

UKRAINE

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1-31 March 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** During the reporting period, the security situation deteriorated. 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:** The Cabinet of Ministers adopted a resolution on the transport of goods to the non-government controlled areas.
- **Assistance provided:** In March, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 10,200 people. UNHCR and its partners provided over 9,000 consultations to IDPs and other people of concern.



Novotroitske became the first of three crossing points in Donetsk region to receive technical assistance from UNHCR and its partners. The equipment provided will help reduce waiting times and alleviate the suffering of tens of thousands of civilians crossing the line of contact daily in conflict-torn eastern Ukraine. The UNHCR project, with a total budget of UAH 3,500,000 (USD 130,000), aims to improve conditions at Novotroitske, Marinka and Maiorsk crossing points on the line of contact in Donetsk region. Technical equipment, funded by the European Union through its humanitarian aid and civil protection department, ECHO, will increase the capacity and reduce waiting times at crossing points. *Photo: UNHCR Ukraine/Maksym Vlasenko*

KEY FIGURES

26,000 people

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

7,500 people

received legal assistance from UNHCR partners in 2017

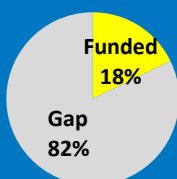
5,653 households

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

FUNDING

USD 37.7 million

required 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

In early March the security situation in eastern Ukraine deteriorated, including a marked increase in the number of ceasefire violations. The end of the month saw the second highest use of weapons prohibited by the addendum to the Minsk Package of Measures since it was introduced in October 2015. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) [reported](#) the majority of ceasefire violations in areas near Svitlodarsk, Mariupol, and the area of Avdiivka, Yasynuvata, Donetsk airport and Horlivka, as well as in western Luhansk region. Numerous civilian fatalities were reported in the conflict area caused by the shelling of populated areas and the presence of explosive remnants of war and landmines. Utility supplies have been disrupted in areas near the line of contact, particularly in and around Avdiivka. Repairs are made difficult by ongoing shelling in the area.

The humanitarian situation remains precarious and access of humanitarian agencies to persons of concern remains difficult due to restrictions on activity in the non-government controlled areas imposed on all UN humanitarian agencies. UNHCR's "registration" with de facto authorities in Donetsk remains on hold. UNHCR continues to implement activities through local partner NGOs. UNOCHA's [Humanitarian Snapshot](#) provides an overview of the humanitarian situation.

UNHCR remains concerned for the conditions faced by civilians crossing the line of contact between government-controlled and non-government controlled areas. Residents of government-controlled areas near the line of contact face restricted freedom of movement, even if not crossing the line of contact, due to the presence of internal checkpoints. In March, UNHCR continued to provide equipment to government-controlled checkpoints with the aim of expediting processing times and reducing waiting times for civilians waiting to cross. Since 1 March, checkpoints on the line of contact have extended their opening times, now operating from 0700 to 1830. The increased operating hours should alleviate waiting times and the exposure of civilians to risk from the conflict and adverse weather.

On 1 March, a Cabinet of Minister's resolution on the transfer of goods to and from the non-government controlled areas was adopted. Nonetheless, it was announced that unauthorized trade blockades of the non-government controlled areas would be extended to include rail crossings with the Russian Federation. The political situation further deteriorated, with de facto authorities transferring some 40 companies in the non-government controlled areas to "external management". In mid-March, Ukrainian authorities moved to break up the unauthorized trade blockade between government and non-government controlled areas leading to small protests in several cities.

Access of IDPs and those remaining in non-government controlled areas to pensions and social assistance is a persistent concern. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has extended the deadline for IDP pensioners to appear in person at branches of the state-owned Oschadbank until 1 May. Despite the extension, and due to lack of information, the number of persons crossing the line of contact to report to the bank has significantly increased. The verification process for immobile IDP pensioners remains an issue. Oschadbank does not have instructions on how to deal with such cases. At present, relatives of immobile IDP pensioners submit applications to Oschadbank on their behalf, while others call Oschadbank's telephone hotline. Some bank staff visit IDP pensioners at home in an unofficial capacity. IDP pensioners who have a bankcard with a photo must be verified every six months; those with bankcards without a photo must be verified every three months. The cards of unverified pensioners will be blocked, although no procedures on unblocking suspended bankcards have been developed. Long queues of pensioners at Oschadbank branches have been observed. UNHCR has established contact with Oschadbank focal points in to raise some of the main concerns of IDPs.

