

Operational Update

01-31 March 2018

Situation at check points: The Border Guard Service recorded 1,021,600 crossings of the line of contact during the month. Long queues continued to be reported by UNHCR’s partner R2P.

Winterization: Unusually cold conditions persisted throughout March; UNHCR continued with winter assistance plan distributing coal, winter-cash assistance and warm clothes.

Legal Assistance: In March, UNHCR and its partners provided primary legal assistance to more than 2,300 people.

KEY INDICATORS

4,100

IDPs and conflict-affected persons received **primary legal assistance** from UNHCR partners in 2018.

3,000

households in the non-government controlled area of Donetsk region received **9,000 tonnes of coal** from UNHCR in 2018.

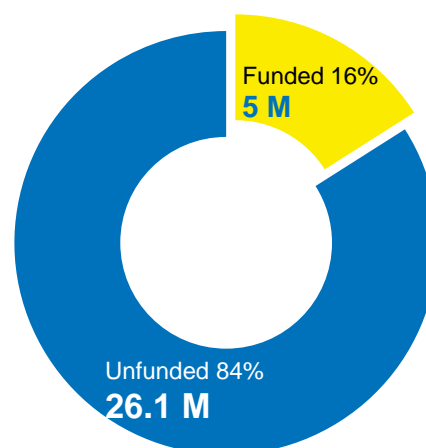
843

households in government-controlled areas received **winter cash assistance** in 2018.

FUNDING (AS OF 4 APRIL)

USD 31.1 M

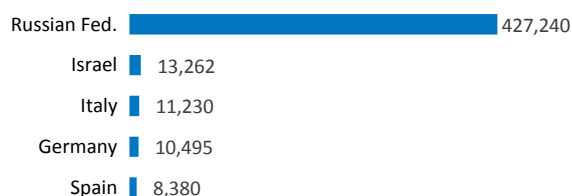
requested for Ukraine



INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP)* AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED PERSONS**

1.8 million***

ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM UKRAINE****



* Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).
 ** Estimated number of conflict-affected persons living along the line of contact in GCAs and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).
 *** Source: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).
 **** Source (external displacement): Russian Federation (as of December 2016), Israel (as of June 2017); respective government authorities, UNHCR. EU Countries: EUROSTAT (as of October 2017).
 External displacement data refers to the total number of asylum applications by Ukrainians (first time applications) in the top five receiving countries since the beginning of the Ukraine situation in January 2014.



Distribution of winter jackets provided by German donor EuroTops. Photo: UNHCR

Update on Achievements

Operational Context

Following an initial decrease, ceasefire violations progressively increased during March upon the coming into effect of a recommitment to suspension of hostilities on 5 March. Shelling targeted civilian areas including the towns of Avdiivka and Horlivka, in northern Donetsk, and the village of Sakhanka, east of Mariupol. On 26 March, the Trilateral Contact Group announced a further recommitment to ceasefire to come into effect on 30 March. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) [reports](#) 37 civilian casualties, including 8 fatalities, since the beginning of the year. UNOCHA published the [2017 Humanitarian Response Plan End of Year Report](#) providing an overview of humanitarian achievements and funding. As of 2 April, there are 1,492,590 registered IDPs according to the Ministry of Social Policy (MoSP).



UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) for Operations, Mr. George Okoth-Obbo, and the Regional Director for Europe, Ms. Pascale Moreau, meets with UNHCR beneficiaries in eastern Ukraine during a weeklong fact-finding mission to Ukraine. Photo: UNHCR

Achievements



PROTECTION

Protection Cluster

- Dr. Walter Kaelin, Special Advisor to the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator on Displacement, was on mission to Ukraine to discuss implementation of the draft *Action Plan for the Strategy on IDP Integration and Durable Solutions*. Key concerns highlighted by Cluster partners during a meeting with Dr. Kaelin included the need for more meaningful involvement of civil society in the policy making process and

that implementing the Action Plan would be challenging, as there was no budget allocation for activities included in the Plan. Partners also highlighted concerns regarding lack of IDP voting rights, and the link between social benefits, pensions, IDP status, and the trend of involuntary return of IDPs to the NGCA and conflict-affected areas of the GCA due to inability to support themselves in areas of displacement. Dr. Kaelin recommended that more planning take place at local level, and that capacity building for local authorities should include IDPs, voting rights for IDPs be guaranteed, and that there should be more focus on communities affected by the displacement.

