

UKRAINE

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1-28 February 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** During the reporting period, the security situation seriously deteriorated followed by a de-escalation. The situation remains volatile and tense.
- **Protection concerns:** UNHCR continued to advocate for improvements to draft law 3593-d “On the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Ukraine” in the areas of human rights protection, freedom of movement and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- **Legislation update:** A law aimed at supporting children permanently residing in settlements near the line of contact, on both sides, of was adopted.
- **Assistance provided:** In February, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 13,000 people. UNHCR and its partners provided over 3,150 legal, information and social work consultations to IDPs and other people of concern.



An elderly woman looks through the window of her house, badly damaged by shelling in Avdiivka, Donetsk region. A surge of violence in eastern Ukraine in late January 2017 left a small town of Avdiivka in Donetsk region and its 22,000 residents without electricity, heating and water for a week amid harsh winter condition. Fierce fighting has damaged critical infrastructure and destroyed the homes of nearly 200 families. UNHCR supported a government-led response by delivering 40 tonnes of humanitarian assistance for 2,000 people, including emergency shelter materials and relief items such as of blankets, bedding and towel sets, jerry cans, buckets and winter clothing. *Photo: UNHCR Ukraine/Evgeny Maloletka*

KEY FIGURES

21,000 people

Reached through Shelter/NFI assistance from UNHCR and partners in 2017

40 tonnes

of humanitarian assistance delivered in government-controlled areas in response to the Avdiivka situation

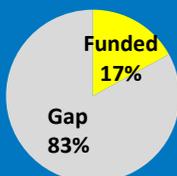
3,875 households

received coal briquettes or winter clothing through UNHCR’s 2016/2017 winterization programme

FUNDING

USD 37.7 million

requested for 2017



PRIORITIES

- Leading the Protection and Shelter/NFI Clusters.
- Supporting the Government of Ukraine on IDP and refugee/asylum issues.
- Advocacy on freedom of movement, humanitarian access, and other concerns.
- Provision of humanitarian assistance, especially near the line of contact and in the non-government controlled areas.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The situation remained relatively tense and volatile with occasional deterioration in some areas. The OSCE SMM [reported](#) a serious deterioration in the security situation in the area of Avdiivka, Yasynuvata and Donetsk airport in early February followed by a de-escalation of hostilities. The fighting and shelling in the area of Avdiivka at the end of January led to the displacement of some 300 people and the destruction or damage of around 300 houses and disrupted utility supplies throughout the area. UNOCHA's [Humanitarian Bulletin](#) provides an overview of the humanitarian situation. In response to the fighting, UNHCR protection staff and partners went to the area to provide information, protection by presence, and to undertake referrals. Field teams also monitored the situation and needs of evacuated persons from Avdiivka and provided non-food items, including tarpaulin, buckets, blankets, bed linen, towels and winter clothing. UNHCR's partner Slavic Heart registered IDPs arriving from the conflict area and provided psychosocial support and legal counseling to the evacuees. Government agencies and voluntary organizations assisted the voluntary evacuation of people from Avdiivka to collective centres in Myrnohrad, Pokrovsk, Selydove, Slovyansk, Svyatohirsk and Urzuf. Some 300 people were evacuated from the area, though the majority of residents were unwilling to leave their homes. Most affected residents of Avdiivka, Krasnohorivka, Mariinka and Trudovske are displaced within their own towns, staying with relatives or in rented accommodation. According to current legislation, they are not eligible for IDP status and related assistance.

