccessible to the Mission due to security considerations.

The Mission reiterates that in line with the provisions of the Minsk agreements and the conclusions of the Normandy Four Paris meeting in December 2019, it is the obligation of the sides to mark, fence off and clear contaminated areas of mines, UXO and other explosive objects; to refrain from laying new mines, and to ensure that requests from the SMM are actioned in a timely manner.

# ANNEX 1: MAPS

## Map 1 – SMM patrol routes



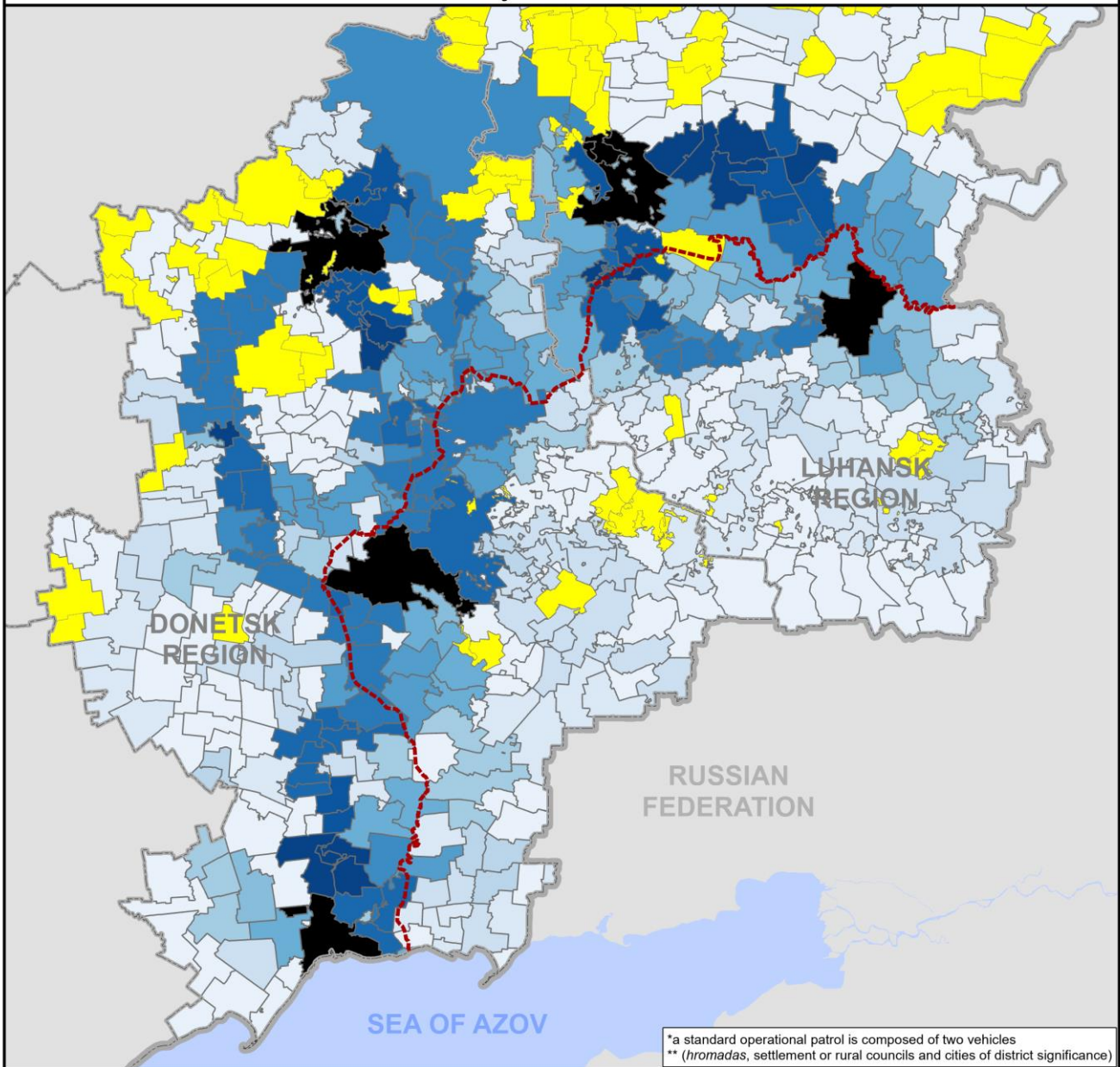
# Map 2 – The Mission’s presence in Donetsk and Luhansk regions



