

ND202001001 Analysis of an SMM Report - The 256/2020 Report of October 27, 2020

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Reference document: report SMM 256/2020 of October 27, 2020

Available at: <https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/468633>

Background

SMM reports are generated from the previous day's data at 7:30 pm (from the day before at 7:30 pm) or on Monday from the data of the 2 previous days.

Why doesn't SMM take data from 0:00 to 0:00 and provide a report every day, including Sundays?

The SMM ratio and operation are adapted to their own constraints. There is probably a changeover at 7:30 pm, which must explain this shift, which takes different bearings from all the other actors who talk about violations or incidents of the previous day from 0:00 am to 0:00 am the next day.

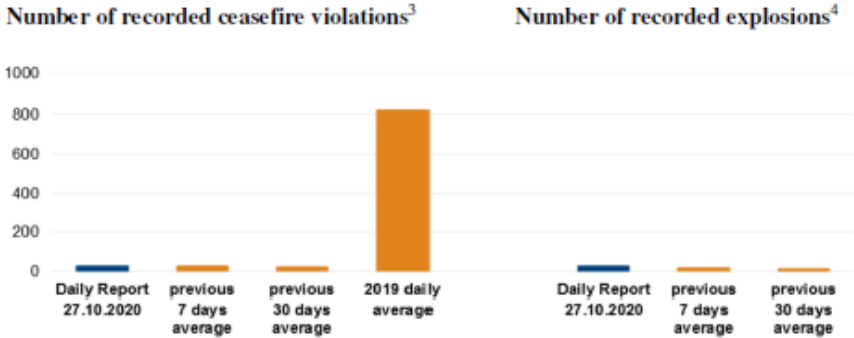
At best, the report gives information between the previous 48 hours and 24 hours and at worst (weekends and after holidays) information between the previous 72 hours and 24 hours.

Consequently, the data in the SMM reports cannot be used to control and react to the indicated events, but only to check the overall operation, in background work.

Part 1: Ceasefire Violations

Violations are summarized graphically :

First by a graph on violations and explosions



Then by a map :



At the end of the report are the details of the violations:

Table of ceasefire violations as of 26 October 2020¹¹

SMM position	Event location	Means	No.	Observation	Description	Weapon	Date, time
SMM camera in Avdiivka (government-controlled, 17km N of Donetsk)	3-5km E	Recorded	2	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	25-Oct, 20:19
About 1km NW of the railway station in Yasynuvata (non-government-controlled, 16km NE of Donetsk)	6-8km N	Heard	20	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	26-Oct, 09:04-09:33
Avdiivka (government-controlled, 17km N of Donetsk)	2-3km E	Heard	1	Explosion	Undetermined	N/K	26-Oct, 13:05

Analysis of the Violations section :

Graphic part: It exists since September 2019, it is practical and allows at a glance to know where we are. *The analysis of all the graphic maps from October 19, 2020 to October 27, 2020 shows that more than 2/3 of the violations in the Donetsk sector are in the same area:*

between 10 and 25 kms northeast of Donetsk. See the appendix of the document for the different maps verified.

This means that the ceasefire monitoring system is largely passive. Both on the part of the SMM, which did not report it, and on the part of the JCCC, which seems not to use the SMM information and reconstruct it itself. There has been no specific development of this zone as a temporary sub-sector. They should have done so, but the rotation of local teams (both SMM and JCCC) probably caused them to lose this information to which they did not even react.

Violations table part: This part allows you to have details about the violations. In this case we see that there were 20 explosions in a little less than half an hour. This stopped, which may suggest that there is still a local system, but it should be strengthened since most incidents remain in the same area.

Overall, the violations section of the report provides the necessary information. This part can be used not to give an order in relation to incidents that took place more than 24 hours ago, but to evaluate the "background management" of the SMCC system (System Monitoring and Control Center) which should include SMM and JCCC. This management seems to be frozen and unable to perform a week-long analysis to deduce the measures needed to mitigate these violations. (Still in the same area? there are proven recipes to reduce these violations which, obviously, have been forgotten or ignored by the SMCC actors)

Part 2: Areas of disengagement

For many years, diplomats and OSCE and SMM officials have argued that zones of disengagement would lead to a ceasefire. Several disengagement agreements were accepted by the fighting parties and formalized by the Contact Group.

