

UKRAINE SITUATION

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

23 October – 17 November 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** Following two months of improved security conditions, the situation is again deteriorating, with increased fighting taking place on the line of contact and increased tension in the overall situation. De facto authorities in non-government controlled Luhansk “registered” UNHCR, allowing the agency to operate in the area.
- **Protection concerns:** Freedom of movement across the line of contact remains a primary concern. Access to adequate housing for internally displaced people (IDPs) is also an ongoing concern.
- **Legislation update:** Amendments to the IDP Law were adopted by the Government improving conditions for IDP registration and registration renewal.
- **Assistance provided:** Since 23 October, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 9,400 people.



For the first time since the suspension of its activities, UNHCR has delivered vital winter assistance including plastic sheeting, timber and thousands of blankets for distribution to up to 12,000 vulnerable people in an area of eastern Ukraine that is beyond government control.

The UNHCR convoy of nine trucks loaded with basic relief items and construction materials passed through checkpoints, arriving in Luhansk on 7 November. It was the first UN convoy in three months to take supplies to the city where thousands of civilians have been caught up in the conflict that erupted last year. *Photo: UNHCR/D. Volkova/November 2015*

WINTERIZATION PLAN

57,300

beneficiaries

USD 6.1 million

total budget

116,400

NFIs

34,100

tonnes of heating coal or m³ wood

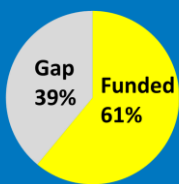
USD 1.75 million

winterization cash assistance

FUNDING

USD 41.5 million

requested for the operation in 2015



PRIORITIES

- As part of the UN Humanitarian Response Plan, to lead protection, shelter and NFI clusters to help those forcibly displaced from their homes.
- Support Government in efforts to establish a central authority to deal with IDPs.
- Work with the Government to improve registration system, specifically procedures relating to pensioners and access to social assistance.
- Promote freedom of movement and humanitarian access.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

Following two months of improved security conditions in eastern Ukraine with the implementation of a ceasefire on 1 September and a subsequent addendum to the Minsk Package of Measures on the withdrawal of weaponry, the situation is again deteriorating. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission [reports](#) increasing small arms fire on the line of contact. While the fighting remains localized on the line of contact, the overall situation remains tense.

On 23 October, de facto authorities in non-government controlled Luhansk “registered” UNHCR, allowing the agency to operate in the area. Despite this positive development, at present UNHCR partner organizations remain prohibited by the de facto authorities from providing humanitarian assistance in the area. Convoys carrying much needed humanitarian assistance to non-government controlled Luhansk and Donetsk regions were organized by UNHCR Sub-office in Dnipropetrovsk, arriving on 7 November; these were the first UNHCR convoys to arrive in the non-government controlled areas since the end of August. In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, UNHCR access remains difficult due to the ongoing issue of “registration” with the de facto authorities in the area. Despite this, a further 12 trucks carrying timber and roofing panels arrived on 10 November. While UNHCR activities in non-government controlled Donetsk are restricted, UNHCR partner People in Need (PiN) is able to conduct activities. The materials taken to Donetsk will be provided to PiN for repairs to 117 homes in Donetsk city and 87 houses in Horlivka. The distribution of shelter and winterization assistance is now particularly urgent in preparation for winter, particularly in the non-government controlled areas where there remain extensive needs.

A recent increase in population movements near the line of contact has led to an increase of the number of people killed or wounded by explosive remnants of war, such as landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). The threat from explosive remnants of war may remain for many years after the end of the conflict. It is therefore imperative that people living in the conflict area are informed of the risks.

