

Operational Update

February 2020

In February, UNHCR scaled up its activities in providing humanitarian and protection assistance in non-government controlled areas (NGCA) of Luhansk. UNHCR initiated assessment of damaged houses in these areas and provided residents of social institutions with non-food-items. [More on page 2.](#)

To enhance the humanitarian and development nexus approach, UNHCR and UNDP staged a joint visit to the conflict-affected town of Avdiivka, Donetsk oblast. Both agencies identified areas for cooperation to make the premises of the local Pension Fund more accessible for the elderly. [More on page 3.](#)

UNHCR stepped up its advocacy efforts to ensure that the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless, displaced and conflict-affected persons are respected in light of new measures undertaken by authorities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. [More on page 3 \(see "UNHCR's Key Advocacy Messages"\).](#)

KEY INDICATORS

1,903

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other conflict-affected persons have received **legal assistance** from UNHCR's NGO partners in 2020.

45

IDPs and other conflict-affected persons have been **counselled on SGBV-related issues** in 2020.

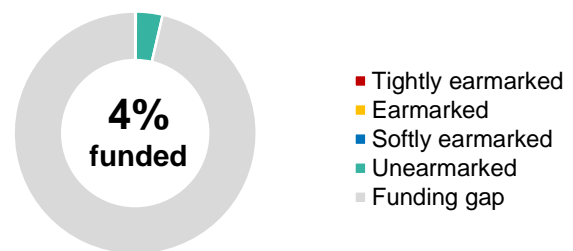
373

IDPs and other conflict-affected persons have benefited from **psychosocial support** in 2020.

FUNDING (AS OF 27 FEBRUARY 2020)

USD 28.2 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2019



INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)*

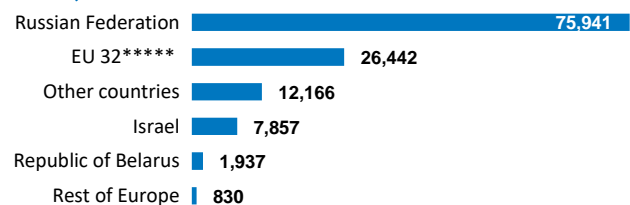
734,000***

OTHER CONFLICT-AFFECTED PERSONS**

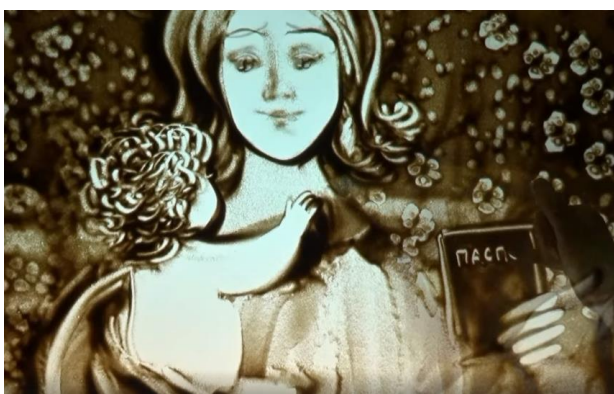
1,68 million****

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM UKRAINE

125,173*****



*Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA)
 **Vulnerable, conflict-affected persons living along the contact line in GCA and non-government controlled areas (NGCA)
 ***Source: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)
 ****Sources: Protection Cluster, UNHCR – 2020
 *****Source: UNHCR PopStats, December 2018
 *****28 EU countries and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland



This touching [sand animation video](#) was produced by UNHCR Ukraine to observe World Cancer Day on 4 February. It tells the real story of a stateless woman living with cancer who was unable to access health care services because she lacked appropriate civil documentation. Her story is just one example of how stateless persons are often deprived of basic human rights, such as access to health care. To watch the video and read the story click [here](#).

Operational Highlights

In February, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)'s Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) recorded 20,300 ceasefire violations in Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts, a 23 per cent increase as compared to the previous month. During the reporting period, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded five conflict-related civilian casualties (one killed and four injured). At the same time, the UNHCR-led Shelter Cluster reported that 76 new civilian houses were damaged or destroyed by shelling that intensified in February along the contact line. This represents a 280 per cent increase as compared to January. *Photo (top right) shows UNHCR's NGO partner Proliska delivering emergency shelter assistance after a shelling incident damaged the homes of the residents of Horikhove, Donetsk oblast.*



Coordinating protection at the local level: On 6 February, UNHCR organized a Local Protection Meeting in the town of Popasna, Luhanska oblast in which local authorities, international and national humanitarian actors discussed recent developments and protection concerns. The location has seen a resented increase of shelling in Novotoshkovske, Olhove, Zolote/Khutir Vilnyi and Mykhailivka. Local Protection Meetings are organized every time protection solutions are needed at the local level to solve particular protection issues.