The reality of the July 27, 2020 ceasefire shows that without new zones of disengagement, a ceasefire was possible and that the initial assumptions of OSCE and SMM diplomats and officials were not entirely accurate.

After the ceasefire, the SMM is doing exactly what it did before the ceasefire without apparently realizing that this monitoring is not doing much good, nor has it led to a ceasefire.

The SMM actors, contact group and company are fixed in "agreements", whatever the evolution on the field.

The real problem is that the security zone should be disarmed, demined with appropriate security services. But the disengagement agreements defined that the only security services present should be the JCCC. It is a pleasant fiction and a daydream to believe that 60 JCCC officers would one day be able to ensure the security of the entire security zone. When you take away armed forces, you have to put something in its place and if possible something else than institutionalizing the forces already present.

Is there a pilot in the plane? That is the question that we can ask ourselves. It's a juxtaposition of agreements that no longer really make sense and that must be rethought: all of them and replaced by one that makes a little more sense than the present situation.

In addition, these are areas from which SMM patrols are excluded. Still the rivalry between SMM and JCCC that has been going on since 2014, where each claims to be THE leader of the ceasefire monitoring system. The SMM therefore uses drones to monitor and the combatants do on the spot as if it did not depend on the SMM. There is an atmosphere between the actors who are supposed to cooperate to establish the ceasefire. Even after the ceasefire is established, the rivalry between the actors on the ground continues. They do not work together but side by side.

In fact, SMM reports never talk about what the JCCC actually does other than on an ad hoc basis.

Overall, the part of the disengagement zones is there to remind us that the various actors have not adapted to the changes brought about by the ceasefire. They remain stuck on agreements that have not led to a ceasefire but which, in order not to lose face, continue to be monitored as if they still mattered. A comprehensive review is needed. The entire security zone must be disarmed, de-mined, and appropriate security services must be put in place. In other words, a global disengagement of the security zone remains necessary but with a different functioning.

Part 3: Arms Withdrawal and Indication of Military Presence in the Security Zone

There are different tables presented at the end of the report .

Weapons in violation of the withdrawal lines

Date	No. of weapons	Type of weapons	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
24/10/2020	3	Towed howitzer (2A36 <i>Glavin-B</i> , 152mm)	Near Bakhmut (formerly Artemivsk, 67km north of Donetsk)	Long-range UAV
Non-government-controlled areas				
25/10/2020	14	Self-propelled howitzer (2S1 <i>Gvozдика</i> , 122mm)	In a training area near Buhaivka (37km south-west of Luhansk)	Long-range UAV
	12	Towed howitzer (D-30A <i>Lyagushka</i> , 122mm)		
	1	Multiple launch rocket system (BM-21 <i>Grad</i> , 122mm)	In a training area near Miusynsk (62km south-west of Luhansk)	
	21	Multiple launch rocket system (BM-21 <i>Grad</i> , 122mm)	Near Khrustalnyi (formerly Krasnyi Luch, 56km south-west of Luhansk)	
	1	Towed anti-tank gun (MT-12 <i>Rapira</i> , 100mm)	In a training area near Shymshynivka (27km south-west of Luhansk)	
20/10/2020	17	Self-propelled howitzer (type undetermined)	In a training area near Buhaivka (37km south-west of Luhansk), where imagery also revealed the presence of 66 armoured combat vehicles ⁹	Aerial imagery

Other weapons

Date	No. of weapons	Type of weapons	Location	Source of observation
Non-government-controlled areas				
20/10/2020	10	Towed howitzer (type undetermined)	In a training area near Buhaivka (37km south-west of Luhansk)	Aerial imagery

Beyond withdrawal lines but outside of designated storage sites

Date	No. of weapons	Type of weapons	Location	Source of observation
Non-government-controlled areas				
20/10/2020	22	Tank (type undetermined)	In a training area near Buhaivka (37km south-west of Luhansk)	Aerial imagery
	18	Tank (type undetermined)	In a training area near Myrne (28km south-west of Luhansk), where imagery also revealed the presence of 72 armoured personnel carriers	
	8	Self-propelled artillery (type undetermined)		
	19	Towed artillery (type undetermined)		
25/10/2020	19	Tank (probable T-64)	In a training area near Buhaivka (37km south-west of Luhansk)	Long-range UAV
	1	Surface-to-air missile system (9K35 <i>Sirela-10</i>)		
	8	Self-propelled howitzer (2S1 <i>Gvozdika</i> , 122mm)	In a training area near Myrne (28km south-west of Luhansk)	
	16	Tank (probable T-72)		

