

OSCE SMM Spot Report 9/2021: Members of the armed formations again denied the SMM passage at the checkpoint near Olenivka, Donetsk region

On the morning of 17 April, an SMM patrol traveling from non-government-controlled Donetsk city, consisting of three vehicles with three trailers and six mission members, arrived at the checkpoint of the armed formations near Olenivka (non-government-controlled, 23km south-west of Donetsk) to conduct an exchange of trailers with a second SMM patrol arriving from government-controlled areas. At 12:19, two members of the armed formations approached the first patrol and asked the SMM to open the doors and trunks of the SMM vehicles for a visual inspection. At the same time, the SMM saw two women nearby, one of whom said to be a journalist. They appeared to be filming the patrol with their mobile phone. The patrol refused the armed formations members' request and remained stationary at the checkpoint.

During the next hours, the SMM undertook efforts to facilitate the patrol's crossing that would enable the exchange of trailers, but the vehicles were not allowed to pass.

At 14:00, the patrol left the checkpoint and returned to Donetsk city.

Since 1 March, the Mission has faced similar denials in Donetsk region five times: two times at the same checkpoint of the armed formations near Olenivka, on 1 March and on 15 March, and on 31 March, 2 April and 8 April at the checkpoint near Oleksandrivka (see SMM Spot Reports [1/2021](#), [3/2021](#), [4/2021](#), [5/2021](#) and [7/2021](#)).

The Mission again notes that such denials at checkpoints of the armed formations not only restrict the SMM's freedom of movement across the contact line, but also prevents the SMM's logistical operations, which are essential for implementation of its tasks.

The SMM furthermore notes that OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 1117 specifies that the SMM shall have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine. Unrestricted and unconditional access to all areas is essential to ensure effective monitoring and reporting of the security situation, as well as other mandated tasks. The mandate also tasks the Mission to report on any restrictions of its freedom of movement or other impediments to fulfilment of its mandate.

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit:
<https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/483800>

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