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 459,477, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (427,240), Poland (4,278) 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 9,615 applications for international protection in Germany, 9,319 in Italy, 3,495 in France and 3,148 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: UNHCR

Achievements



Protection

Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR, continued its advocacy to assist IDPs and conflict affected people have non-discriminatory access to social benefits and pensions, equal to that of other Ukrainian citizens. The Cluster prepared an [Update on IDP Access to Social Benefits and Pensions \[pdf\]](#) outlining recent developments, the protection challenges and key messages for humanitarian actors.
- The Cluster held an Information Management workshop for 18 persons from 15 member-organizations, to strengthen knowledge about the Cluster's information products and tools, including the [Protection Cluster 5W dashboard](#), and ensure more effective data collection and reporting.
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the [March factsheet \[pdf\]](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 1 March, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted resolution no. 99, "*On the Order of Transfer of Goods to and from the Anti-Terrorist Operation area*". Under the resolution, the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs will develop a list of goods and items that can be provided at humanitarian-logistics centers and transferred across the line of contact. Legal entities will need to apply to the State Fiscal Service to be included in the registry of entities transferring goods across the line of contact. The Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry will establish a list of enterprises receiving coal from the non-government controlled areas. Legal entities are prohibited from transferring goods across the line of contact with the exception of food and medicines for humanitarian purposes, goods for metallurgical and mineral processing, mining, and power generation, and critical infrastructure. In case of a critical humanitarian situation, restrictions may be lifted to prevent loss of life in the non-government controlled areas, as well as disruption to energy and water supplies.
- In March, UNHCR and its partners provided over **9,000 consultations** to IDPs and people at risk of displacement.
- In the government-controlled areas, Proliska provided 512 information consultations. 196 persons received individual case management. Slavic Heart provided 609 information consultations, 503 general consultations and 259 psychosocial consultations. Between 66 and 77 per cent of those assisted were women. The Right to Protection (R2P) provided legal assistance in 3,571 cases. Main concerns included access to social assistance and pensions, IDP registration, access to services, HLP, access to civil documentation, freedom of movement and family law. 74 per cent of those assisted by R2P's lawyers were women. CrimeaSOS provided 539 legal consultations and 331 general consultations. Main concerns included IDP registration, crossing the line of contact and the administrative border with Crimea, HLP, civil documentation, social assistance, psychological assistance, training and medical assistance.
- In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, UNHCR partner MOST provided 380 information consultations, 338 general consultations, 126 psychosocial consultations, and 36 legal consultations. Main concerns included humanitarian assistance, civil documentation, social assistance, and employment. The NGO also provided capacity development training to 734 people in the areas of personal development, interpersonal communication, personal safety and career advice. UNHCR partner DDC provided 36 legal consultations. Main concerns included HLP, pensions, social assistance and civil documentation. The NGO also conducted 45 workshops attended by 454 people covering areas such as education, first aid, languages and personal development. Maximal provided group and individual psychosocial consultations to 1,093 people dealing with stress, anxiety and children. 68 mobile teams provided legal, psychological and general counselling to 1,415 people in areas near the line of contact. A further 292 telephone consultations were provided. In the non-government controlled area of Luhansk, UNHCR Protection Unit provided 31 general consultations and 67 telephone consultations. Those assisted include returnees, host communities, Roma, and disabled persons. Main concerns raised included crossing the line of contact, civil documentation, obtaining refugee status, housing land and property, medical care, and humanitarian assistance.
- UNHCR continued to conduct **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. Participatory Assessment with IDPs is aimed at gathering accurate information on specific protection risks faced by IDPs, underlying causes and hearing their proposed

solutions. Preliminary findings from discussions in eastern Ukraine include accounts of sexual and verbal harassment against women in the areas near the line of contact; intimate partner violence against women; economic insecurity leading to conflict within families; and women with small children lacking access to services and childcare. Other concerns include housing, employment and state support for vulnerable individuals and specific cases.

