

UKRAINE

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1-31 January 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** During the reporting period, the security situation in eastern Ukraine remains volatile and tense.
- **Protection concerns:** Freedom of movement across the line of contact remains a primary concern. The suspension of social and pension payments to IDPs pending verification of their residential address is an ongoing concern.
- **Legislation update:** The Cabinet of Ministers adopted an Action Plan on the implementation of recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Assistance provided:** In January, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 6,400 people. UNHCR and its partners provided over 4,600 legal, information and psychosocial consultations to IDPs and other people of concern.



Anna, 68, and Victor, 67, stand in front of several bags of coal that will heat their homes in the village of Luhanske, Donetsk. The village of Luhanske, near the line of contact in eastern Ukraine, looks abandoned during the day. A handful of older people who stayed behind struggle to keep warm in the harsh winter after conflict drove out younger residents. During the coldest months of January and February temperatures often fall below -20C in Ukraine. In early January, Anna and Victor received coal from UNHCR’s local partner NGO Proliska. Two hundred Luhanske residents have received similar support under the scheme to meet gaps in winterization assistance. Read more on our [website](#). Photo: UNHCR/Evgeny Maloletka

KEY FIGURES

78 per cent

of people crossing the line of contact are concerned about long queues at checkpoints

47 per cent

of people crossing the line of contact are concerned about shelling

38 per cent

travel to visit relatives

26 per cent

are concerned about difficult conditions while queuing at checkpoints

8 per cent

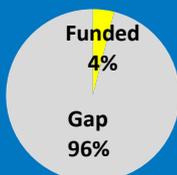
of people travelling by car were unable to cross due to long queues

Source: Foundation.101 crossing the line of contact survey (December 2016)

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.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The overall security situation in areas near the line of contact remained volatile and tense during the reporting period. The OSCE SMM [reports](#) shell-damage to civilian infrastructure and disruption of water, gas and electricity supplies in many areas. Hostilities were concentrated in the areas of Donetsk airport-Yasynuvata-Avdiivka; west and north of Horlivka; east and south-east of Svitlodarsk; north-east and east of Mariupol; western Luhansk region; and Stanytsia Luhanska. Numerous civilian fatalities were recorded during the period due to the shelling of populated areas and areas close to crossing points on the line of contact. Despite the shelling, no significant new displacement of civilians was reported. UNOCHA's [Humanitarian Snapshot](#) provides an overview of the humanitarian situation.

During January, the State Border Guards Service (SBGS) recorded 586,000 individual and 100,000 vehicle crossings of the line of contact. Difficult conditions persist at crossing points on the line of contact. Long queues and correspondingly long waiting times are reported at checkpoints, while freezing weather conditions make the situation of those waiting to cross at checkpoints particularly difficult, with low temperatures in eastern Ukraine of -20 C. Delays at crossing points include lack of staff and equipment to manage the number of people waiting to cross. In order to improve the processing capacity at the checkpoints, UNHCR is providing 12 furnished booths, 60 computers technical assistance to the SBGS. UNHCR also delivered 10 winterized tents and two generators to the State Emergency Service (SES) to provide shelter for people waiting at checkpoints. In the non-government controlled area, UNHCR provided diesel generators and two tents for the establishment of heating points for civilians queuing at Nikitovka and Novotroitske checkpoints.

UNHCR continued implementation of its [winterization plan](#), aimed at providing targeted winter assistance to vulnerable households near the line of contact. The assistance will reach 3,000 households in the government-controlled area and 2,000 households in the non-government controlled areas. UNHCR's distribution of coal in the non-government controlled area was disrupted in January by a blockade of the railway line crossing the line of contact.

Access of IDPs to pensions and social assistance is an ongoing concern. IDPs remain subject to bi-annual address verification visits to confirm their eligibility. Other Ukrainian citizens are not required to meet these requirements. The additional criteria are an unnecessary burden on the displaced, many of whom are without livelihoods and homes and are dependent on pensions and social assistance. In addition, the current rules mean that citizens of non-government controlled areas are required to register as IDPs in order to continue to access their rightful benefits. 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; social assistance is linked to an individual's vulnerability and not the fact of displacement.

