

KEY MESSAGES

- **NEW:** Civilian water technicians come under fire yet again
- **Global Humanitarian Overview:** more people affected by the crippling impact of the conflict in eastern Ukraine than before.
- **Civilians continue to pay the highest price:** 10 killed or injured in November. More than 3,000 killed since 2014.
- **“Urgent political solution needed to end suffering of civilians”** - Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine appeals after crossing the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint.
- **Member States Briefing in Geneva:** over 40 Member States and international organisations hear about the severe humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine.



Stanytsia Luhanska Entry/Exit Checkpoint © O. Osinsky

KEY FIGURES

5.2M

People affected

3.5M

People in Need

1.5M

IDPs (Ministry of Social Policy)

FUNDING

\$186.9M **\$70.2M**

Requirements

Funding

38%

Progress

FTS: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/641/summary>

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ANALYSIS

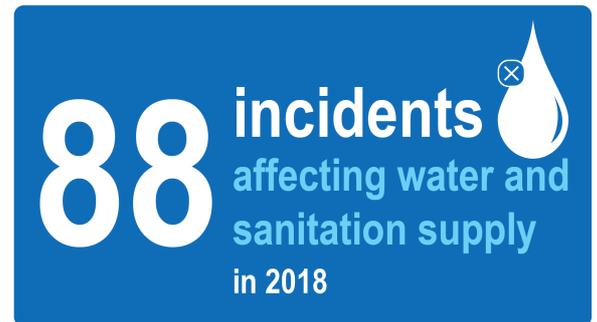
NEW: Civilian water technicians come under fire yet again despite safety guarantees

In eastern Ukraine, yet another “window of silence” – a no-fire arrangement around critical infrastructure – was brokered last week. This time, to repair the damage caused by shelling to a local water pipeline, which supplies water to some 43,000 people in Toretsk and nearby settlements on both sides of the “contact line”. Like previous agreements, this one did not hold long enough, as water technicians came under heavy shelling on 25 December, while carrying out necessary repair works. This time, casualties were avoided. However, it is not always the case.

Water technicians in eastern Ukraine have come under attack dozens of times while carrying out vital work. Since the conflict broke in 2014, nine of them have lost their lives, and 23 have been injured. They were simply trying to keep water running to millions of people, risking their own lives. They often have to take to bomb shelters, when the next shelling starts near their workplace, often spending nights in these shelters.

Water infrastructure continues to come under constant attack in eastern Ukraine. This year alone, 88 incidents were registered, impacting critical water and sanitation facilities, including due to shelling and landmine explosion, disrupting access to water to millions of people on both sides of the “contact line”. In December alone, these facilities were affected 11 times. The stoppage of the water supply could lead to severe consequences, including the blockage of heating systems, which rely on an uninterrupted water system, during the harsh winter season.

Despite repeated calls and clear agreements, including through local “windows of silence”, obligations under International Humanitarian Law to protect civilians and critical infrastructure continue to be neglected. On the eve of New Year, the ceasefire was reinforced yet again. It is hoped that this time, it will bring the peace that the people of eastern Ukraine have hoped for.



2018 WASH incidents

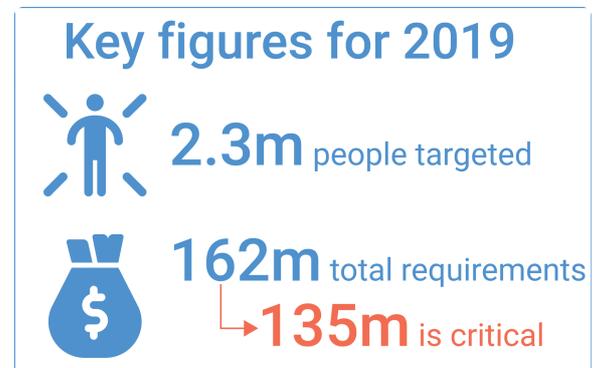
FEATURE

Global Humanitarian Overview: Number of people affected in eastern Ukraine rises in 2019

The conflict in eastern Ukraine continues to take its toll on civilians with an estimated 5.2 million people affected – the highest number since 2014, with 3.5 million of them needing humanitarian assistance and protection. Of them, over 30 per cent are above the age of 60. On 4 December, Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals launched the [Global Humanitarian Overview](#)

<https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO2019.pdf> (GHO) for 2019, together with the [World Humanitarian Data and Trends \(WHDT\) 2018](#) <http://interactive.unocha.org/publication/datatrends2018/> in Geneva.