During February, freedom of movement across the line of contact remained difficult. Long queues and correspondingly long waiting times continued to be reported. A shortage of heated waiting areas, medical facilities, toilets, drinking water and lack of information is a problem at all checkpoints. The non-government controlled area of Luhansk region remains particularly isolated as there is only one operating checkpoint, the pedestrian crossing at Stanytsia Luhanska. The crossing via a damaged bridge is precarious and can be difficult to cross, particularly in poor weather and for older and disabled people. People continue to cross at unofficial crossings exposing themselves to the risk of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Some residents of Luhansk cross from one area to the other via Russia, risking the payment of fines or bribes for illegally crossing the non-government controlled border with Russia. UNHCR is in the process of providing booths and equipment for State Border Guard Service (SBGS) officials at checkpoints on the line of contact. Twelve booths will be provided to the SBGS at Novotroytske, Marinka and Maiorsk checkpoints. The improved conditions and equipment should help to alleviate waiting times at checkpoints. In addition, tents are being provided to the State Emergency Service (SES) for use by people waiting to cross at checkpoints.

A year after the Government of Ukraine suspended social payments and pensions to some 500,000-600,000 IDPs in eastern Ukraine, access to social assistance and pensions remains a key concern. While some IDPs have been able to restore payments, a considerable number have not, particularly those living in the non-government controlled areas whose addresses cannot be verified by government officials. As social assistance and pensions are received mostly by IDPs with specific needs, the most severely affected are also the most vulnerable, including older people, people with disabilities, large families and single mothers. UNHCR advocates for the de-linking the payment of pensions and social assistance from IDP registration, as recommended in draft law no. 4257. Pensions are an acquired right of all citizens of Ukraine and should not be linked to IDP registration. Any system of verification and fraud prevention needs to include safeguards based on national and international human rights standards. In case of suspected fraud, verification must be conducted before suspension of payments.

External Displacement

UNHCR continues to monitor the refugee situation in neighbouring countries and Europe. According to government sources in receiving countries, the total number of Ukrainians seeking asylum in neighbouring countries now stands at 434,284, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (427,240), Poland (4,320) and Belarus (2,278). As of the end of 2016, since the beginning of the crisis, in the receiving countries of the European Union there were 9,625 applications for international protection in Germany, 9,310 in Italy, 3,530 in France and 3,155 in Sweden. An additional 1.3 million is also seeking other forms of legal stay, mainly in the Russian Federation (912,370), Belarus (244,621) and Poland (216,351).

Data source: EUROSTAT and respective Government authorities

Achievements



Protection

Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR, responded to the escalation of hostilities in Avdiivka by coordinating the provision of protection assistance to IDPs who were relocated to other areas of the region. The Cluster developed advocacy messages and took part in contingency planning to ensure preparedness for future conflict escalation in the areas near the line of contact. The Cluster also disseminated [guidance on humanitarian evacuations \[pdf\]](#) to ensure that humanitarian actors are aware of relevant protection principles that should be taken into account during evacuations.
- The Protection Cluster Coordinator conducted field missions to Donetsk, Kramatorsk, Sievierodonetsk and Slovyansk to chair protection working group meetings, participate in a Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Technical Working Group meeting and a general coordination meeting, as well as to meet with partners.
- The Protection Cluster has mapped the operational presence and activities of partners in 2017 on the [Protection Cluster 3W Dashboard](#).
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the [February factsheet \[pdf\]](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 7 February, the **legislation** “On amending certain laws of Ukraine concerning state support to children who permanently reside in settlements along the line of contact in the Anti-Terrorist Operations (ATO) zone” was adopted. It aims to support children permanently residing in settlements near the line of contact, on both sides. They are not registered as IDPs, live in harsh conditions and close to ongoing hostilities, and require social and other types of assistance. In particular, the law suggests granting such children with the following privileges: full or partial exemption from tuition fees, free textbooks and internet access, free housing while studying at college or university. The law tasks the Cabinet of Ministers with developing the necessary executive provisions for its implementation within three months after its entering into force. The positive effect of the law may be assessed after respective by-laws are developed by the Cabinet of Ministers and will depend on the implementation of its provisions.
- In February, UNHCR and its partners CrimeaSOS, MOST, Donbas Development Centre (DDC) and Maximal provided over 2,300 **legal consultations** (or legal information sessions) and 856 **social work consultations** to IDPs and people at risk of displacement in both government controlled and non-government controlled areas. Main areas of concern were social and financial assistance, civil documentation, employment, HLP, medical care, freedom of movement, humanitarian assistance, education and administrative services.
- UNHCR partner MOST provided capacity development **training** to 484 people in the areas of personal development, interpersonal communication, personal safety and career advice. The NGO DDC also conducted 32 workshops attended by 705 people covering areas such as education, first aid, languages and personal development.