A shortage of housing options remains an enduring problem for displaced persons. Collective centres, originally established as temporary solutions to house the displaced, are at increased risk of closure as the situation in Ukraine continues. With few affordable long-term solutions, IDPs evicted from closed collective centres remain in precarious situations. The cost of private accommodation is increasing, while affordable accommodation is often in poor condition. Many of those evicted either relocate to alternative temporary shelters or return to their places of origin. UNHCR continues to advocate for the access of vulnerable IDPs to social housing. Housing needs for IDPs are becoming increasingly acute as prolonged displacement outlasts available assistance and individual savings. The Government should protect IDPs against forced evictions from collective centers and provide reasonable alternatives. IDPs with disabilities and with other specific needs should receive priority for social housing.

External Displacement

UNHCR continues to monitor the refugee situation in neighbouring countries. According to government sources in receiving countries, the total number of Ukrainians seeking asylum or other forms of legal stay in neighbouring countries now stands at 1,554,497, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (1,226,104) and Belarus (148,867). In other neighbouring countries, 286 Ukrainians sought asylum in Moldova, 88 in Hungary, 80 in Romania and 26 in Slovakia. As of 31 January, since the beginning of the crisis, in the top five receiving countries of the European Union there were 9,227 applications for international protection in Germany, 8,715 in Italy, 5,852 in Poland, 3,423 in France and 3,058 in Sweden.

Data source: Respective national asylum authorities

Achievements



Protection

Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR, convened a coordination meeting of Cluster partners to agree on the priorities for advocacy regarding legislation for the IDP thematic day in Parliament. Based on the discussion, draft laws related to access to justice (elimination of court fees for IDPs), freedom of movement across the line of contact and access to social services for IDPs were prioritized. Subsequently, UNHCR as Protection Cluster Lead prepared a number of letters to responsible Parliamentary Committees with the request to expedite the consideration of these draft laws.

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 28 December 2016, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Directive no. 1073-r, an Action Plan on the implementation of recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The recommendations were provided following Ukraine's first report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The plan has been developed for 2017-2020 to address pertinent issues to all persons with disabilities, independently from their displacement status or situation. Through its provisions, the registration process and data collection regarding individuals with disabilities will be improved. The plan contains a number of actions, which, upon successful implementation, will make the offices of various state authorities and social services, railway stations and other public places accessible and provide equal access to employment. It also prioritizes the evacuation of persons with disabilities in case of emergencies, including hostilities and prioritizes their access to humanitarian assistance. The plan contains specific provisions relating to the situation of disabled IDPs and envisages loosening the procedures for physical identification and verification for them. UNHCR supports the Action Plan which is expected to contribute to building a safer and friendlier environment for those with special needs.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR partners provided over 4,600 consultations to IDPs and people at risk of displacement. In the government-controlled area of Donetsk region, UNHCR partner Slavic Heart provided information assistance to 79 people, 40 legal consultations, 54 psychosocial consultations, 90 social consultations. Proliska provided 202 information consultations and assisted 334 people with individual case management. Between 64 and 85 of consultations were provided to women. Main concerns included humanitarian assistance, civil documentation, winterization, access to social assistance, employment and depression. CrimeaSOS provided 944 legal consultations and 342 social consultations. In December, UNHCR partner the Right to Protection provided 1,705 individual legal consultations, group legal counselling to 437 persons and legal assistance to 235 persons, including 84 court cases. Main issues included access to social assistance and pensions, access to services, housing, land and property (HLP), IDP registration, freedom of movement, family law, employment, civil documentation and harassment. During October-December 2016, the Norwegian Refugee Council provided provided 4,180 information consultations, 2,251 legal consultations and legal assistance to 118 people. In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, UNHCR partner MOST provided individual protection assistance to 188 people. In the non-government controlled area of Luhansk, UNHCR Protection Unit provided 35 legal consultations and 28 telephone consultations.
- In the government-controlled area of Donetsk region, NGO partner Proliska finalized its community-based initiatives (CBIs) for 2016. The final CBIs were implemented in the town of Girnyak (support to communal services) and Pervomaiske village (provision of a power generator to a local clinic). UNHCR implemented 21 community projects and 60 community initiatives assisting 13,323 IDPs and members of hosting communities, mostly aimed at responding to concerns of vulnerable IDPs. In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, UNHCR partner MOST finalized a CBI replacing windows at a kindergarten in Torez damaged in 2014. A second CBI aimed at improving conditions (installation of benches and repairs to a bus stop) at Sadove school in Shakhtarsk is being finalized. NGO partner Maximal completed a CBI in Yasynuvata aimed at improving conditions in a kindergarten and a second initiative to repair showers at a collective center in Donetsk city. A further three CBIs in Staromykhailivka, and Stepano-Krynka and Yasynuvata are being finalized. The implementation of two CBIs is being supervised by local People in Need (PiN) staff, local volunteers and local administrations. Of 17 CBIs approved for the area, 15 have been completed and two will be finalized shortly.