The GHO features the Multi-Year Humanitarian Response Plan 2019-2020 (MYHRP) for Ukraine. Next year, US\$162 million will be urgently needed to deliver vital humanitarian assistance and protection services to 2.3 million people in need in eastern Ukraine. With winter temperatures dropping below -10 Celsius, mobilising these funds now is crucial. The GHO also highlights the achievements of the humanitarian organisations in eastern Ukraine in 2018, including the rapid scaling up of response efforts in hard-to-reach areas through the allocation of US\$6 million by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The MYHRP aims not only to help people with urgent humanitarian assistance, but also to reduce their needs overtime, with collaborative opportunities sought to operationalise the New Way of Working (NWOW) thereby ensuring strong linkages between humanitarian and development actions.



2019 Projections

FEATURE

Humanitarians are racing to assist people in frigid winter temperatures, but funding falls short

On 15 November, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Ms. Osnat Lubrani, [briefed](https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1025861) UN Member States on the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine and called on international donors to urgently increase their funding to help vulnerable families through the harsh winter. “Thanks to generous support by donors, so far this year more than one million most vulnerable Ukrainians have received vital assistance and protection services. But funding is now falling short,” Ms. Lubrani warned the delegations from 40 countries and international organisations in Geneva. “I call on all Member States to stand in solidarity with the people of eastern Ukraine and help sustain them through the cold winter,” she said. Ms. Lubrani also highlighted the urgency for the affected people to gain better access to basic services as well as for humanitarians to better reach the people in need, the dire conditions at the five checkpoints crossing the “contact line” and the high risk of landmines and unexploded remnants of war (ERW).



Member States Briefing © A. Munavvarov

With 10 civilians killed or injured in November, making a total of over 3,000 killed and almost 9,000 injured since the start of the conflict, the human cost of the conflict continues to increase. Critical civilian infrastructure is also severely affected. “This year only, we have seen more than 75 incidents affecting critical water infrastructure. If the shelling continues during the winter, people will struggle to keep warm, and frequent water interruptions will increase the risks of communicable disease outbreaks,” Ms. Lubrani said in her statement, referring to fragile interconnected water and heating systems and calling for increased protection of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure.

FEATURE

Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine joins civilians to cross the “contact line” via a dangerous footbridge

During her recent mission to eastern Ukraine, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) joined hundreds of men, women and children to cross the “contact line” via the rickety footbridge at Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint – the only crossing point for the entire Luhanska oblast. While crossing, she experienced first-hand the challenges people who make this arduous journey every day face to simply access social services, pensions or hospitals, or to be with their family. Earlier in December, the bridge was damaged by shelling yet again. “I could genuinely experience the hardship of those who are forced to make this challenging journey every day,” she said in her latest [statement](https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/united-nations-humanitarian-coordinator-calls-urgent-political-solution-end-suffering)



HC visit to Eastern Ukraine © O.Osinsky

<https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/united-nations-humanitarian-coordinator-calls-urgent-political-solution-end-suffering> , expressing hope that an urgent agreement can be reached to repair the bridge. She also joined the Minister of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs (MTOT) to observe the

improvement works recently undertaken by the Government of Ukraine and talk to people crossing the "contact line". Advocacy works for the opening of additional checkpoints across the "contact line", especially in Luhanska oblast have not yielded results so far.