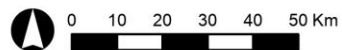
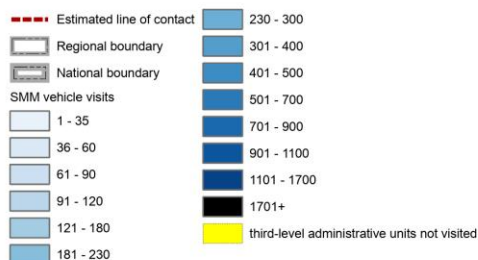
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

## Number of SMM vehicles\* visiting Ukrainian third-level administrative units\*\* in Donetsk and Luhansk regions

1 January - 30 June 2021



\*a standard operational patrol is composed of two vehicles  
\*\* (hromadas, settlement or rural councils and cities of district significance)



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.

© OSCE SMM 2019 Use, copy, reproduction, transmission, broadcasting, sale, license, or exploitation not permitted without OSCE prior written authorization.

Classification (Mission circular 171071): OSCE+

Created: 15/12/2021



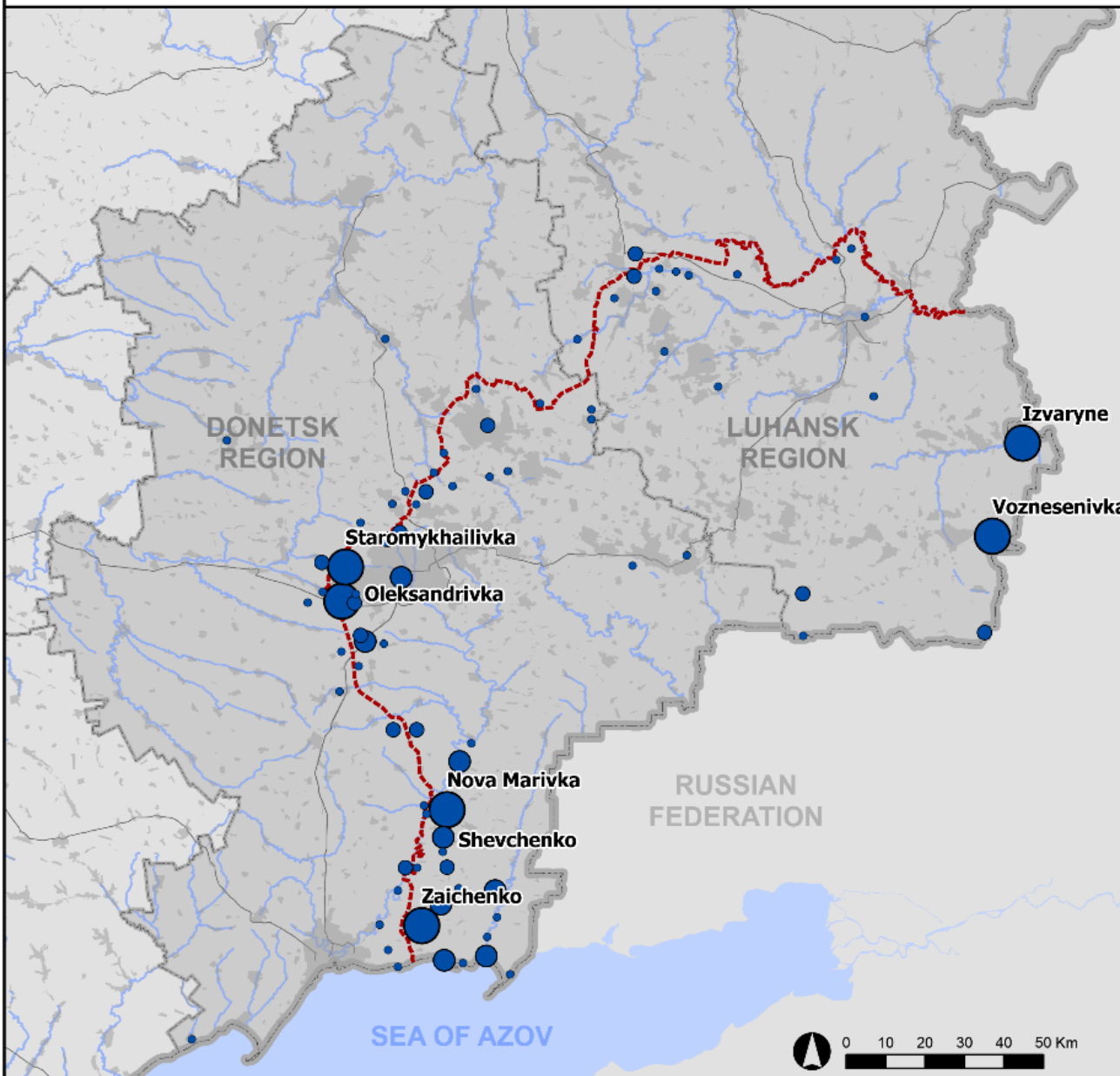
Map 3 – SMM FoM locations



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

# Freedom of movement (FoM) restrictions

1 January - 30 June 2021



- Estimated line of contact
  - ▭ National boundary
  - ▭ Regional boundary
  - ▭ Settlement
- Frequency of FoM restrictions
- 1 - 2
  - 3 - 5
  - 6 - 10
  - 11 - 25

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.

© OSCE SMM 2020 Use, copy, reproduction, transmission, broadcasting, sale, license, or exploitation not permitted without OSCE prior written authorization.