On 2 February, UNHCR delivered 40 tonnes of humanitarian assistance to the town of Avdiivka and nearby areas. In addition to much demanded tarpaulin for emergency repairs, the humanitarian cargo contained supplies for 2,000 persons, including 2,000 blankets, 500 bedding and towel sets, jerry cans, buckets and winter clothing. *Photos: UNHCR Ukraine/Markiy Lyseiko*

- UNHCR has begun conducting **Participatory Assessments (PA)** with IDPs as well as refugees and asylum seekers in government-controlled areas of Ukraine to inform its planning for 2018-2019, as well as development of the multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategy. The main emphasis of the PAs is on the situation of people living near to the line of contact and people from vulnerable groups. Participatory Assessment with IDPs is aimed at gathering accurate information on specific protection risks faced by IDPs, underlying causes and hearing their proposed solutions. The results will influence the finalization of the protection and solutions strategy for Ukraine.

Shelter and Non-food Items (NFIs)

Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter and NFI Cluster, led by UNHCR and co-chaired by People in Need, drafted a [technical note on the scale of damage \[pdf\]](#) for partners and local authorities to correctly label escalations and changes in the situation following the recent escalation of the conflict. The Cluster also produced a [technical note on damage assessment \[pdf\]](#) to guide partners on essential data to be collected in order to improve coordination at field level.
- The Cluster published its [annual report \[pdf\]](#) reviewing the strategy and the results of project implementation in 2016. Following more than two years of shelter and non-food item response, the report seeks to analyse trends, achievements, and response to shelter and NFI needs. In 2016, the Shelter and NFI Cluster and its partners assisted over 175,000 households.
- The Cluster circulated a draft [guidance document on monetization in the Shelter/NFI Cluster in Ukraine \[pdf\]](#). The document includes vocabulary on cash terms, a review of the use of Shelter and NFI monetization programs that have been used in Ukraine, a guidance matrix on when and how to monetize, tips for monitoring and evaluation, protection mainstreaming, a review of government social programs, and reminders on anti-corruption and fraud.
- Winterization activities and coordination at village level continued. An updated coverage of partners can be seen on the [website](#).
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the February [factsheet \[pdf\]](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter assistance was provided to **13,000 people**.
- In February, UNHCR's [winterization plan](#), provided assistance to 2,480 households (1,440 in government-controlled areas and 1,040 in non-governmental areas) through the distribution of coal briquettes. 1,400 households also received winter clothing in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions.
- In response to the situation Avdiivka, UNHCR delivered 40 tonnes of humanitarian assistance in government-controlled areas. Assistance provided included tarpaulin for emergency shelter repairs, 2,000 blankets, 500 bedding and towel sets, jerry cans, buckets and winter clothing. Priority was given to vulnerable people and conflict affected households. UNHCR also provided some 1,900 NFIs to 500 people in Svyatohirsk, including a group of children and their parents who had fled to from the fighting in Avdiivka. UNHCR's Mariupol field office provided 450 buckets and jerry cans to partner NGO Proliska for distribution in Verhnetoretske village. UNHCR's Sievierodonetsk field office provided 400 m² of tarpaulin to the State Emergency Service for distribution to five homes in Malynove damaged by shelling.
- In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk region, UNHCR provided 100 blankets, bedding sets to NGO partner Maximal for distribution to vulnerable people in Yasynuvata. UNHCR also provided 10,000 m² of plastic sheeting to the de facto "Ministry of Emergency Situations", for distribution to the conflict-affected population on the non-government controlled side of the line of contact near Avdiivka. Partner Donbas Development Centre (DDC) distributed 8,420 m² of plastic sheeting for emergency repairs to 102 households in Donetsk city and the villages of Oleksandrivka and Staromykhailivka near the line of contact.
- In the non-government controlled area of Luhansk region, UNHCR continued distribution of furniture and educational equipment provided by UNICEF to schools and kindergartens in Heorhiivka and the villages of Frunze, Komisariivka and Petrovenky located near the line of contact. UNHCR provided medical establishments in Lotykove, Slovyanoserbsk and Stakhanov with 93,552 IOM-procured diapers.
- In central and western Ukraine, the UNHCR IDP field unit in Kyiv provided assistance to 374 vulnerable IDP families, including 15 Roma IDP families.