Ms. Osnat Lubrani also observed the humanitarian situation, ongoing response operations, and talked to the people affected on both sides of the "contact line". She also met with the *de-facto* entities to discuss the humanitarian situation and the need to scale-up efforts to meet people's basic needs.

FEATURE

Parliament of Ukraine adopts much-awaited Mine Action Law

The landmark news on the adoption of the Law on 6 December comes at a time when two million people in the Government-controlled areas (GCAs) alone face risk from landmines and unexploded remnants of war (ERW) every day. According to the Geneva International Humanitarian De-mining Centre, Ukraine ranks highest for the third consecutive year when it comes to civilian casualties caused by anti-vehicle mines. The Government of Ukraine and humanitarian organisations continue to mark or clear contaminated lands, to teach people how to mitigate risks, and to assist the victims. However, the lack of a legislative framework on Mine Action according to International Mine Action Standards had seriously hampered scaling up such efforts. Mine-action partners are analysing the Law and its implications to humanitarian demining in eastern Ukraine. The Law's draft version recommends, among other critical issues, to establish a national mechanism to coordinate mine-action efforts. This is a significant achievement after several years of advocating for a legislative framework for mine-action, but protection of civilians from landmines will require efforts that go beyond the legislation. "Measures must be taken to avoid using landmines near civilian structures," the HC said in October after a landmine incident killed three children in eastern Ukraine.

FEATURE

Efforts to address protracted internal displacement reach new level

In the absence of notable sustained peace, much of the internal displacement affecting more than 1.5 million people (Ministry of Social Policy) has become protracted. The general economic insecurity of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and average monthly income per IDP household member were considerably lower compared to Ukrainian households (UAH2,187 and UAH4,344,2, respectively), according the latest IOM [survey](http://www.iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/nms_round_11_eng_press.pdf) http://www.iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/nms_round_11_eng_press.pdf . Displaced persons rely heavily on Government support, such as social payments, the second most mentioned source of income after salary, the survey suggests.

In their efforts to promote IDP inclusion in local communities, on 21 November, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the ordinance on Approval of the Action [Plan](https://mtot.gov.ua/government-adopted-implementation-plan-of-idp-integration-strategy) <https://mtot.gov.ua/government-adopted-implementation-plan-of-idp-integration-strategy> for the implementation of the National IDP [Strategy](https://mtot.gov.ua/government-adopted-implementation-plan-of-idp-integration-strategy) <https://mtot.gov.ua/government-adopted-implementation-plan-of-idp-integration-strategy> , which had been drafted by MTOT, consulted and supported by the international community. It is hoped that consolidated efforts through the Strategy will protect the rights, freedom and lawful interests of IDPs, eliminate any discrimination, and promote social cohesion. It is now time to shift to practical arrangements, including funding mechanisms to implement the Strategy and the Action Plan where necessary, through support of international organisations and financial institutions.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE



Despite Martial Law, humanitarians continue to reach more people

Despite the implementation of the Martial Law in ten oblasts, including in Donetsk and Luhansk, for 30 days starting on 26 November 2018, humanitarians continue to reach people in need with assistance and protection services. Seven convoys with over 1,200 tons of relief items for people on both sides of the "contact line" have been dispatched since November 2018. Overall, the imposition of Martial Law did not result in additional bureaucratic procedures or impediments for humanitarian agencies, as humanitarian response continues through the OCHA facilitated Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) notification mechanism. For more information on humanitarian response, visit the inter-agency [portal <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/infographic/ukraine-humanitarian-dashboard-january-september-2018-en>](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/infographic/ukraine-humanitarian-dashboard-january-september-2018-en) .

The Russian Federation informed OCHA New York that it dispatched convoys to Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (NGCAs) on 22 November and 20 December respectively, reportedly carrying over 850 tonnes of baby food, medicines, medical and basic emergency supplies.¹

1. OCHA reports on what has been communicated in New York, but is not in a position to verify this information.

FEATURE

2018 Humanitarian Response Plan remains underfunded

As of 31 December 2018, the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which requests US\$187 million, is only 38 per cent funded. Whilst this is a slight increase compared to the same period in 2017, a funding gap of over 60 per cent means that humanitarians are not able to reach all who need help.

