



Ressort: Politik

Highly tense situation in Ukraine

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The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) documented fewer ceasefire violations in both Donetsk and Luhansk regions compared to the previous reporting period, but the general situation remained highly tense. It remarked the use of multiple-launch-rocket systems in Horlivka and Kruta Balka. The preponderance of violations were recorded in the area of Avdiivka-Yasynuvata .

The SMM recorded hundreds of explosions in different areas of the contact line and the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) facilitated a local ceasefire permitting repairs to power lines supplying the Donetsk water filtration station and to restore electricity to the town of Avdiivka. The Mission witnessed weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and on the move on both sides of the contact line. The SMM monitored the humanitarian situation in Avdiivka and Yasynuvata, it followed up on reports of civilian casualties and saw damage caused by shelling on both sides of the contact line.

The Mission carried on the monitoring of the three disengagement areas in Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske but its access remained limited. OSCE monitored also the continuing blockade of a railway track near Hirske. In Kyiv the SMM monitored a funeral ceremony for seven Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers reportedly killed in Avdiivka.

On 2 February 2017 in a briefing of the UN Security Council on the situation in eastern Ukraine, the top United Nations political and humanitarian officials emphasized that continuing fighting in the region, with only short periods of respite, have exasperated human suffering.

“Since 7 January this year, and in particular over the last few days, we have seen a dangerous intensification of the conflict,” Jeffrey Feltman, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs told Council members today. “The entire length of the ‘Contact Line’ has seen a serious escalation of hostilities, and there is still a risk of further deterioration of the situation,” added Mr. Feltman. According to reports, there were more than 10,000 explosions in the Donetsk region over 24 hours, and heavy fighting has been reported near Mariupol, Popasna and the Svitlodarsk/Debaltseve areas, both in Government-controlled and non-government controlled areas, along with use of heavy weapons such as prohibited multiple-launch-rocket systems.

Moreover, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission has verified damage to civilian houses and a school in populated areas of Avdiivka, raising serious apprehension about possible violations of international

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humanitarian law by all sides.

Since the start of the conflict, almost 10,000 people have been killed (Ukrainian armed forces, civilians and members of armed groups), and over 23,000. Over 2,000 of those killed were civilians.

Mr. Feltman also spoke of the statement agreed yesterday at the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk which laid down urgent measures that both sides should take in the Avdiivka-Yasynuvata-Donetsk airport area and along the entire contact line in order to prevent further ceasefire violations.

With every new day of fighting, the conflict becomes more entrenched and difficult to resolve. There is no military solution to this conflict.

Also briefing the Security Council today, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien highlighted the impact of the conflict to civilians underlined the need for a political solution to the crisis.

Civilians living on both sides of the frontline [?] are not only traumatized, living a precarious and dangerous existence, but damage to critical services is making survival an issue, said Mr. O'Brien, adding that damage to critical infrastructure such heating in places such as Avdiivka and the freezing temperatures could trigger large-scale displacement.

The latest escalation of violence is exasperating the ongoing needs of an estimated 3.8 million civilians who require various degrees of humanitarian assistance. More than 60 per cent of those (about 2.3 million people) reside in non-Government controlled areas, and over 70 per cent are elderly, children and women. Government-imposed bureaucratic impediments, particularly in relation to the ban on commercial trade and importation of food and medicines across the contact line, remained a serious constraint to alleviating the humanitarian crisis and that suspension of social payments by the Government have severely affected hundreds of thousands of displaced people.

In his briefing, Mr. O'Brien also alerted the Security Council of the risk of serious environmental impact of the hostilities, he said: Damage to the Phenol plant near Novgorodsk village means that waste chemicals, including deadly sulfuric acid and formaldehyde, are now at critical levels [and] leakage into the surrounding land and the Seversky Donets River would have disastrous humanitarian consequences in a highly industrialized part of Europe. On the other side Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with the financial assistance of the European Union, is engaged in projects launching safeguarding and environmentally sound alternatives to the overuse and mismanagement of pesticides in Ukraine.

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