	6	Towed howitzer (2A18M, D-30A <i>Lyagushka</i> , 122mm)	In a training area near Miusynsk (62km south-west of Luhansk)	
	6	Surface-to-air missile system (9K33 <i>Osa</i>)		
	1	Surface-to-air missile system (9K35 <i>Sirela-10</i>)		
	6	Towed anti-tank gun (MT-12 <i>Rapira</i> , 100mm)		
	21	Tank (15 probable T-64 and six T-72)		In a training area near Kruhlyk (31km south-west of Luhansk)
	9	Self-propelled howitzer (2S1 <i>Gvozdika</i> , 122mm)		
	4	Surface-to-air missile system (9K35 <i>Sirela-10</i>)		
	2	Tank (probable T-64)		
	12	Towed howitzer (D-30A <i>Lyagushka</i> , 122mm)		
	5	Tank (one T-64 and four type undetermined)		In a training area near Ternove (57km east of Donetsk)
26/10/2020	10	Tank (T-72)	In a training area near Pokrovka (36km east of Donetsk)	

Table of military and military-type presence in the security zone¹⁰

Date	No.	Type	Location	Source of observation
Government-controlled areas				
23/10/2020	1	Armoured personnel carrier (BTR-60)	In a residential area in a government-controlled part of Zaitseve (50km north-east of Donetsk)	Mid-range UAV
24/10/2020	4	Armoured combat vehicles (two of which probable BMP variant)	In a compound in Trudivske (47km south of Donetsk)	Long-range UAV
26/10/2020	2	Infantry fighting vehicle (probable BMP-1)	Near Berezove (31km south-west of Donetsk)	
	2	Infantry fighting vehicle (probable BMP-1)	In a residential area of Vodiane (15km north-west of Donetsk)	

What can we infer from this information about weapons that are in violation of the agreements?

- None of the observations came from a ground patrol. This is a new point, since previously there were observations from patrols. All the observations come from drones or aerial photographs.
- No action on these points is described in the report.

What does SMM do with this information?

The SMM has a passive mode of operation, as if all that is required to solve the problem is to observe and report observations.

Did SMM disseminate this information to military and militia leaders?

Even if this was the case, it was probably already too late to do anything about it.

What should be done?

That each piece of information be relayed by a ground patrol within 30 minutes of the observation. This requires a different way of working than today. It is obvious that only SMM observers will not be able to relay information to local commanders until the weapons are evacuated.

This would only be possible with mixed SMM and liaison officer teams from each camp.

Here the SMM and JCCC malfunction is glaring.

The information presented by the SMM is not questioned, but it is doubtful that anything was done to evacuate these armaments.

On this subject of the armaments present in violation of the agreements, it has been like this from the beginning and there has been little or no willingness to move the subject forward on either side. The SMM is unable to get it out. It could do so if the patrols had liaison officers from each camp who could immediately contact and evacuate these armaments, with the necessary logistics. In the short term, it is necessary to take 10 SMM observers and 5 officers from each camp and put them in a jar until they propose an operation capable of acting within one hour of the observation with a timing of 30 minutes to relay the information and 30 minutes to evacuate the weapon.

They will stay there 1, 2, 3 days until they propose a solution and the next day we try the proposed solution. If it doesn't work, we put everyone back in a jar and start again.

It is not the information that is in question, but what is done with it, and not just throwing information to others (SMM specialty) without worrying too much about what we do with it. Priorities must also be set:

- ***First the safety zone***
- ***Then the rest***

.... And review existing agreements. A mountain of more or less false and more or less exact agreements, very partially applied and probably inapplicable without global retouching.

In the flattening process, one should start by having a reference map of the "safety zone". As a reminder, the contact line and the safety zone no longer correspond to the official agreements.