As the displacement situation in Ukraine becomes more protracted, long-term housing solutions for IDPs are difficult to find. The majority of IDPs stay with host families, volunteers and in private accommodation, though in many cases affordable private accommodation is in poor condition. Others stay in collective centres intended as short-term transit accommodation. Some IDPs in collective centres face eviction as they stay longer than anticipated or are unable to pay utility bills, sometimes leading to involuntary return. Those staying in collective centres tend to be the most vulnerable with limited financial means and who are unable to afford private accommodation. Livelihood opportunities for IDPs are very restricted due to the difficult economic situation facing Ukraine and discrimination by employers. UNHCR is working closely with authorities and civil society to address the needs of IDPs remaining in collective centres and to find longer-term housing solutions.

On 11 November, UNHCR Ukraine’s Head of Operations *ad interim*, Jean-Noël Wetterwald left the Ukraine operation. We wish him all the best and look forward to welcoming his successor, Pablo Mateu who has been accredited by the Government of Ukraine as Representative of UNHCR in Ukraine and will take up his post shortly.

External Displacement

UNHCR continues to monitor the refugee situation in neighbouring countries. According to government sources in receiving countries, the total number of people seeking asylum or other forms of legal stay in neighbouring countries now stands at 1,093,100, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (858,400) and Belarus (127,300).

The OSCE Observer Mission monitoring the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints on the Russia-Ukraine border inform that the situation remains calm. Total cross-border traffic again decreased at both checkpoints during the reporting period. There was a daily average net flow of 90 people going to the Russian Federation from Ukraine. This is contrary to the trend of the previous two months of more people returning to Ukraine.

As of 17 November, 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, 4,360 in Poland, 5,289 in Italy, 2,532 in Sweden, 2,637 in France, 250 in Moldova, 70 in Romania, 60 in Hungary and 30 in Slovakia according to government sources in receiving countries.

Data source: Respective national asylum authorities

Achievements



Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster co-led by UNHCR and OHCHR, remains concerned by the situation at checkpoints on the line of contact, although the pedestrian crossing at Stanytsia Luhansk reopened on 27 October. In addition to the three existing official corridors in Donetsk region, it is the only open crossing in Luhansk region under the provision of the Temporary Order on Movement. The queues at checkpoints continue to be very long, creating protection concerns especially with the dropping temperatures. Priority remains to reduce waiting times by increasing processing capacity at checkpoints while improving the conditions for people having to wait (heated tents, toilets, public transportation). The risks posed by explosive remnants of war around checkpoints and along the line of contact pose a serious danger. These messages were conveyed to Ukrainian authorities at a meeting dedicated to freedom of movement.
- The Cluster has developed a guidance [document](#) on older people, including recommendations to design and implement programs targeting this vulnerable group.
- The Ukraine Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) decided that the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) will promote the concept of a 'protection lens' to ensure protection issues are mainstreamed in all projects submitted by plan partners (especially non-protection projects). A specific guidance note, 'Gender and Protection Lens for all the Actors,' was developed together with the Inter-agency Gender Capacity Advisor to help partners in their project planning.
- The Protection Cluster has developed its response plan for the 2016 HRP, identifying priority activities and indicators.

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 3 November, the Parliament adopted Law no. 2166 amending the IDP Law. The amendments allow for the inclusion of foreigners and stateless people entitled to permanent residence in Ukraine in the IDP definition. They also cancel the requirement for IDPs to extend their registration certificate every six months. The changes also permit registration with evidence confirming previous permanent residence in the non-government controlled areas and areas located on the line of contact within the government controlled area and removal of the residence registration stamp requirement on the IDP certificate. UNHCR and its partners have lobbied for these amendments since the beginning of 2015. Harmonization of the Law with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement will address some of the current protection concerns. However, the Law does not provide details on the verification mechanism.
- Over the past two weeks, UNHCR held participatory assessment exercises in Kherson and Lviv regions, in southern and western Ukraine. The exercises brought together local authorities and civil society organizations, having conducted over 35 focus group discussions with diverse profiles of the displaced population. The findings are being currently systematized by UNHCR; summary reports with recommendations will follow. 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 protection and solutions strategy for eastern Ukraine.
- On 29 October, UNHCR facilitated several training sessions on international standards relating to internal displacement for staff of the Ministry of Social Policy and regional ombudspersons for IDP affairs. A three-day comprehensive training programme on internal displacement took place within a United Kingdom funded project implemented by UNHCR partner Crimea SOS, envisaging the deployment of 27 ombudspersons at regional and central level to provide a two-way communication link between central government, regional authorities and local communities to develop synergies in assisting the displaced population. Given its institutional role and protection expertise, UNHCR has been invited to provide advisory and facilitative support in the training programme for those to be deployed.

