

## UKRAINE

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

10 February – 1 April 2016

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** During the reporting period, the security situation in eastern Ukraine has fluctuated between periods of calm and isolated fighting. The situation throughout eastern Ukraine remains tense.
- **Protection concerns:** Freedom of movement across the line of contact remains a primary concern. The Ministry of Social Policy instructed its regional offices to suspend social and pension payments to IDPs until their residential address is verified.
- **Legislation update:** A resolution amending the way IDPs receive social assistance and pensions was adopted. The amendments could lead to cancelled IDP registrations and will make access to assistance more difficult for those living in non-government controlled areas.
- **Assistance provided:** Since 10 February, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 11,400 people.



Anna's life was difficult long before Ukraine's conflict, as the 79 year old is disabled and cannot walk. When fighting came to their home town of Avdiivka the trauma of living under shelling in a makeshift bomb shelter was too much for her elderly husband, who sadly passed away. As soon as it was safe to reach her, her daughter evacuated Anna to a new home in the village of Tovsta near Mariupol, where she was met by UNHCR. In March 2016, the Ministry of Social Policy suspended social benefits and pension payments to some 500,000 people on the suspicion that some claimants are ineligible. The suspension particularly affects the most vulnerable, those with less mobility and access to information, such as Anna. People with specific needs, such as the elderly and disabled may have difficulty reaching the offices of the Department of Social Protection to confirm their residence. *Photo: UNHCR/A.Shcherbyna*

### KEY FIGURES

**74.8 per cent**

of people crossing the line of contact are concerned about insecurity

**58 per cent**

cross by private cars

**57.2 per cent**

are aged 40-65

**54 per cent**

travel to visit relatives

**46 per cent**

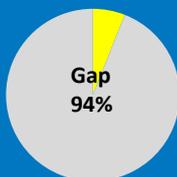
cross the line of contact every month

*Source: UNHCR crossing the line of contact survey*

### FUNDING

**USD 34.8 million**

requested for the operation in 2016



### 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 around the line of contact and NGCA.

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

### Operational Context

During the reporting period, the security situation in eastern Ukraine has fluctuated between periods of calm and isolated fighting. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission [reports](#) ceasefire violations, including increased use weapons prohibited under the terms of the Addendum to the Package of Measures. While the fighting remains concentrated on the line of contact in Donetsk *oblast*, particularly in the vicinity of Donetsk city, Avdiivka and Yasynuvata, the situation throughout eastern Ukraine remains tense.

Freedom of movement of people across the line of contact remains a key concern. People waiting to cross the line of contact must queue for many hours and sometimes overnight while their documents are checked. UNHCR conducted a survey of people waiting to cross checkpoints which found that primary concerns related to security, particularly the risk of shelling, shooting and the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW). Other concerns included the amount of traffic waiting to cross and the subsequently long waiting times. The checkpoints lack capacity to meet demands including lack of adequate infrastructure, such as sanitary facilities, access to drinking water and food. The majority of people surveyed were crossing the line of contact to visit friends and family, while others were crossing to check on their property. Government restrictions on the freedom of movement of people across the line of contact following the introduction of the Temporary Order on Movement in January 2015 have divided families and harmed livelihoods.

A recent announcement by the Ministry of Social Policy announcing the suspension of social and pension payments to IDPs until their residential address can be verified is of particular concern. While estimates of the number of people affected varies, the office of the Ombudsperson estimates that around 500,000 people may be affected. Benefits that have been suspended include those paid to IDPs under Council of Ministers resolution no. 505 as well as state pensions. The suspension will particularly affect the most vulnerable, such as the elderly and disabled, who may face difficulties reaching offices of the Department of Social Protection to confirm their residence. Meanwhile, the procedure for the verification of addresses remains unclear, as it is not stipulated by current legislation.

Humanitarian access to non-government controlled Donetsk remains limited for UN agencies while the issue of “registration” is still pending. UNHCR continues to conduct activities through partners, including monitoring, meeting with different partners, implementation of small-scale community based projects and Quick Impact Projects (QIP). The reluctance of de facto authorities to cooperate and collaborate with the UN and other international organizations without “registration” and government sanctions greatly restrict the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the population.

The displaced continue to report the lack of livelihoods as a key concern. A shortage of employment opportunities and the general economic situation facing Ukraine has particularly affected the displaced, forcing many to live in inadequate housing such as collective centres and other temporary accommodation. At present, there are around 300 such collective centres housing some 12,600 people, some 1,400 fewer than at the end of 2015. Other IDPs stay with host families, volunteers and in private accommodation, though affordable private accommodation is often in poor condition. The lack of livelihoods and adequate housing greatly restrict the possibility to find lasting solutions.

### 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 1,363,802, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (1,092,212) and Belarus (129,990).

The OSCE Observer Mission monitoring the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints on the Russia-Ukraine border inform that total cross-border traffic increased at both checkpoints during the latest reporting period, from 9,685 to 10,398 crossings per day. There was a daily average net flow of 110 people entering Ukraine from the Russian Federation. This continues the trend of recent weeks of increased total crossings.