Then identify the few agreements that need to be enforced in the short term. Not every fighter can move around with an agreement dictionary in his pocket. A few simple agreement that can be applied and enforced.

To communicate them and to set up an adapted ground device, the current device being not adapted to evacuate these weapons seen but simply adapted to signal it. The SMM limits itself to observations, without feeling involved in the evacuation that should be carried out. If they give this information to each camp 48 hours late, it is certain that there will be no evacuation. A passive observer mode does not help. An active observer mode could help: in this mode, observers would feel concerned about what can be done with their information when it is given to someone else to evacuate the weapons. We need to agree on an overall SMCC (SMM and JCCC) operation that makes sense and has a clear end goal. For the moment, the SMM says: I observe, I give you my information and the rest is not my problem. It is necessary to change the mode of operation and to think globally the system until the weapons are evacuated.

Part 4: Repair and Operational Facilities of Critical Civil Infrastructure

There is a sentence that is the same before and after the July 27th ceasefire:

« The SMM facilitated and monitored adherence to localised ceasefires ...»

Is there still a need for a local ceasefire since the ceasefire of July 27, 2020?

The activities presented and monitored by the SMM are not stupid, but pretending that it is necessary to renegotiate a specific and localized ceasefire each time no longer makes sense. Has SMM realized that there have been some changes?

Part 5: Movement Restrictions for SMM Patrols

As long as the patrols are only SMM, this will be the case.

What does it take to get it accepted that if the inspection patrols had a liaison officer from each camp integrated into the patrol (whether the liaison officer is physically present or not), every problem of this type is up to the liaison officer to deal with it live?

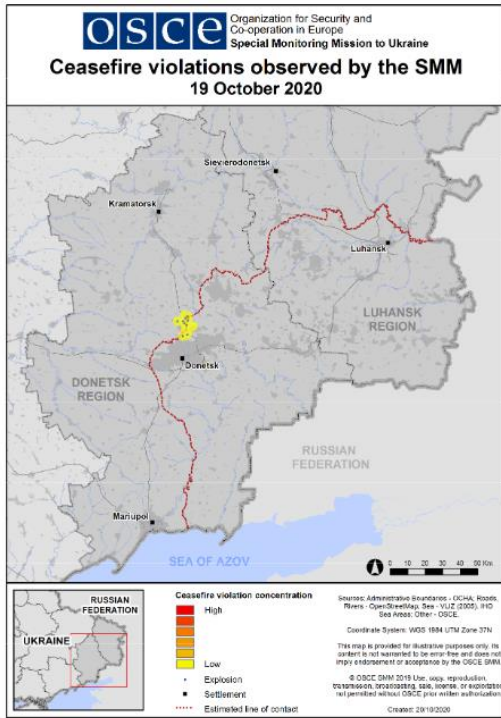
More globally, as long as SMM patrols will only be observing without being able to evacuate weapons with the active assistance of liaison officers, the problem will be the same.

It is a pattern of SMM observers who only observe passively, reserving the right to go anywhere, and without entering an active mode. This scheme will not be useful for the future.

It seems illusory to put an end to these restrictions without changing the current operation mode.

APPENDIX – Maps

Map of recorded ceasefire violations

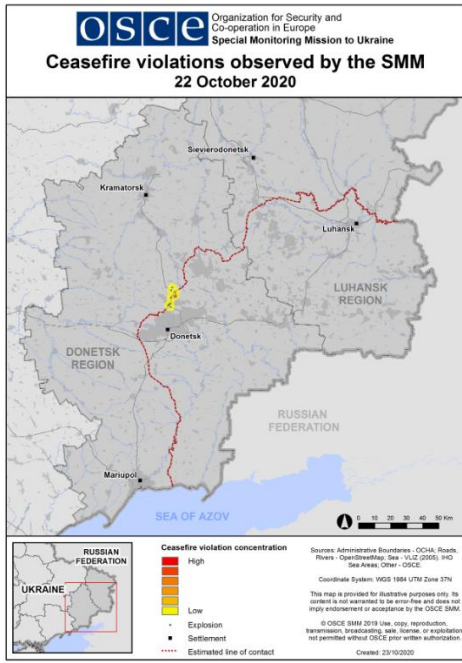


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