¹ [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>

- During the reporting period, UNHCR partner Stantia Kharkiv provided 3,002 general consultations, 787 legal consultations and 392 psychosocial consultations. 75-80 per cent of the consultations were provided to female beneficiaries. Main concerns were access to humanitarian assistance, medical assistance, IDP rights, social counseling, social assistance, crossing the line of contact, housing, employment, children, social adaptation, anxiety and depression. Between 15 and 31 October, UNHCR partner Crimea SOS provided consultations to 1,291 people, of which 968 were social consultations and 323 were legal consultations. The most frequently raised concerns included the crossing of the line of contact, civil documentation, blocked bank accounts, pensions, employment in non-government controlled areas, winterization assistance, vocational training, medical assistance and housing. Between 12 October and 8 November, UNHCR partners the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Right to Protection (R2P) conducted 477 protection monitoring visits to over 8,150 IDPs and referred some 79 cases to legal counseling providers. Main concerns raised included: employment, accommodation, social assistance, voting rights, medical assistance, education, IDP registration and freedom of movement.



Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter NFI cluster under the lead of UNHCR, is still closely monitoring the implementation of the winterization assistance, especially for people living close to the line of contact through. The Cluster regularly updates a matrix of winterization activities developed to provide a coordinated response. In parallel, a referral system has been established at sub-national level in the northern Donbas area. Monitoring shows some remaining gaps including urgent need of heating fuel (coal and wood).
- A first Technical Working Group meeting on heavily damaged buildings and structural repairs took place in Slovyansk on 22 October, to discuss technical standards and approaches as well as agree on key modalities. A next meeting is planned at the end of November to finalize Cluster recommendations.
- The Cluster has prepared a [mapping](#) of needs based on the [REACH Shelter Assessment](#) conducted earlier in the year and on the displaced population baseline for blankets, bedding items, clothing, heating and shelter conditions.
- On 29 October, an ammunition depot exploded in Svatove, government controlled Luhansk, causing serious damage to surrounding buildings. Following and initial coordinated response involving clusters, NGOs and local authorities, the sub-national Cluster is liaising with authorities to finalize a technical assessment related to window repairs affecting some 10,000 people.
- The Shelter Cluster together with all partners is actively engaged in preparation of the Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan for 2016.

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter materials were provided to over 9,400 people. In the government controlled area, UNHCR's Field Office in Kharkiv provided 30 folding beds and blankets at Artemiivsk collective centre, northern Donetsk. Those staying in the centre include people stranded overnight while waiting to cross the line of contact. UNHCR partners distributed bedding sets (consisting of a blanket, bed linen and towels) and other NFIs to some 780 people in the Mariupol area. A further 400 bedding sets were provided to NGO Pokrova for distribution. UNHCR provided shelter materials to ADRA for distribution to households in Mariinka village, near the line of contact in southern Donetsk. UNHCR's Field Office in Sievierodonetsk provided 2,224 m² of glass to Shchastya, in Luhansk region for repairs undertaken in cooperation with the Local Development Agency. NFIs for some 6,000 beneficiaries were provided to NRC for distribution. Roofing slate and timber was also provided for repairs to homes in areas close to the line of contact. Emergency shelter materials and NFIs for some 410 people were sent to Svatove. In northern Donetsk, UNHCR implementing partner ADRA carried out repairs to 83 homes and an apartment block. Implementing partner People in Need (PiN) completed medium repairs on 88 homes and provided emergency shelter materials to a further 220 homes.
- In the non-government controlled area, UNHCR provided 200 m² of plastic tarpaulin sheeting for emergency shelter repairs to local NGO Most for Makiivka Youth Club for Natural Sciences.