To ensure effective use of available resources, and to record and recognise the contributions, donors and partners should reflect their contributions pledged, disbursed and received at <https://fts.unocha.org> <<https://fts.unocha.org>> .

BACKGROUND

Humanitarian Context

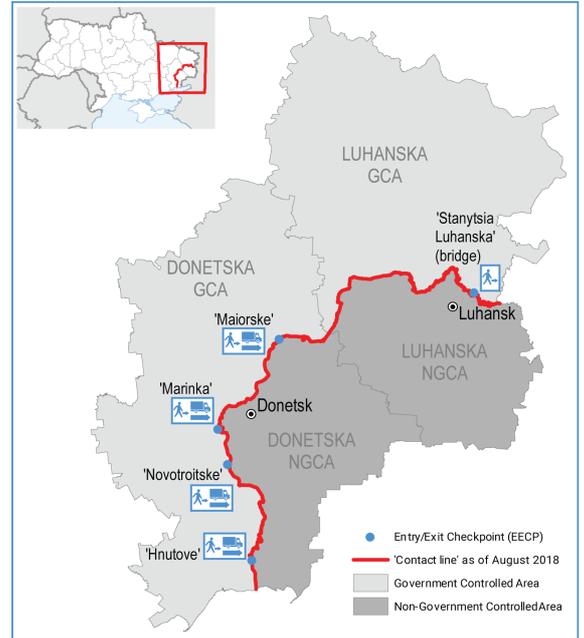
As the crisis in Ukraine is well into its fifth year, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. Fear of shelling, violent clashes, or treading on one of the many landmines or unexploded remnants of war (eastern Ukraine has been branded one of the world's most mine-contaminated areas) are the daily reality for millions of people living on both sides of the over 420-km-long "contact-line", which is about the length of the French-German border. Since the start of the conflict, more than 3,000 civilian men, women and children have been killed and another 9,000 injured.

The crisis in eastern Ukraine has become protracted. The long-term consequences are serious with daily hostilities damaging critical infrastructure often disrupting essential services, such as water supply and sanitation facilities, severely impacting the lives of the people residing in the area. Every month, more than 1.1 million civilian crossings are recorded at the five checkpoints, where people often have to endure long waiting hours in the bitter cold in winter and scorching heat in summer to maintain family links and access basic services. This is especially arduous for the elderly, who make up 30 per cent of all people in need, the highest proportion in the world. People are increasingly affected by mental health issues having lived in fear for far too long, and lacking self-esteem after losing their job. The economic situation of the Donbas region, once the economic heartland of Ukraine, is dire which has seriously impacted household wellbeing and living standards.



Despite enormous challenges, the UN and its humanitarian partners continue to deliver lifesaving assistance to millions of people across the country every month. Over the course of 2018, more than one million people benefited from some form of humanitarian assistance and protection services. Since 2014, over US\$400 million has been mobilised through humanitarian response plans.

The humanitarian response is coordinated within six clusters: Shelter and Non-Food Items; Protection; Health and Nutrition; Education; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; and Food Security and Livelihoods. Cluster partners conduct joint assessments, coordinate the response and monitor humanitarian assistance and programming. Relief and early recovery supplies, including food and non-food items, shelter materials, medicine, psychosocial support and hygienic and education kits are distributed. Access to safe drinking water through in-kind as well as cash assistance is provided. Other urgent humanitarian assistance includes provision of farming inputs, mine clearance and mine-risk education as well as other protection services.



Eastern Ukraine with the 427-km long "contact line" and five checkpoints

For more information, visit:

<https://www.unocha.org/ukraine>

https://twitter.com/OCHA_Ukraine

<https://www.facebook.com/ochaukraine/>