Created: 13/09/2021

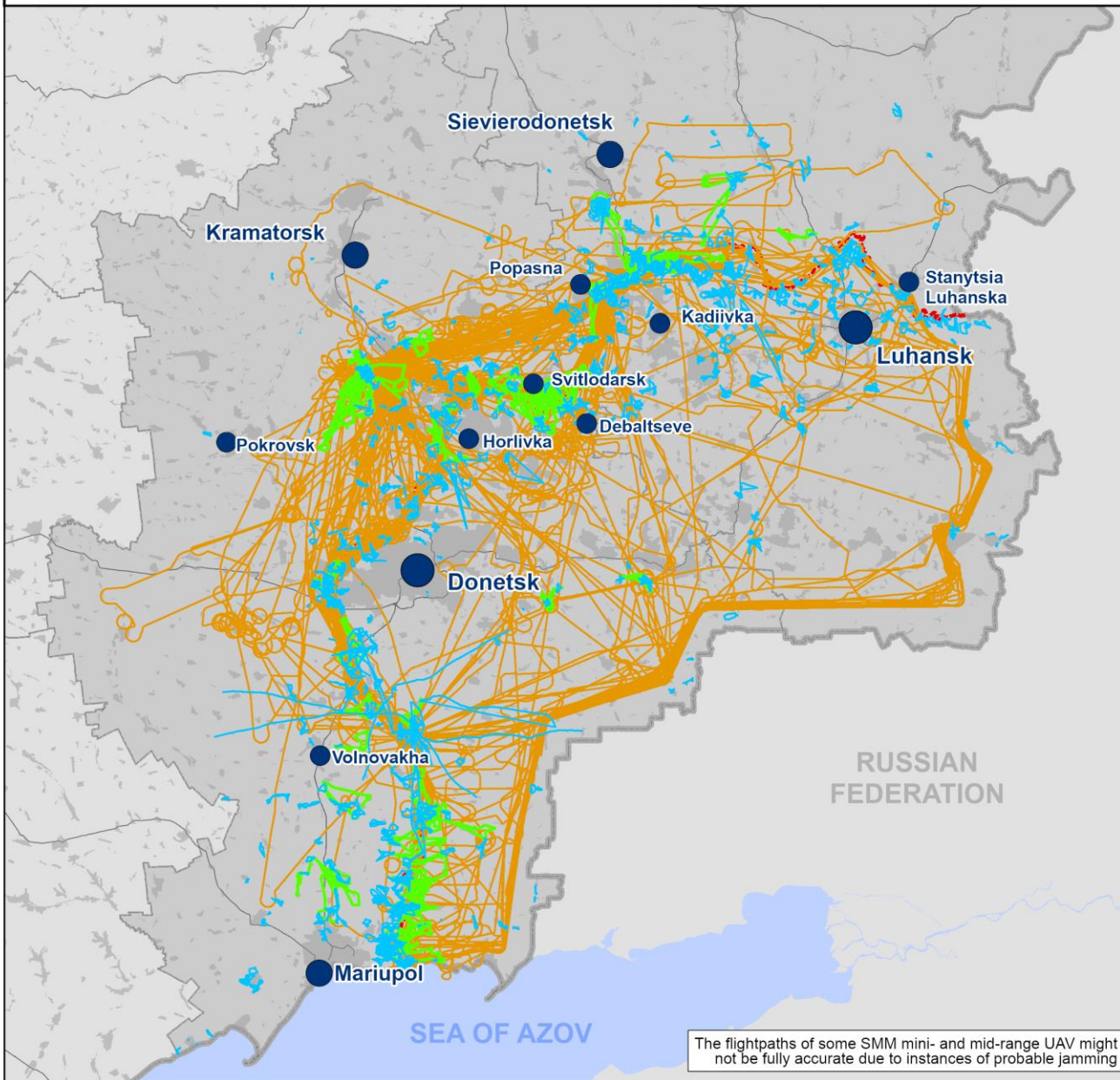
Map 4 – SMM UAV flight routes



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

# UAV flights

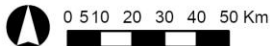
1 January - 30 June 2021



The flightpaths of some SMM mini- and mid-range UAV might not be fully accurate due to instances of probable jamming



- Monitoring team / patrol hub
- Patrol hub
- Forward patrol base
- Estimated line of contact
- Short-range UAV flight
- Mid-range UAV flight
- Long-range UAV flight



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.

© OSCE SMM 2019 Use, copy, reproduction, transmission, broadcasting, sale, license, or exploitation not permitted without OSCE prior written authorization.