UNHCR funded Community-based Initiatives

Villages Displaced children and youth decorated a wall in the center of Kharkiv. The two day street art festival ‘Signs of Peace’ organized by Kharkiv branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross in early October brought together youngsters from the conflict affected Luhansk and Donetsk region. Young artists led by a famous Kharkiv painter Daryna Eremka created a gigantic colorful painting at the busy crossroad in the city downtown.



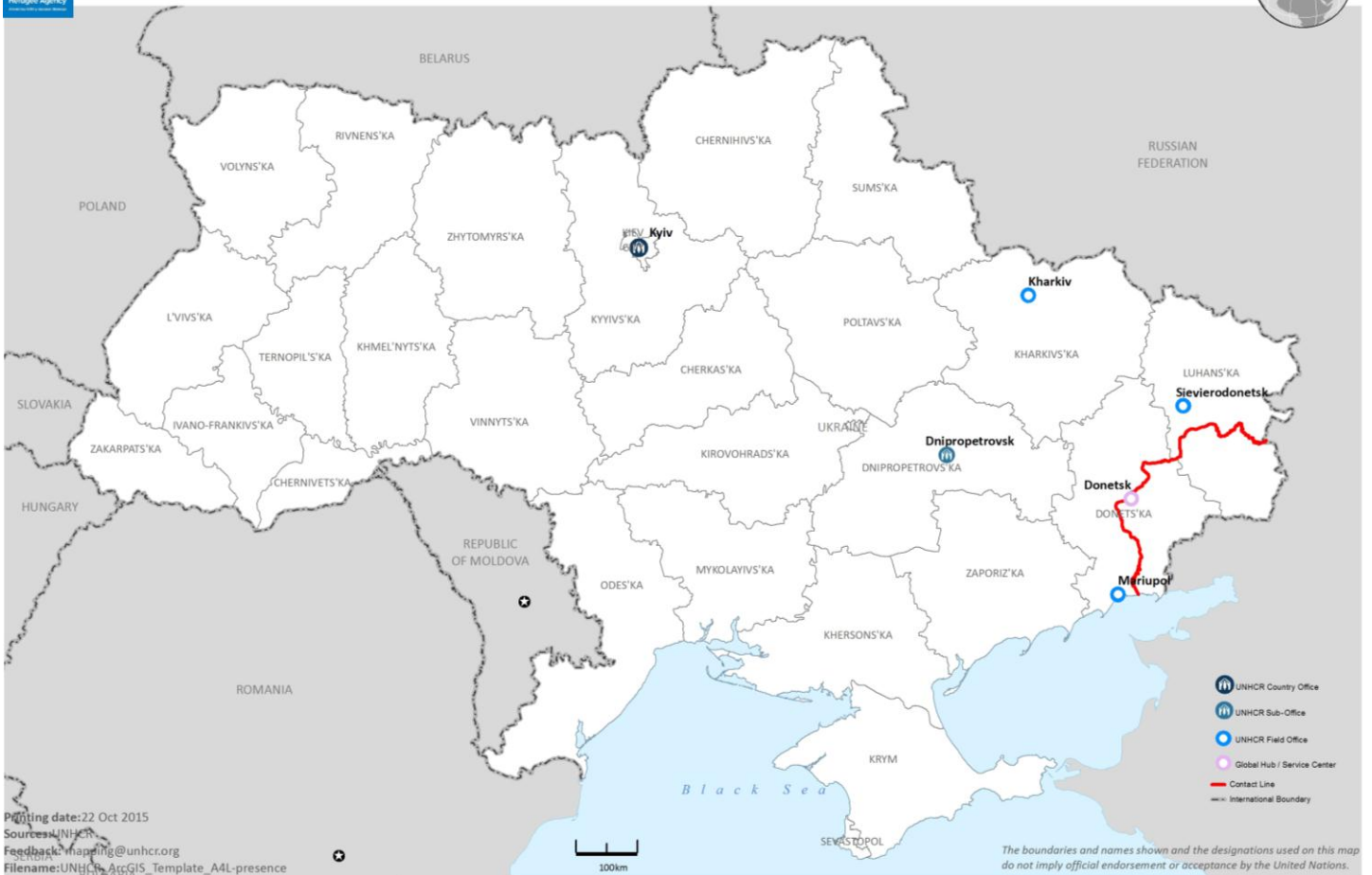
“I would like to thank Kharkiv residents and give something back to the city”, says Mykhailo, aged 18, from Luhansk National University, which was temporary relocated to Kharkiv due to the conflict.