Octogenarian couple struggle for survival on Ukraine's front line

Hanna and Oleksiy Huzovskiy barricade the door of their apartment and take refuge in the hall when the shelling starts. They are both in their 80s and are too frail to run to a bomb shelter. Hanna suffers from pain in her legs and walks with a stick, and Oleksiy, who can barely walk, has poor hearing and eyesight. They stick together and constantly refuse their daughter's pleas to leave.

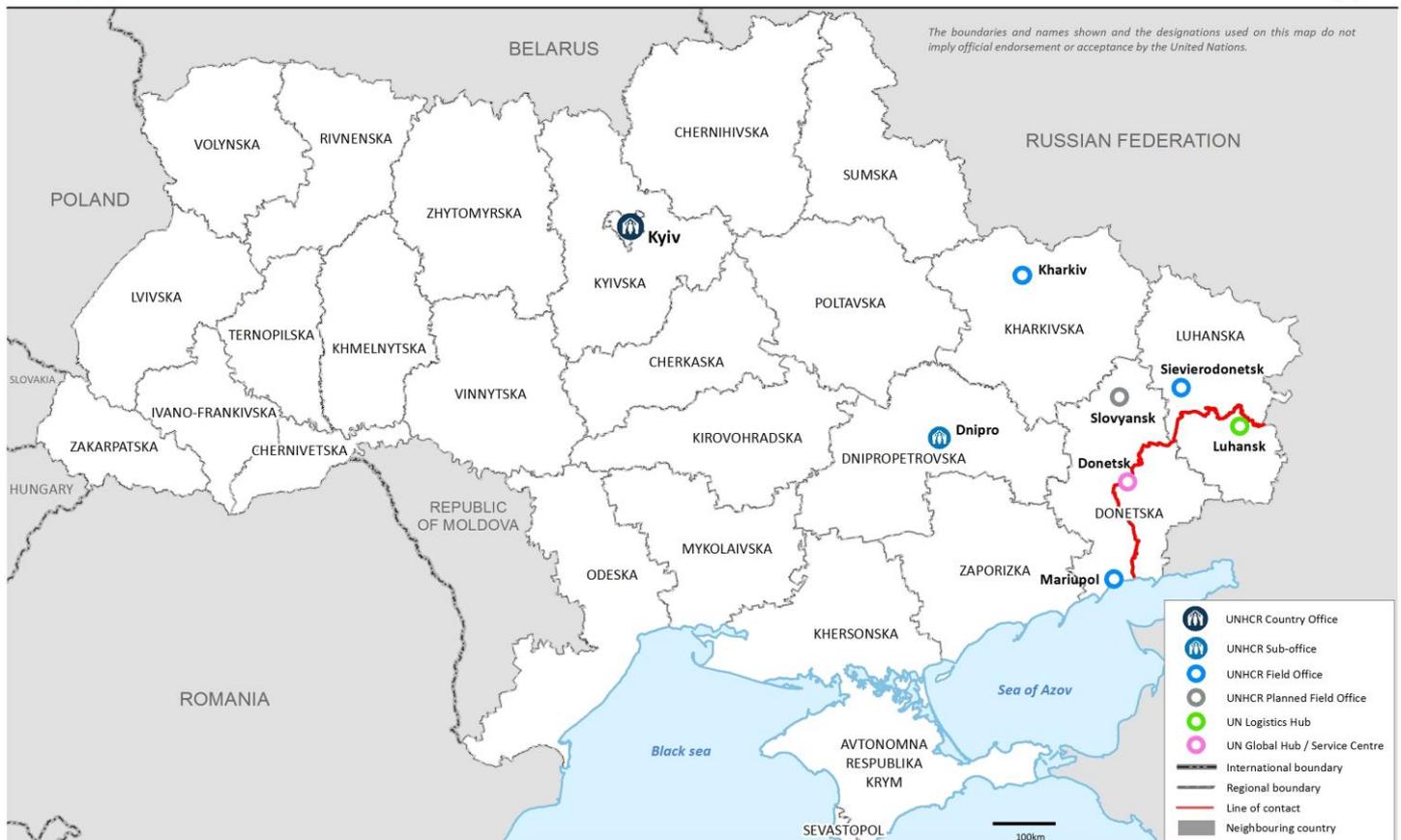


Like hundreds of thousands of elderly people in Luhansk, they have faced social, financial and medical difficulties since the war began in eastern Ukraine in April 2014.

In December, HelpAge delivered cash assistance provided by UNHCR to the most vulnerable elderly residents living near the line of contact. Read the full story [online](#). Photo: UNHCR Ukraine/Anastasia Vlasova



Ukraine: UNHCR Presence



Date: 31 Mar 2017 Sources: UNHCR Author: UNHCR - Kyiv Feedback: InformationManagement@unhcr.org Filename: UNHCR_presence_Eng_v1

Working in partnership

The humanitarian response to the internal displacement situation in Ukraine is a coordinated effort by international organizations, the Government, local and international NGOs. UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding with the [Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons](#) establishing a framework for collaboration and coordination aimed at maximizing the capacity of UNHCR and the Ministry to assist IDPs. UNHCR works together with nine implementing partners* and other partners providing assistance to IDPs through protection and legal assistance, policy development and capacity building and the distribution of emergency shelter materials and non-food items. UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and co-chairs the Shelter and Non-food Item Cluster together with [People in Need](#).