Classification (Mission circular 171071): OSCE+

Created: 09/12/2021

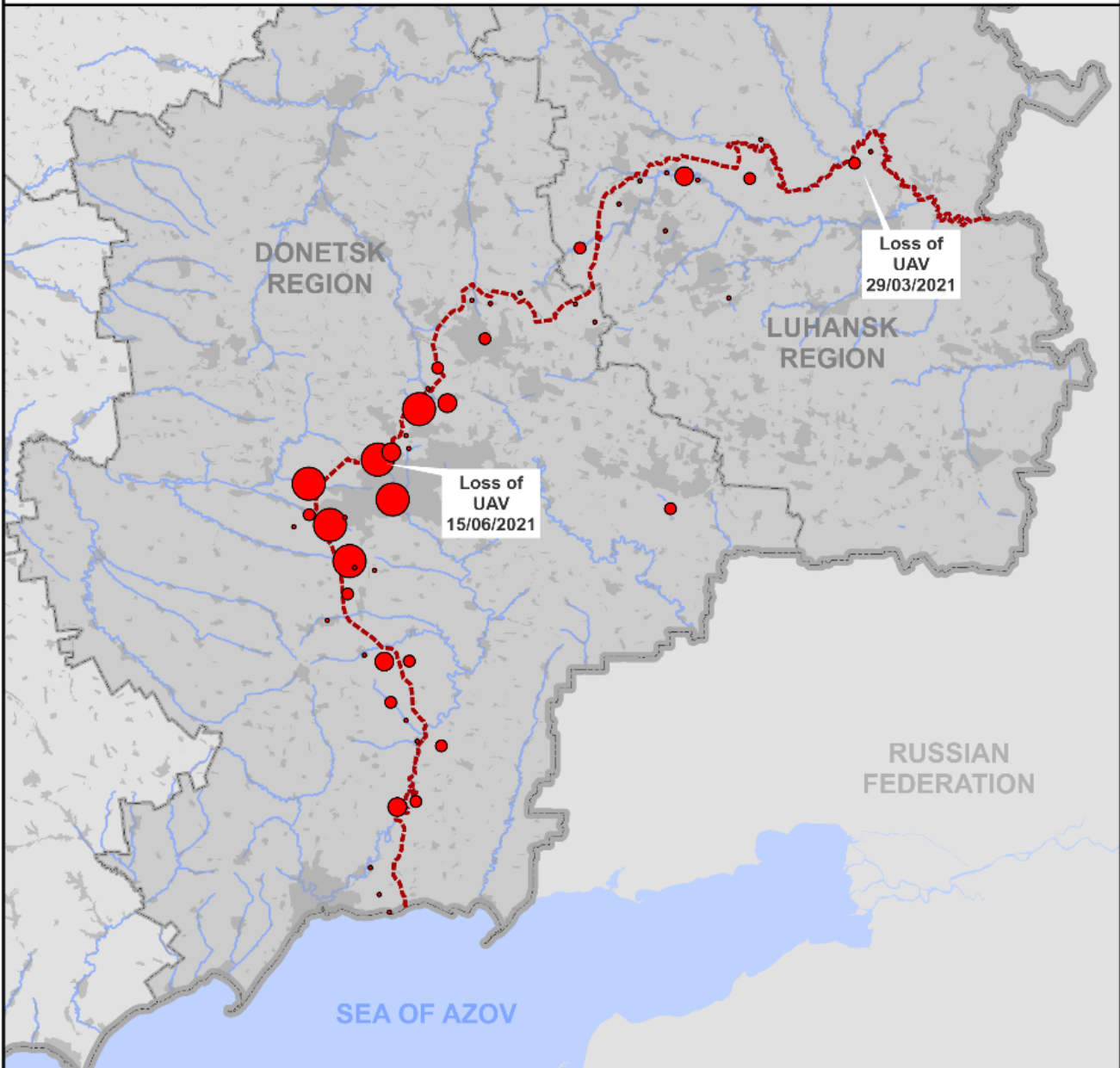
Map 5 – Gunfire targeting Mission UAVs



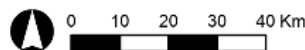
Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe  
Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

# Freedom of movement (FoM) restrictions (UAV shot at)

1 January - 30 June 2021



- UAV shot at frequency
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 - 9