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, delivered 82 per cent of its projected life-saving assistance during the first quarter of 2017 corresponding with the end of winterization programming and the delivery of additional emergency materials for the increased number of homes damaged during the reporting period. Repair interventions only represented 4 per cent of activities in this last quarter due to the prevailing winter season. If the conflict continues with the current rate of shelling, it is likely that the projected number of emergency and light repairs will have to be significantly revised.
- Cluster partners finalized the implementation of their 2016-2017 winterization programming. Partners began consulting with the Cluster to share lessons learned and to inform future winterization activities. A summary of winterization activities can be found at the [winterization matrix 2016-2017](#).
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the March [factsheet \[pdf\]](#) and via the [Shelter and NFI Cluster 5W dashboard](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter assistance was provided to over **10,200 people**.
- In March, UNHCR's [winterization plan](#), provided 1,982 households (952 in government-controlled areas and 1,030 in non-governmental areas) with coal. 326 households in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions also received winter clothing. In central and western Ukraine, UNHCR partners Desyate Kvitnya and CrimeaSOS began distribution of some 13,400 items of winter clothing from ALDI (U.K. and Ireland) and UNIQLO to the most vulnerable IDPs in the areas.
- In government-controlled areas, UNHCR distributed 400 m² of tarpaulin to homes in Malynove and Stanytsia Luhanska districts, recently damaged by shelling. In northern Donetsk region, UNHCR partner Proliska provided emergency shelter materials to households damaged by hostilities. UNHCR FO Mariupol provided NFIs and tarpaulin to 1,925 people in Avdiivka and the surrounding area affected by recent shelling.
- In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk region, UNHCR partner Maximal provided NFIs including blankets, bedding, kitchen sets, and tarpaulin to 10 households in the villages of Luhanske and Syhnalne, near the line of contact. Donbas Development Centre (DDC) provided emergency shelter assistance to households in of Donetsk city.

Olena, 37, smiles as she collects warm winter jackets, thermal underwear, and shoes for herself and her family, distributed by UNHCR in Kharkiv. Olena fled the fighting in Luhansk region in August 2014, together with her husband and three children, Yan Arturovich, Maria and Eva. The family went to Kharkiv where they have now lived for more than two years.

The residents of Kharkiv have welcomed those fleeing from conflict-affected areas; however, life is not easy for Olena and her family. The family received a cash grant from UNHCR to help them manage during the harsh winter. Clothes donated by Aldi (UK and Ireland), Uniqlo and Youngone helped to keep the family warm and dry, and maintained their dignity. *Photo: UNHCR Ukraine/ Viacheslav Madievskiy*

