



Ukraine - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 18 September 2014

Information on the relocation of displaced people in 2014 due to the ongoing conflict

A paper issued in July 2014 by the *UNHCR* states:

“UNHCR observes a rise in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Through reports received by local authorities and NGOs and through monitoring on the ground, UNHCR can confirm that some 54,400 persons have been internally displaced, comprising over 12,200 persons from Crimea and some 42,200 from the east (this latter figure includes an estimated 15,000 IDPs in the city of Sviatohirsk, in Donetsk province). [18] However, taking into account the absence of a centralized registration system and the fact that many IDPs do not register themselves, UNHCR estimates actual numbers of IDPs to be considerably higher. Many persons fleeing the eastern Oblast of Donetsk and Luhansk do not wish to provide their identity for fear of potential reprisals and prefer to remain unregistered. Previously, most IDPs were staying in central and western Ukraine, but an increasing number is now remaining in eastern Ukraine” (UNHCR (1 July 2014) *International Protection Considerations Related to the Developments in Ukraine – Update I*).

This report also points out that:

“Displaced persons in Ukraine face a number of common challenges in obtaining access to social services, especially if they are not in possession of documentation or can no longer access their bank accounts. They face difficulties in obtaining residence registration because they are staying in temporary shelters or renting from landlords unwilling to allow them to register for tax-related reasons. Without residence registration, they cannot register business activities and can face further obstacles in accessing other administrative services. In order to register as unemployed, displaced persons need to provide documentary evidence that they are no longer working at their previous place of employment, and as most left abruptly, they do not have sufficient evidence to prove that they qualify for this assistance” (ibid).

It is also noted in this document that:

“While authorities, as well as friends, family and civil society at large, make temporary shelter available, housing opportunities are generally located in rural areas where jobs or other livelihood opportunities are slim. This makes it difficult for displaced people to re-gain self-sufficiency. Not every Ukrainian has relatives in a different part of the country that can take care of them temporarily. On an emergency basis, many provinces have recently started making available sanatoriums, dormitories and summer camps for the temporary collective shelter of IDPs. However, the funding for these centres is not secured, and it is unclear for how long IDPs can stay in these facilities. Some incidents of evictions and threats of evictions from temporary accommodation centres have been reported to UNHCR, especially when the centres needed to revert to their ordinary use. For example, some IDPs had to leave a summer camp so that children could arrive for their scheduled holidays. By the autumn, people will need to move out of centres that are not

winterized, and funding will need to be in place to heat other centres. While emergency needs are being met, the prospects for shelter in the medium term remain precarious” (ibid).

This report also states:

“Displaced persons generally have access to public health care, though having lost their incomes and support networks, they report to have increasing difficulties to pay for medication. Civil society has generously donated food, clothing and other household items to support displaced persons, but levels of support vary and do not fully meet identified needs” (ibid).

A report published by *Human Rights Watch* in July 2014 notes:

“In early July the Human Rights Watch researcher visited eight temporary living facilities for displaced people, both privately-owned and state-owned, in Kiev, Vinnytsya, Lviv, and Kharkiv regions. In addition to interviewing displaced people, our researcher met with staff of numerous civil society groups and intergovernmental organizations, volunteers that provide assistance to displaced people, and representatives of local authorities tasked with providing assistance to displaced people. All displaced people said they received little to no help from the government when they were fleeing from armed conflict areas or when they have sought to secure housing, food, clothing, and other essential items, as well as access to social services. Most also said that they did not receive any information about agencies or governmental bodies they could turn to for help. People who fled fighting in the east but remained in the region reported problems accessing medical help due to shortages in emergency medical services, medication, and supplies there” (Human Rights Watch (21 July 2014) *Ukraine: Letter to President Poroshenko on Internally Displaced Persons*).

This report also states:

“Regional administrations tasked by the state government with registering and assisting displaced people seem to lack funding, internal coordination, and expert guidance. In most cases examined by Human Rights Watch, they struggle to provide needed assistance to displaced people who arrive in their regions” (ibid).