- Estimated line of contact
- Settlement
- ▭ Regional boundary
- ▭ National boundary



Sources: administrative boundaries - OCHA; roads, rivers - OpenStreetMap; sea - VLIZ (2005). IHO sea areas; other - OSCE.

Coordinate system: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 37N

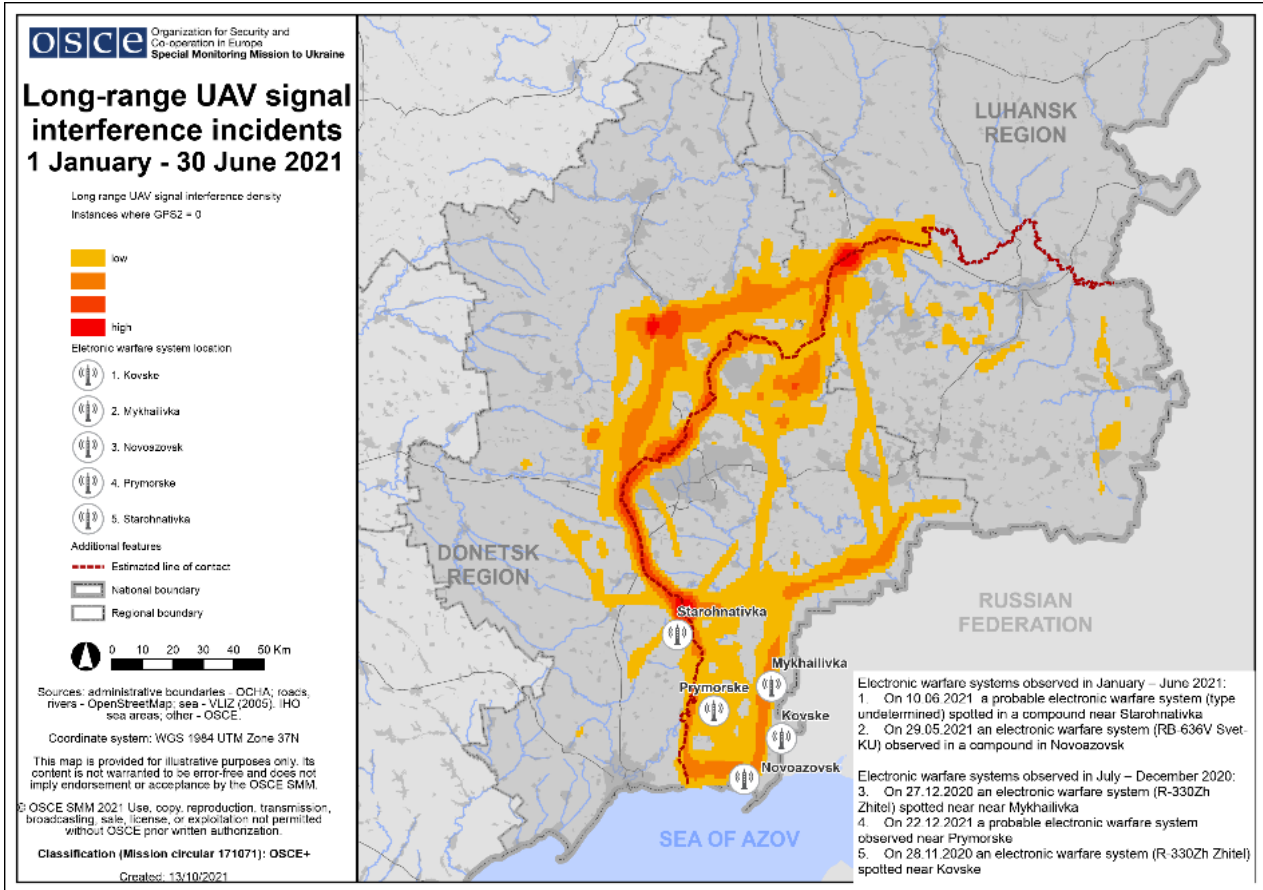
This map is provided for illustrative purposes only. Its content is not warranted to be error-free and does not imply endorsement or acceptance by the OSCE SMM.