- Key protection concerns raised at the Protection Cluster meeting in Donetsk (NGCA) included limited access to essential services such as transport and health for those living near the line of contact, including lack of assistance for older and immobile people. There were reports of older people in areas near the line of contact without sufficient food having exhausted their food stocks during winter. Continued lack of mobile telephone connection in the area means that pensioners cannot receive information about pensions from the GCA, and poses a risk to life, safety, and security as people have difficulty contacting emergency services.
- More information on Cluster activities is available in the [March fact sheet \[pdf\]](#).

Achievements, Impact, and Identified Needs

- On 23 March, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) for Operations Mr. George Okoth-Obbo, and the Regional Director for Europe, Ms. Pascale Moreau, conducted a weeklong visit to Ukraine. The two senior officials held meetings with Ukrainian government authorities and NGOs working with refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and stateless persons as well as with members of the UN Country Team and the humanitarian community, including donor representatives, ICRC and OSCE. The mission discussed with refugees about the integration challenges facing them, while in Sviatohirsk, in eastern Ukraine, the discussion with IDPs concentrated on access to pensions, participation of IDPs in local elections, and conditions at collective centres. Meetings with Government counterparts included the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs, as well as the Parliamentary Ombudsperson for Human Rights and the traditional leaders of the Crimean Tatar people (the *Mejlis*, including 1998 Nansen Award winner Mr. Mustafa Dzhemilev). While in the NGCA of Donetsk region, the UNHCR delegation met with UNHCR and UN staff, visited UNHCR-funded shelter activities, as well as neighborhoods severely affected by the conflict. [The mission also visited Maiorsk checkpoint, where they witnessed the challenges faced by civilians, particularly older people, while crossing the line of contact.](#)
- During March, UNHCR reviewed and approved **114 cases for individual protection assistance (IPA)** to vulnerable persons in the NGCA of Donetsk region. In January and February, UNHCR provided IPA to 90 persons.
- During March and in eastern Ukraine, UNHCR partner the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provided **primary legal assistance to 852 persons, while** NGO Proliska provided 2,422 protection consultations. In Odesa region, NGO Tenth of April provided primary **legal assistance to 108 persons**. Right to Protection (R2P) provided **primary legal assistance to 1,192 IDPs and conflict-affected persons**, and **individual protection counselling to 2,066 persons**. The UNHCR hotline managed by R2P

received **calls from 148 persons**. Main concerns included civil documentation, crossing the line of contact, pensions, humanitarian assistance, and inheritance.

- In 2017, UNHCR completed **24 Community Quick Impact Projects** in eastern Ukraine thanks to GIZ Funding. One of these centres, KvARTal (QIP no. 2) in Bakhmut renovated by UNHCR of a GIZ-funded Quick Impact Project (QIP) in December 2017, hosts a number of activities and services, hosting a mobile clinic, a psychologist, legal assistance provided by UNHCR partner R2P, and children's clubs. Local authorities, the Department of Labor and Social Protection, the Office of the Pension Fund, and UkrPoshta, the Ukrainian post office, also provide services at the centre. During March, **822 beneficiaries visited the centre**. Another Community Quick Impact Project, a Sports Centre for the disabled persons (QIP n#1) in Sloviansk that opened in November 2017 has been regularly hosting a variety of free activities for IDPs and local residents of all ages. Activities at the centre include wheelchair dancing, dance classes for children, tennis, table tennis, self-defence classes, board games, and craftwork masterclasses. The centre also provides psychological assistance.
- UNHCR initiated **local-level coordination meetings** in Ocheretyne and Avdiivka with the participation of local authorities and humanitarian actors operating in the area. Participants shared information on their planned assistance programmes, discussed coordination, and exchanged views on cooperation with the village councils and local authorities. The discussion also covered main protection concerns in the area and possible solutions. Main concerns raised included the lack of a local State Migration Service (SMS) office, payment of utility bills for damaged housing, the need for a centre for older people, absence of a court, and poor access to *Oshadbank* services, where pensions and social assistance payments are issued.
- During the first week of March, UNHCR organized **training sessions in Lviv and Odesa for some 60 IDP communities** from central and western Ukraine. The training events, organized jointly with NGO partners CrimeaSOS and Tenth of April, introduced IDP communities to UNHCR's plans for 2018 including a calendar of events dedicated to community capacity building, and UNHCR's strategy for 2018-2022. The events were planned based on consultations with IDPs in November and December 2017. Participants also received training on decentralization, after which it was agreed that IDP communities together with their host communities will establish contact with local authorities.
- In March UNHCR Sub-Office in Sloviansk facilitated a **workshop on SGBV prevention for 36 participants from partner NGOs** providing protection and assistance to IDPs, conflict-affected persons, and IDP host communities in eastern Ukraine. As a result of the workshop, a **network of SGBV focal points** was established ensuring improved coordination of referrals and response.
- In NGCA Donetsk region, UNHCR and its NGO partners provided **protection counselling to some 509 persons**, including three SGBV survivors. UNHCR NGO partners facilitated workshops and community meetings for 196 people on subjects including parenting, protection advice, and SGBV awareness. Main concerns of persons provided protection consultations in NGCA Donetsk included humanitarian assistance, social assistance, pensions, crossing the line of contact, Housing, Land and Property (HLP), employment, and civil documentation.