UNHCR implementing partners (Refugees): [Desyate Kvitnya](#) | [International Fund for Health Well Being and Environment Conservation \(NEEKA\)](#) | [Right to Protection](#) | [Rokada Faith, Hope, Love](#) | [WORLD](#)

UNHCR implementing partners (IDP operation): [CrimeaSOS](#) | [Desyate Kvitnya](#) | [Donbass Development Centre](#) | [Most | Maximal](#) | [Proliska](#) | [Roma Women Fund Chiricli](#) | [Slavic Heart](#) | [Right to Protection*](#)

Key Shelter and Non Food Items Cluster partners: [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [Caritas Ukraine](#) | [Chesna i Svyata Kraina](#) | [CrimeaSOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Dopomoha Dnipra](#) | [HIA Hungary](#) | [IOM](#) | [Mercy Corps](#) | [Ministry of Regional Development, Building and Housing](#) | [Ministry of Social Policy](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Save the Children UK](#) | [Save Ukraine Organization](#) | [State Emergency Service](#) | [Ukrainian Red Cross Society](#) | [UNDP](#) | [Vostok SOS](#) | [World Jewish Relief](#)

Key Protection Cluster partners: [Crimea SOS](#) | [Crimean Diaspora](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Foundation 101](#) | [HelpAge](#) | [IOM](#) | [La Strada](#) | [Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [OHCHR \(HRMMU\)](#) | [OSCE](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Right to Protection](#) | [Save the Children](#) | [The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [UNFPA](#) | [Vostok SOS](#)

*Some Project Partnership Agreements for 2017 are pending and are not listed.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR's total financial requirement in 2017 for Ukraine is **US\$ 37.7 million**. Total recorded contributions for the operation in 2017 amount to some **US\$ 6.4 million**

As of the **5 April 2017**, contributions recorded represent **17 per cent** of the total financial requirements. UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, particularly those with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

Funding received (in million USD)

