

KEY MESSAGES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

- **UNHCR remains concerned by entrenched restrictions on freedom of movement.** UNHCR urges all parties involved to ensure **unhindered access of humanitarian organizations** to all affected populations, and to allow people to move freely, to reach safety, to access services, and to exercise their rights.
- **The humanitarian response needs to be scaled up, in particular to conflict-affected locations.** In that regard, UNHCR wishes to reiterate that neither the United Nations *per se* nor any UN agency has the ability to confer recognition on a state, regardless of the various parties' interpretation. Since June 2015, the *de facto* authorities in non-government controlled areas (NGCAs) have requested that the presence and work of humanitarian agencies in the areas they control be formalized. The Government of Ukraine and the *de facto* authorities have to meet their **obligations under international humanitarian law and the Minsk Agreements to ensure safe access of humanitarian assistance.** It is incumbent on the Government of Ukraine and the authorities in control to find practical and workable solutions that are acceptable to all concerned.
- **Authorities must guarantee unrestricted access to benefits and rights to all displaced persons, regardless of registration status.** UNHCR reminds that the rights of internally displaced persons, and the responsibilities of national authorities towards them, are not affected by their location or their status in national legislation. Unregistered displaced persons are among the most vulnerable.
- **The Government should strengthen its efforts to assist displaced persons lacking civil documentation.** Civil registration procedures, specifically documentation for newborn children in NGCAs, should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Government should develop an administrative procedure for civil registration. Persistent gaps in the procedural framework will eventually result in a **growing number of undocumented children, potentially leading to a risk of statelessness.**
- **UNHCR urges Ukrainian authorities to properly address housing needs in order to prevent further displacement and secondary movements.** Housing needs for IDPs are becoming increasingly acute as protracted displacement outlasts available assistance and household savings. Authorities are encouraged to develop systematic, forward-looking approach to respond to those needs. UNHCR wants to highlight that living in collective centres can engender dependency and weaken the ability of the internally displaced to manage their own lives, which perpetuates the trauma of displacement and creates barriers to integration.
- UNHCR urges Ukrainian authorities to promote pathways, which will allow for permanent **legal, economic and social integration for all affected populations** without discrimination. Humanitarian agencies should particularly monitor the situation of **ethnic minorities**, such as Roma and Crimean Tatars, marginalized communities and other **persons with specific needs.** The Government should also ensure that sufficient resources, including financial, are allocated to implement the recently adopted Comprehensive State Programme for Support, Social Adaptation and Reintegration of IDPs until 2017 and the accompanying Action Plan.
- **The Government and humanitarian partners should intensify information campaigns focusing on the rights and obligations of IDPs and affected communities,** as well as on available services. IDPs and affected communities must be informed on where to seek redress and assistance in case of rights violations. **Psychosocial assistance** should be strengthened for conflict-affected populations, as it is an essential tool to overcome their trauma and create conditions for durable solutions.
- **Authorities should ensure that political rights of IDPs are restored.** UNHCR highlights the link between voting and durable solutions, noting that the act of voting can be a crucial element of integration into the local community. At the same time, it is important to enable IDPs to participate in the Donbas local election foreseen to take place in 2016 under the Minsk II agreement.

UNHCR, jointly with UN agencies and partners, remains ready to support authorities and communities in addressing the needs of IDPs and those in need of protection and assistance, wherever they may be.

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