© OSCE SMM 2021 Use, copy, reproduction, transmission, broadcasting, sale, license, or exploitation not permitted without OSCE prior written authorization.

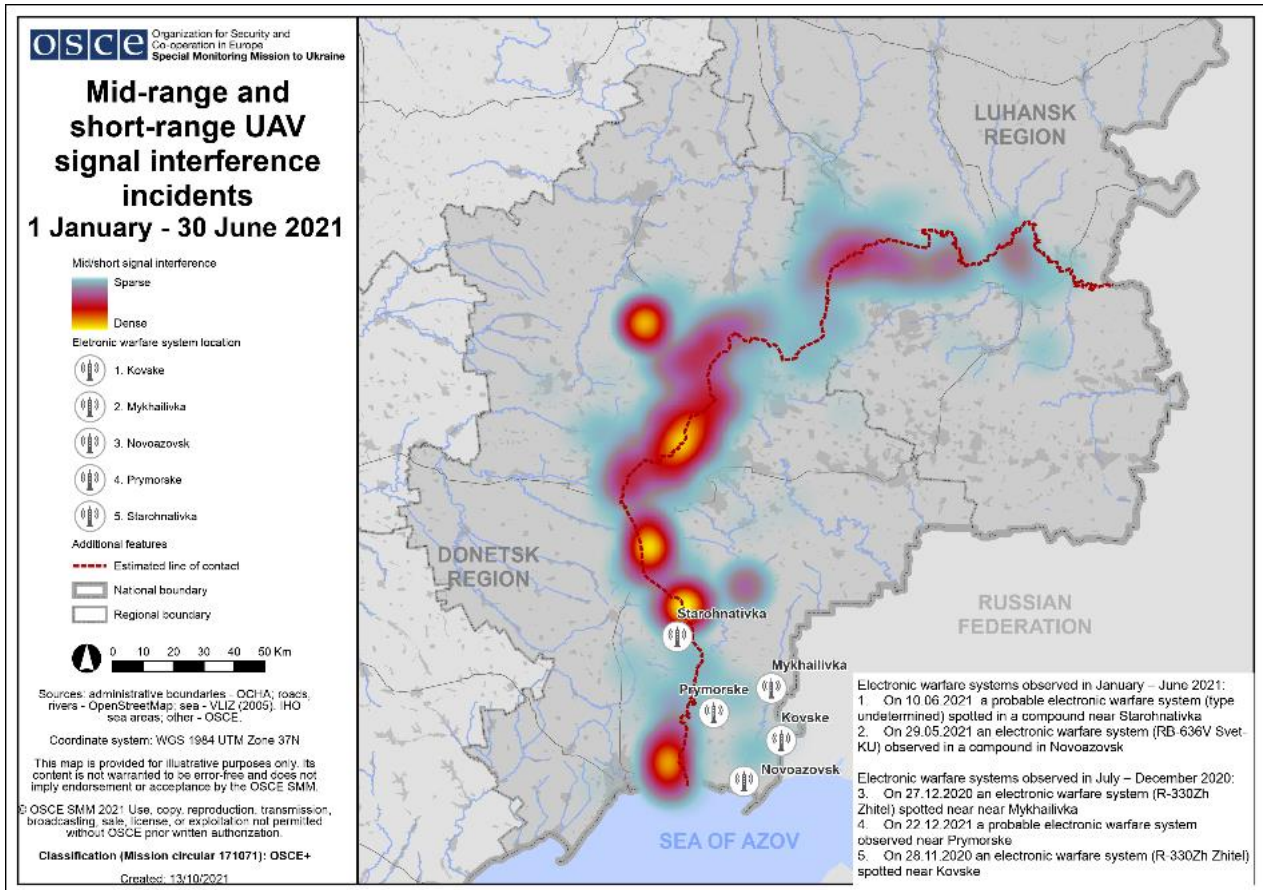
Classification (Mission circular 171071): OSCE+