As of 1 April, since the beginning of the crisis, in the top five receiving countries in the European Union and in neighbouring countries there were 6,540 applications for international protection in Germany, 4,880 in Poland, 6,522 in Italy, 2,532 in Sweden, 2,687 in France, 261 in Moldova, 76 in Romania, 67 in Hungary and 26 in Slovakia according to government sources in receiving countries.

## Achievements



### Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR, is concerned about the situation at checkpoints on the line of contact and significant deterioration of freedom of movement in the south of non-government controlled Donetsk oblast. The checkpoint at Zaitseve was closed on 3-20 February and the checkpoint at Mariinka was closed on 13 February and again on 17-22 February because of security concerns. This led to long queues at the three open checkpoints, with people waiting around 4-5 hours to cross. Moreover, the conditions for people waiting at checkpoints, such as heated waiting tents, toilets and public transportation, has not improved.
- Restrictions to freedom of movement mean that there is a high risk of people entering areas contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war while taking alternative routes, especially people commuting to work across the line of contact.
- The Protection Cluster together with UNHCR has developed an overview on state assistance for IDPs summarizing existing social entitlements and benefits, developments in legislation with a focus on the government controlled area; the note provided recommendations for humanitarian actors and authorities.
- The Protection Cluster produced a detailed [factsheet \[pdf\]](#) on the suspension of social and pension payments to IDPs.
- More information on cluster activities can be found in the February 2016 [factsheet \[pdf\]](#).

### Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 14 March, the Council of Ministers adopted Resolution no. 167, amending Resolution nos. 1596/1999, 509/2014 and 637/2014. The amendment to Resolution no. 1596/1999 states that Oschadbank, the bank contracted to pay state benefits, must share information on the cash flow of payments to IDPs with the Ministry of Finance. The amendment to Resolution no. 509/2014 means that IDPs may not state their residential address as the Department of Social Policy, State Migration Service or any other address considered non-residential. According to the Danish Refugee Council, tens of thousands of IDPs are registered at non-residential addresses. The amendment could lead to a considerable number of cancelled IDP registrations. The amendment to Resolution 637/2014 makes Oschadbank the only institution paying benefits and pensions from the state and local budgets. The amendment will come into effect for all IDPs from 1 July, requiring that anyone receiving social assistance or pension payments open an account at Oschadbank. The new process includes the issuing of an electronic card requiring claimants to be physically present to collect their entitlements. This will particularly affect registered IDPs residing in the non-government controlled areas, many of whom depend on friends and relatives to collect social assistance and payments on their behalf.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR partner Stantsia Kharkiv provided 1,118 general consultations, 217 legal consultations and 84 psychosocial consultations. UNHCR partner Slavic Heart provided 1,293 general consultations, 1,587 legal consultations and 682 psychosocial consultations. Around 75 per cent of the consultations were provided to female beneficiaries. Main concerns raised were the suspension of social payments and pensions for IDPs, humanitarian assistance, civil documentation, medical assistance, IDP rights, legislation, crossing the line of contact and the Crimean administrative border, housing, land and property, employment and children. In February, UNHCR partner CrimeaSOS provided consultations to 1,361 people, of which 1,012 were legal consultations and 317 were social consultations. The NGO also assisted with 32 court cases. Main concerns were delayed payment of IDP assistance, crossing the line of contact and the Crimean administrative border, the re-registration of cars and civil documentation. Legal assistance activities targeting people of concern in the non-government controlled area of Donetsk are being developed and planned for 2016. The projects will be implemented through local partners Maximal and Most. In non-government controlled Luhansk, UNHCR conducted consultations with 20 IDPs (including 16 women). Issues discussed included humanitarian, social and medical support, explanation of IDP and social vulnerable group rights and referral to relevant social services (both in the government and non-government controlled areas).

<sup>1</sup> [International Protection Considerations Related to the Developments in Ukraine – Update III](http://www.refworld.org/docid/56017e034.html)  
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/56017e034.html>

## Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

### Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter Cluster led by UNHCR and co-chaired by People in Need (PiN), conducted decentralized coordination meetings in Kramatorsk on 2 February and in Sievierodonetsk on 4 February. These meetings with field partners allowed the cluster team to prepare an update on the progress of winterization in 2015-16. Furthermore, a consolidated update on damage assessment is ongoing to prepare the spring repair campaign.
- The Cluster team in partnership with the UNHCR Protection Unit, held training sessions on collective centers at two workshops organized by UNHCR partner NGO CrimeaSOS. The first workshop was for staff of regional Departments of Social Protection (DoSP) from all regions of Ukraine and the second for CrimeaSOS ombudspersons in the field.
- At the request of Cluster partners, the Cluster team ran two intensive training sessions on programming online data collection. The first training session was for PiN staff and the second was with participants from UNHCR Field Offices, Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), PCPM, Terre des Hommes and Ukrainian Frontiers. A further three training sessions have already been requested, increasing the number of people trained in the practice of data collection.

### Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- UNHCR's distribution of winter NFIs, heating fuel and winter cash assistance in eastern Ukraine is complete in the government controlled area and nearing completion in the non-government controlled areas. The winter cash assistance programme targeting government controlled Donetsk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia *oblasts* is complete. The distribution of pre-paid cards began on 1 February. Cash cards with a value of either UAH 6,000 (USD 231) or UAH 8,000 (USD 308) were provided depending on family size. A total of 3,594 households were assisted by the programme. The beneficiaries were identified through a hybrid approach involving direct input from UNHCR field monitoring activities and partners. The UNHCR Sub-office in Dnipropetrovsk is summarizing Winterization Cash lessons learned in case there is need for planning similar activities on 2016. The winterization hotline report will be prepared together with the post-distribution monitoring report.
- In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, NFI distribution is ongoing. 4,099 out of 5,000 households targeted (82 per cent) have received assistance. 2,848 out of 5,000 households have received coal for heating. Donetsk Field Office also provided 193 heaters to NGO Maximal to be distributed to social institutions in Donetsk city and to vulnerable categories of people residing near the line of contact and in damaged houses in Donetsk city, Ilovaysk, Horlivka, Telmanove, Makiivka and Yasynuvata.



UNHCR improved living conditions at the dormitories of the Marioupol State University by providing repairs, washing machines and equipment for the gym. The dormitory accommodates nearly 350 students, including 90 displaced from Donetsk. This is one of a series of Quick Impact Projects aimed to improve coexistence between IDPs and host communities. *Photos: UNHCR/A.Shcherbyna*

## ‘Renovation of a kindergarten for children with special needs in Slovyansk’ project

Lisa and her friends are happy to pose for the camera in the playroom of the newly renovated kindergarten no. 6 in Slovyansk, Donetsk *oblast*. In autumn 2015, the kindergarten for children with latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) was at risk of closure due to severe damage and a faulty heating system.



The USD 15,000 project ensured repairs and a working heating system for the kindergarten. This institution provides daycare for some 100 children, including displaced children, orphans and children from large families. Thanks to renovation of the heating system and new windows, it remained open throughout winter, serving not only the needs of children with special needs in the town of Slovyansk but the entire Slovyansk district.

UNHCR provided funding to renovate the kindergarten in the framework of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) aimed at peaceful coexistence between displaced and hosting communities. *Photo: UNHCR Ukraine/O. Pustovit*



## 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 works with eight implementing partners and other partners providing assistance to internally displaced people through protection and legal assistance, policy development and capacity building and the distribution of emergency shelter materials and non-food items. UNHCR co-leads the Shelter and Non-food Item Cluster and co-leads the Protection Cluster.

UNHCR implementing partners (IDP operation): [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [CrimeaSOS](#) | [Desyataya Kvitnya](#) | [Donbass Development Centre](#) | [Donetsk Region Charitable Foundation](#) | [Most](#) | [Maximal](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Slavic Heart](#) | [Stantsia Kharkiv](#) | [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](#) | [Donbas reconstruction and development agency](#) | [Dopomoha Dnipro](#) | [HIA Hungary](#) | [IOM](#) | [Mercy Corps](#) | [Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Communal Living](#) | [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](#) | [UNDP](#) | [UNFPA](#) | [Vostok SOS](#)

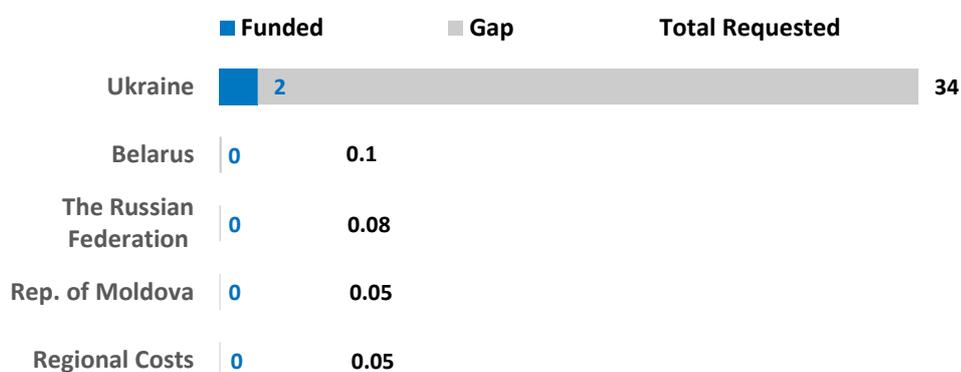
## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, particularly those with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds. UNHCR's total financial requirement in 2016 for the Ukraine situation is **US\$ 34.8 million**. This covers UNHCR's financial needs for providing protection and assistance to those displaced by the conflict inside Ukraine, as well as those externally displaced in the neighboring countries in Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. Contributions recorded so far represents **6 per cent** of the total financial requirements.

### Donors who have contributed: Funding (in million USD)

- Estonia
- Japan
- Private Donors

A total of **2 million** has been contributed



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