In August 2014 a report released by the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* states:

“IDPs in Ukraine come predominantly from urban or semi-urban backgrounds. The vast majority of IDPs are women and children². Commonly, men stay at home to take care of family property (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (12 August 2014) *Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine - Thematic report: Internal displacement in Ukraine*, p.3).

This report also points out that:

“Assistance to IDPs in Ukraine has so far been provided by regional government authorities, civil society organizations and private donors. The central government has faced growing criticism due to limited funding allocations to IDPs” (ibid, p.4).

In August 2014 a document issued by the *United Nations Country Team in Ukraine* points out that:

“The numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from areas affected by fighting continue to rise, thereby placing pressure on neighbouring oblasts and otherwise less-affected areas of western Ukraine. As of 15 August, some 344,016 (155,800 IDPs and reportedly more than 188,000 refugees to Russia) are registered to have been displaced. The numbers of internally displaced has been rising at the rate of 1,200 per day since 20 July and, while the new phenomenon of returns has complicated the estimation of accurate displacement figures, this trend is expected to remain or further increase as fighting intensifies on in the east. Many of the IDPs are in need of shelter, food, and non-food assistance. Mounting pressure has been placed on neighbouring oblasts as well as countries. The numbers of IDPs are potentially higher than currently reported, due to the lack of a centralized IDP registration system and the reluctance of some IDPs to get registered” (United Nations Country Team in Ukraine (15 August 2014) *Situation in Ukraine - Preliminary Response Plan, 15 Aug - 31 Dec 2014*, p.3).

A paper issued in August 2014 by the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* notes:

“Regional and local authorities are providing some emergency shelter for IDPs in collective centres, but large cities like Kharkiv, Kyiv and Lviv – where employment opportunities are generally better – report that they do not have any more free spaces to accommodate IDPs. In part, their reluctance stems from the fact that the central Government has not yet guaranteed any funds to help regions pay for accommodation of IDPs from the Donbas area. Shelter and humanitarian assistance are also being provided by a wide array of business, religious and civic groups, but this has started to subside. With the displacement entering its fifth month, fatigue and lack of capacity has started to set in, and this is compounded by the economic downturn” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (17 August 2014) *Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine (August 2014)*).

This document also states:

“Deeper tensions are also emerging. Host populations and IDPs are competing over scarce resources. In various cities, this competition is expressed over the issue of pre-school slots, since these are in short supply in Ukraine's urban areas. In western Ukraine, host populations increasingly resent male IDPs, accusing them of evading military service while men from the west are being mobilized” (ibid).

In September 2014 a paper issued by the *UNHCR* notes that:

“The UN refugee agency said on Tuesday that fighting in eastern Ukraine, in particular around Donetsk, Luhansk and neighbouring towns, is driving more people from their homes and increasing the need for humanitarian aid” (UNHCR (2 September 2014) *Number of displaced inside Ukraine more than doubles since early August to 260,000*).

A paper issued in September 2014 by the *UNHCR* states:

“As of 1 September 260,000 people have been displaced across Ukraine, over 94% of them come from the eastern regions, while others are from Crimea” (UNHCR (4

September 2014) *UNHCR External Update On The Situation Of Displaced Persons, 22 August - 04 September 2014*, p.2).

This document also points out that:

“...it has become increasingly difficult for the residents to leave the conflict areas as many are afraid of being caught in crossfire. The number of those using the corridors set-up by the Ukrainian authorities to flee the conflict areas is decreasing, mainly due to recent incidents when civilians were killed in attacks” (ibid, p.2).

In September 2014 a paper published by the *UNHCR* states:

“Winterized shelter and access to basic needs and services are of urgent concern for IDPs in/from eastern Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea” (UNHCR (12 September 2014) *Ukraine: Situation report No.11 as of 12 September 2014*, p.1).

In September 2014 an article issued by the *UNHCR* notes that:

“The fighting that has raged across the region since the spring has forced at least 310,000 people to flee their homes and register as IDPs. UNHCR officials believe the real number could be much higher. Many simply move in with relatives or friends and don't tell anyone” (UNHCR (18 September 2014) *Ukraine: the internally displaced struggle to get by*).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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