Created: 17/09/2021

## Map 6 – SMM long-range UAV signal interference incidents



## Map 7 – SMM mid- and short-range UAV signal interference incidents



## ANNEX 2: TABLE OF INSTANCES OF EXPLOSIONS AND GUNFIRE NEAR THE SMM

Date	Location, region	Control	Summary of event	Source
16/02/2021	Petrivske, Donetsk region	Not under government control	An undetermined explosion and black smoke about 300–400m north of an SMM patrol, assessed as not targeting the Mission.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 17 February 2021</a>
24/03/2021	Kamianka, Donetsk region	Under government control	An undetermined explosion about 300-500m east of an SMM patrol, assessed as not targeting the Mission.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 25 March 2021</a>
25/03/2021	Pavlopil, Donetsk region		About 300–400 shots and bursts of small-arms fire at an assessed range of 300–400m east of an SMM patrol, assessed as not targeting the Mission.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 26 March 2021</a>
20/05/2021	Avdiivka, Donetsk region		An undetermined explosion and brown smoke about 500m south of an SMM patrol, assessed as not targeting the Mission.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 21 May 2021</a>
18/06/2021	Sentianivka, Luhansk region	Not under government control	Two shots of small arms fire, about 200-700m north-east of an SMM patrol, and a whistling sound, assessed as caused by small-arms fire nearby, assessed as not targeting the Mission.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 19 June 2021</a>
28/06/2021	Petrivske, Donetsk region		People assessed as probable members of the armed formations displayed aggressive behaviour towards the SMM.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 29 July 2021</a>

## ANNEX 3: TABLE OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING WEAPONS AIMED AT SMM MINI- AND MID-RANGE UAVS

Date	Location, region	Control	Summary of event	Source
11/01/2021	Molodizhne Luhansk region	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 1-1.5km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 12 January 2021</a>
12/01/2021	Lebiazhe, Donetsk region		Bursts of heavy-machine-gun and shots of small-arms fire about 1-2km north of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 13 January 2021</a>
14/01/2021	Berdianske, Donetsk region	Under government control	Shots and a burst of small-arms fire about 1.3km east-south-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 15 January 2021</a>
	Vasylivka, Donetsk region	Not under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 1.5km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
15/01/2021	Donetsk city	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 50-100m north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 16 January 2021</a>
20/01/2021	Talakivka, Donetsk region	Under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 4km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 21 January 2021</a>
23/01/2021	Spartak, Donetsk region	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 1.1km west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 25 January 2021</a>
30/01/2021	Chermalyk, Donetsk region	Under government control	Bursts of heavy-machine-gun and shots of small-arms fire about 1.5km south-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 1 February 2021</a>
	Oleksandrivka, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 1-2km south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
01/02/2021	Holubivske, Luhansk region	Not under government control	Shots of small arms fire about 1-2km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 2 February 2021</a>
06/02/2021	Donetsk city		Bursts of small-arms fire about 300m-400m and 0.7-1km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 8 February 2021</a>
21/02/2021	Dachne, Luhansk region		Shots of small arms fire about 2-2.5km north-north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 22 February 2021</a>
09/03/2021	Troitske, Luhansk region	Under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 1.5-2km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 10 March 2021</a>
10/03/2021	Sentianivka, Luhansk region	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 2-2.5km and 0.7-1km north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 11 March 2021</a>
12/03/2021	Troitske, Luhansk region	Under government control	After landing its mini-UAV, which flew over areas about 1.7km east and west of the SMM's position, the Mission saw a hole in one of its propellers assessed as caused by small-arms fire.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 13 March 2021</a>
19/03/2021	Vesela Hora, Luhansk region	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 1.8km south-south-east, of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 20 March 2021</a>
22/03/2021	Spartak Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 300-400m north of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 23 March 2021</a>
28/03/2021	Vasylivka, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 1.5-2.5 km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 29 March 2021</a>
29/03/2021	Vesela Hora, Luhansk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 1.8km south-south-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV. After the Mission lost spatial	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 30 March 2021</a>