**SHELTER AND NFIS****Shelter and NFIs Cluster**

- In mid-March, a new draft decree was issued granting registration of previously unregistered private residences without an administrative fine. The lack of documentation on tenure led some shelter agencies to remove vulnerable families in need of shelter assistance from beneficiary lists. However, while the decree covers the tenure of the building, it does not cover the land on which the building stands.
- The sub-national shelter Cluster organised field visits to Mariinka, Krasnogorovka, as well as Yasinovatskii and Volnovahskii districts. The focus was on updating Damage Database figures and shelter projections for 2019, and the possibility to include multi-storey buildings with structural damage in the Cluster's list of eligible interventions.
- Cluster members report that winterization activities are complete (with the exception of PiN who will continue their winterization cash programme until June). The Cluster will issue a winterization summary, as well as recommendations for future winterization programmes.
- During a monitoring visit to Cluster partner activities in eastern Ukraine on 6 March, the ECHO Regional Expert on Shelter/NFI and WaSH met with shelter and NFI agencies in the area. UNHCR hosted the meeting attended by Caritas, DRC, IOM, NRC, and PIN. Participants briefed ECHO on assessed shelter needs for 2018 and following years. ECHO requested that the Cluster issue an update of the Damage Database, as it is the main reference for agencies and donors in the country.

Achievements, Impact, and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR partner Proliska distributed **winter jackets** provided by in-kind donors EuroTops and Youngone to more than **1,200 persons** in areas near the line of contact. In Kharkiv region, UNHCR partners R2P and Station Kharkiv provided **winter jackets to 600 vulnerable IDPs**. UNHCR Field Office Sievierodonetsk provided **winter jackets to 97 children** from vulnerable families including IDPs and conflict-affected families through NGO People living with HIV. In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk region, UNHCR delivered **winterization assistance (9,000 tonnes of coal) to 3,000 households** (three tonnes per household).
- UNHCR repaired **two wheelchairs** used at Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint to assist persons with disabilities crossing the line of contact.
- In the NGCA of Donetsk region, UNHCR completed repairs to **30 houses** in the NGCA of Donetsk region, completing **200 repairs** planned under the programme. The repairs were undertaken through a private contractor due to UNHCR's lack of "registration" with the *de facto* authorities in the area. In the NGCA of Luhansk region, UNHCR distributed IOM-provided diapers to eight vulnerable persons. UNHCR provided shelter materials for emergency repairs to one home in the area. UNHCR is standing by to carry out 200 shelter repairs and to provide shelter materials to a further 700 damaged houses in the area, as well as to distribute 1,000 already procured winter jackets, pending "registration" with *de facto* authorities.

Working in partnership

- The humanitarian response to the internal displacement situation in Ukraine is a coordinated effort by the Government, international organizations, national and international NGOs.
- In providing support to persons of concern, UNHCR works closely with the Government of Ukraine. In the case of IDPs, on 10 October 2016, 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 [11 partners](#) providing support 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 Shelter and Non-food Item (NFI), Cluster, the latter being co-chaired together with [People in Need](#).