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, concentrated its efforts in coordinating and responding to winterization needs. In government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, 15 agencies of the Cluster provided 20,376 households with winterization assistance. 8,376 households received clothing, bedding and blankets; 9,952 received heating assistance (coal, wood, heaters, stoves); 1,230 households benefitted from shelter insulation (installation of insulation, window glazing, etc.); and 471 households benefitted from communal heating support. 25 percent of the assistance was delivered as monetary assistance, while 75 percent of assistance was provided in-kind. Despite the tireless efforts to meet needs in the non-government controlled areas, the Shelter and NFI Cluster has noticed that there are gaps to meet the projected needs of conflict-affected people living in these areas. Approximately 40 per cent of households still need fuel, while some 90 per cent are in need of winter clothing and bedding.
- The Cluster has published an interactive winterization tool in order to make bilateral coordination easier at field level. This tool is available at the Shelter and NFI Cluster [website](#).
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the January [factsheet \[pdf\]](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter assistance was provided to over 6,400 people. In government-controlled areas, UNHCR partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) completed its 2016 shelter project in northern Donetsk. UNHCR partner PiN provided shelter assistance to 93 households in the area. In Luhansk, UNHCR completed 56 heavy repairs and 807 light and medium repairs begun in 2016. UNHCR also delivered books, bookmarks and calendars to SOS Children village, Vostok SOS, the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Child Protection, the Center for children, young adults and families in the area. The organizations will use this printed materials in their work to prevent domestic abuse. NGO Proliska distributed 450 buckets and jerry cans provided by UNHCR in Verhnetoretske village. 1,066 Buckets, 533 jerry cans and 2,100 m2 of tarpaulin was also distributed in Avdiivka to 1,416 people. In non-government controlled areas of Luhansk region, UNHCR distributed 125 tonnes of furniture and educational equipment provided by UNICEF to 9 schools and 10 kindergartens in Novosvitlivka, Khriashchuvate, Pervomaisk, Smile, Rodakove and Frunze. All the educational establishments assisted had been destroyed during hostilities. The Russian Federation provided humanitarian assistance allowing de facto authorities to rebuild the schools and kindergartens. However, lack of furniture and other non-food items remained an issue since January 2015. Educational kits were also provided to 5,000 children. UNHCR provided 33 social and medical establishments in Luhansk, Alchevsk, Kolpakove, Antrazit, Kirovsk, Krasnodon, Mykolaivka, Lutuhino, Bryanka, Sverdlovsk, Perevalsk, Rovenki, Krasnyi Luch with some 800,000 IOM-procured diapers.



This winter UNHCR will distribute coal to 2,000 households in the non-government controlled areas in Donetsk region.

Photos: UNHCR/V.Stetsenko

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 9 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 (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: [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Crimean Diaspora](#) | [HelpAge](#) | [IOM](#) | [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](#)

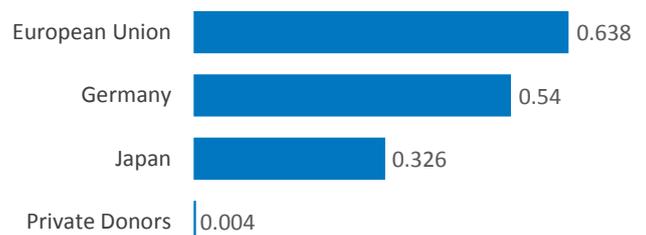
*Some Project Partnership Agreements for 2017 are pending and are not listed.

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\$1.5 million**

As of the **28 February 2017**, contributions recorded represent **4 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)



Contacts:

Nina Sorokopud, Public Information Officer, sorokopu@unhcr.org, Tel: +38 044 288-9710 ext.116

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