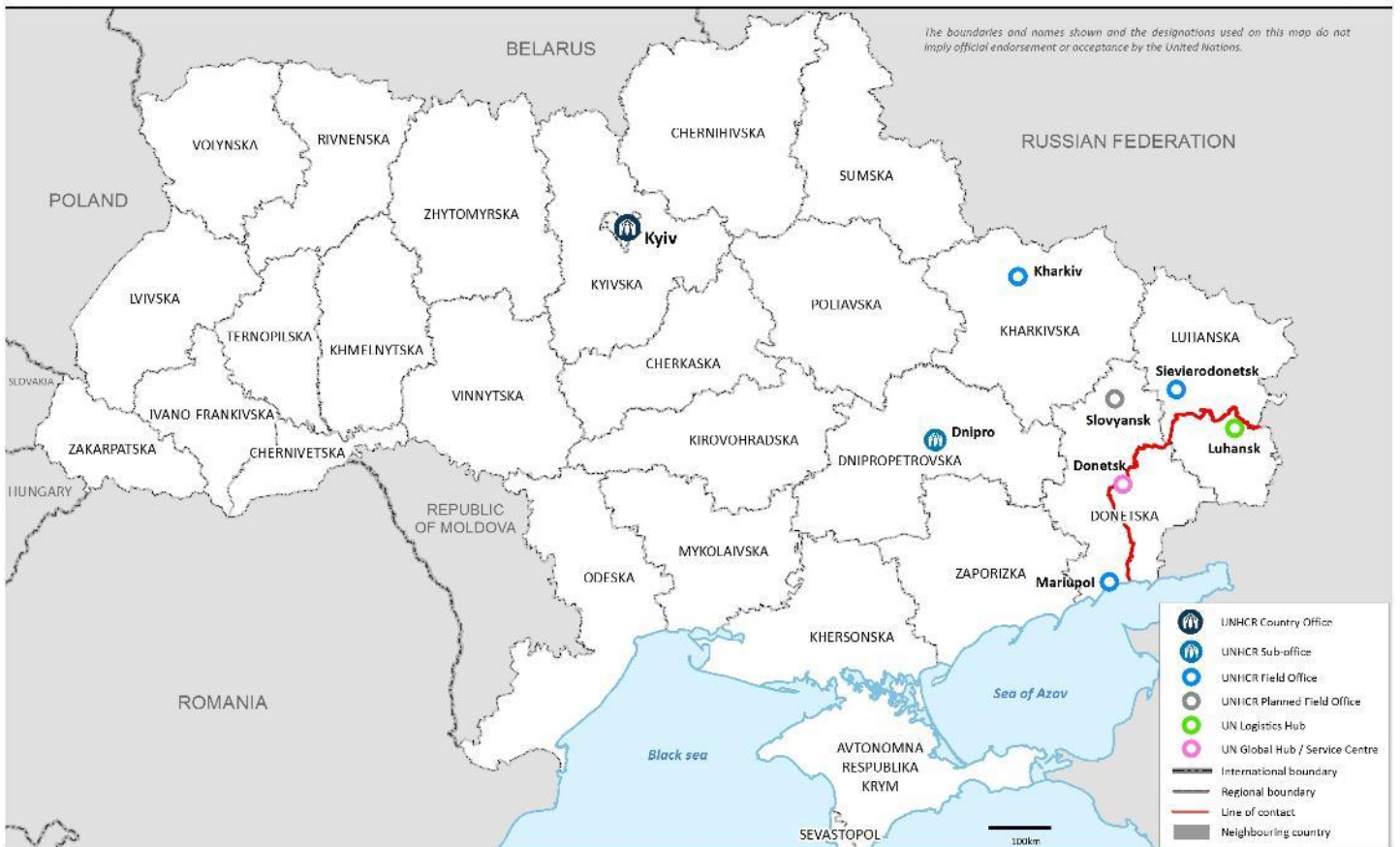


Community initiative in Vinnitsya

On 27 March, a UNHCR-supported community initiative establishing a rehabilitation center at the 'Ukraine' university in Vinnitsya was launched. IDP and local communities from Vinnitsya attended the opening. The centre will assist the rehabilitation of disabled IDPs and veterans and enable students, including some IDP students, to practice their skills in applying their theoretical knowledge. Approximately 680 people will benefit from the new centre. *Photo: UNHCR Ukraine/Tanya Lovtsova*



Ukraine: UNHCR Presence



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 ten 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](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [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](#)

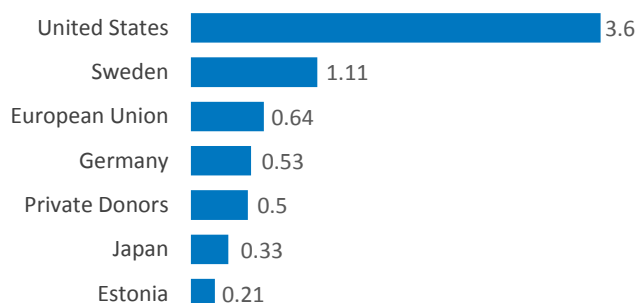
Key Protection Cluster partners: [Crimea SOS](#) | [Crimean Diaspora](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Foundation 101](#) | [HelpAge IOM](#) | [La Strada](#) | [Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [OHCHR \(HRMMU\)](#) | [OSCE](#) | [People in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

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR's total financial requirement in 2017 for Ukraine is **US\$ 37.7 million**.

As of the **19 April 2017**, total recorded contributions for the operation in 2017 amount to **US\$ 6.9 million**, representing **18 per cent** of the total financial requirements. UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to its operations in Ukraine.

Funding received (in million USD)



UNHCR is particularly grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have given unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions to UNHCR this year. Major donors of unearmarked and regional funds to UNHCR in 2017 are: [United States of America \(95 M\)](#) | [Sweden \(76 M\)](#) | [Netherlands \(52 M\)](#) | [Norway \(41 M\)](#) | [Denmark \(23 M\)](#) | [Australia \(19 M\)](#) | [Switzerland \(15 M\)](#) | [Priv Donors Spain \(13 M\)](#) | [Germany \(12 M\)](#)

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