The project was funded by UNHCR in the framework of the Small Grant Program, implemented by DRC. The project aims to promote adaption and integration of young people, displaced from Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the city of Kharkiv that now hosts more than 100,000 IDPs. UNHCR has approved 56 Small Grant Projects which will be implemented by partners Crimea SOS and DRC. *Photos: UNHCR/Andriy Starikov/Kharkiv/October 2015*



Ukraine: UNHCR presence

UNHCR - Kyiv



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The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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 seven 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](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Slavic Heart](#) | [Stantia Kharkiv](#)

Key Shelter and Non Food Items Cluster partners: [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [Caritas Ukraine](#) | [Chesna i Svyata Kraina](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Donbas reconstruction and development agency](#) | [Dopomoga Dnipra](#) | [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](#) | [The Right to Protection](#) | [Save the Children](#) | [The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [UNDP](#) | [UNFPA](#) | [Vostok SOS](#)

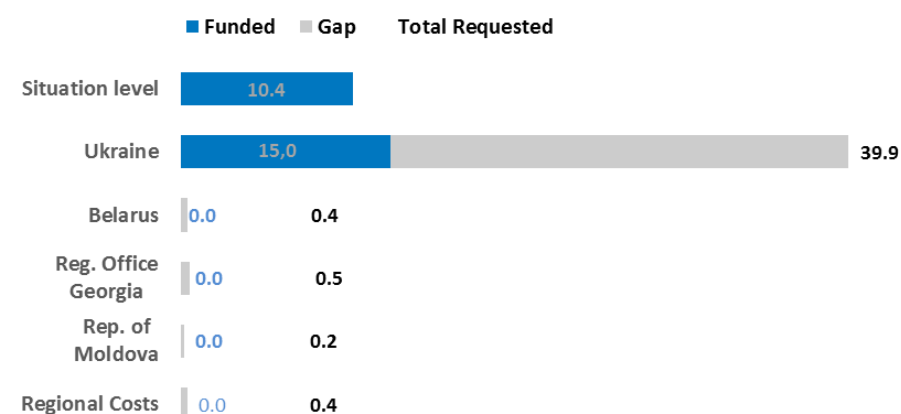
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, particularly those who have already indicated a contribution to UNHCR's 2015 activities in Ukraine with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds. UNHCR's total financial requirement in 2015 for the Ukraine situation is **US\$ 41.5 million**, as presented in the [Supplementary Appeal](#). 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 Belarus and the Republic of Moldova as well as in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, countries covered by the Regional Office in Georgia. Contributions recorded so far represented **61 per cent** of the total financial requirements.

Donors who have contributed: Funding (in million USD)

- Canada
- Denmark
- Estonia
- European Union
- Finland
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Japan
- Norway
- Portugal
- Private Donors
- Republic of Korea
- Russian Federation
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

A total of **25.5 million** has been contributed



Contacts:

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

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