			control over the UAV and was not able to retrieve it.	
31/03/2021	Buhaivka, Luhansk region		Bursts and shots of heavy-machine-gun fire about 1.5-2km south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 1 April 2021</a>
08/04/2021	Vesele, Donetsk region		Bursts of small-arms fire about 2km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 9 April 2021</a>
10/04/2021	Spartak Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 2km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 12 April 2021</a>
	Betmanove, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 300-400m north of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
			Shots of small-arms fire about 1.5-2km north-north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
13/04/2021	Olenivka, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 1.2-1.7km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 14 April 2021</a>
	Oleksandrivka, Donetsk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 1.8km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
			Bursts of small-arms fire about 1.4km south-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
15/04/2021	Pobeda, Donetsk region	Under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 1.4km south-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 16 April 2021</a>
	Marinka, Donetsk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 600-750m south-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
16/04/2021	Verkhnotoretske, Donetsk region	Not under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 600-650m east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 17 April 2021</a>
	Syhnalne, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 500m west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
	Yasne, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 2km west-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
19/04/2021		Under government control	Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 2-3km and 1-2km south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 20 April 2021</a>
	Syhnalne, Donetsk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 2.3km south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
	Krasnohorivka, Donetsk region	Under government control	Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 3.3km south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
22/04/2021	Zaitseve, Donetsk region	Between government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas	Shots of small-arms fire about 1.4-1.6km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 23 April 2021</a>
23/04/2021	Marinka, Donetsk region	Under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 50m north of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 24 April 2021</a>
	Krasnohorivka, Donetsk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 1-2km north of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
			Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 2km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	

26/04/2021			Bursts of small-arms fire about 1.5km east-north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 27 April 2021</a>
	Donetsk city	Not under government control	Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 1.3km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
	Syhnalne, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 2.5km west-north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
29/04/2021	Oleksandrivka, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 1.5km south-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 30 April 2021</a>
02/05/2021		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 1.2km south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 4 May 2021</a>	
05/05/2021		Smile, Luhansk region	Bursts of small-arms fire about 1.4km west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 6 May 2021</a>
	Bursts of small-arms fire about 3.5km north-north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.			
06/05/2021	Lebedynske, Donetsk region	Under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 3-4km north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 7 May 2021</a>
11/05/2021	Bohdanivka, Donetsk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 2km north-north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 12 May 2021</a>
13/05/2021			Bursts of small-arms fire about 2.3km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 14 May 2021</a>
14/05/2021	Chermalyk, Donetsk region	Between government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas	Bursts of small-arms fire about 3-4km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 15 May 2021</a>
18/05/2021	Hranitne, Donetsk region	Under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 2.8km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 19 May 2021</a>
	Oleksandrivka, Donetsk region	Not under government control	Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 1.5km south-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
	Dachne, Luhansk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 1-2km north of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	
26/05/2021	Novotroitske, Donetsk region	Under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 2.3km south-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 27 May 2021</a>
27/05/2021	Donetsk city	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 100m south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 29 May 2021</a>
30/05/2021	Novohryhorivka Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 0.8-1km north-north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 31 May 2021</a>
07/06/2021	Obozne, Luhansk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 2-3km north-north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 8 June 2021</a>
09/06/2021	Bohdanivka, Donetsk region	Under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 560m south-south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 10 June 2021</a>
11/06/2021	Chermalyk, Donetsk region		Bursts and shots of small-arms fire about 3.9km east-north-east and 3.7km east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 12 June 2021</a>



14/06/2021	Vasylivka, Donetsk region	Not under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 300m north-north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 15 June 2021</a>
15/06/2021	Vesele, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 0.8-1km north-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV. After the Mission lost spatial control over the UAV and was not able to retrieve it.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 16 June 2021</a>
16/06/2021	Horlivka, Donetsk region		Shots of small-arms fire about 100-200m south-west of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 17 June 2021</a>
20/06/2021	Krasnohorivka, Donetsk region	Under government control	Bursts of small-arms fire about 2km north-east of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 21 June 2021</a>
22/06/2021	Kalynove- Borshchuvate, Luhansk region	Not under government control	Shots of small-arms fire about 300-600m south of the SMM patrol, assessed as targeting its mini-UAV.	<a href="#">SMM Daily Report 23 June 2021</a>