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 5 million**. UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2018

United States of America (124 M) | [Sweden \(98 M\)](#) | Norway (43 M) | [Netherlands \(39 M\)](#) | United Kingdom (32 M) | [Denmark \(25 M\)](#) | Private Donors Spain (19 M) | [Australia \(19 M\)](#) | Canada (16M) | [Switzerland \(15 M\)](#) | Italy (11 M)

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LINKS

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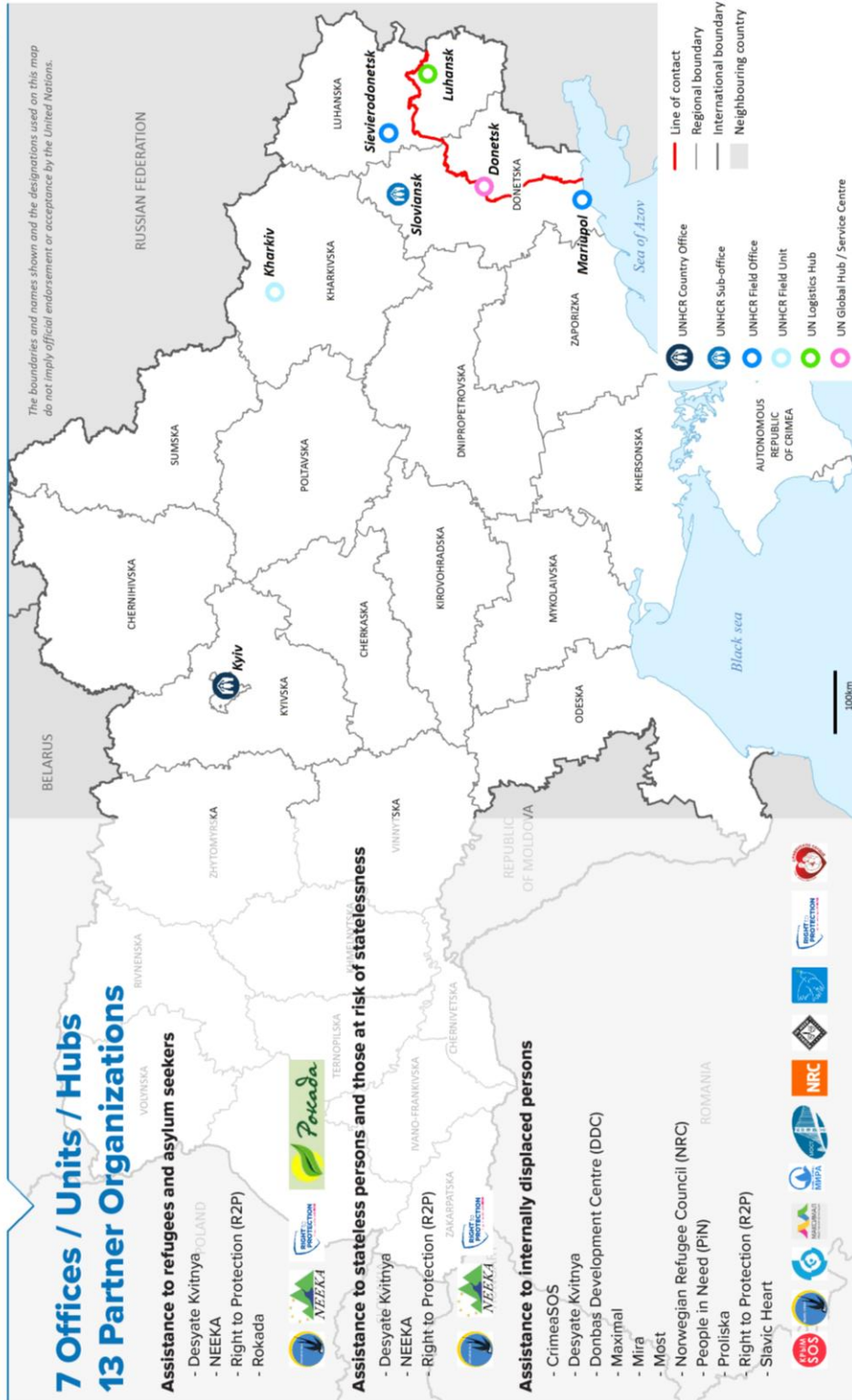
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Annexes

1.



Ukraine: UNHCR Presence



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