UNHCR in Luhansk non-government controlled areas (NGCA): In February, UNHCR scaled up its protection and humanitarian activities in Luhansk NGCA. There was a particularly strong focus on providing non-food items



(NFIs) for covering basic needs, as well intensifying efforts to repair damaged houses. During the reporting period, UNHCR assessed 56 damaged civilian houses in order to ensure that beneficiaries have protection and specific needs covered, as well as to evaluate the repairs that will be needed. In total, UNHCR plans to repair 190 houses in the area. UNHCR also supported persons in social institutions such as orphanages and homes for the elderly and persons with disabilities. In total, UNHCR provided 873 bed linen sets, 1,685 blankets, 126 buckets and 1,994 winter clothing items to persons with specific needs in social institutions in and around the city of Luhansk. With this assistance, conflict-affected persons residing in and around

Luhansk city will be able to better cope with the cold winter conditions in eastern Ukraine. *Photo by UNHCR (first on the left.)*

Humanitarian convoy to Luhansk city: On 20 February, UNHCR jointly with the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) facilitated the delivery of a humanitarian convoy to Luhansk city. In total, 37 tons of humanitarian assistance, including educational supplies from UNICEF and medical items from the NGO Médecins du Monde have been delivered to local social institutions to meet the urgent needs of conflict-affected persons. *Photo by UNHCR (second on the right)*



Situation in the entry-exit checkpoints (EECP): During the reporting period, UNHCR's NGO partners reported the deaths of two elderly men due to health-related issues at Marinka and Maiorske checkpoint. In addition, difficult



winter conditions had a severe impact on the functioning of the checkpoints. As reported by UNHCR's NGO partner Proliska, two vehicles transporting people to Maiorske EECP turned over on icy roads, resulting in the death of one person and an injury of another. In February, UNHCR continued to provide transportation services to persons with specific needs at EECP in Stanytsia Luhanska. At this checkpoint, two electric cars operated by UNHCR and its NGO partner Proliska transported 23,507 individuals across an 800 metres long passage between the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge and the governmental side of the EECP. Sixty-one per cent out of them crossed the contact line to receive pensions on the government-controlled side. *Photo by Proliska (second on the left.)*

Key Advocacy Messages for February

- On 28 February, in efforts to prevent the spread of **COVID-19**, the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine introduced **new restrictions in all five Entry-Exit Checkpoints (EECPs)** between government-controlled and non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts. The new procedure introduced measuring of the body temperature of all persons crossing the checkpoints from NGCA. Should any symptoms be recorded, people are then transported to the closest medical facilities.
- UNHCR is very concerned by the risk of Coronavirus pandemic reaching conflict-affected civilians in eastern Ukraine. This is primarily because of the large presence of elderly persons with specific needs, especially those living near the contact line' who have limited access to health care services. UNHCR calls on the Government of Ukraine to take into account the needs of displaced and conflict-affected persons, especially those with specific needs, in the course of elaboration of normative provisions related to prevention of COVID-19. All preventive measures must ensure that these persons can continue accessing medicines, health and other administrative services **on both sides of the contact line**.

UNHCR'S RECENT REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS:

[ONE-PAGER] Latest Information Products: this one-page fact sheet summarizes all of UNHCR Ukraine's recent products, reports, thematic factsheets, dashboards and UNHCR-led Clusters' reports.

[THEMATIC UPDATE] UNHCR Ukraine February Legislative Update: this monthly report contains UNHCR's legal analysis of laws and governmental policies that affects refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless, internally displaced and conflict-affected persons in Ukraine

[REPORTS] UNHCR Ukraine IPA in-cash Update and **UNHCR Ukraine IPA in-kind Update:** these thematic reports explore the protection impacts of **Individual Protection Assistance (IPA)** implemented by UNHCR and its NGO partners in 2019 in eastern Ukraine to support internally displaced and conflict-affected persons.



Humanitarian Development Nexus

- On 13 February, **UNHCR jointly with UNDP** undertook a **joint assessment field mission to the conflict-affected town of Avdiivka, Donetsk oblast**. During the visit, the UN team visited the local branch of the Pension Fund and noticed the challenges of accessibility of the premises for persons with limited mobility. Given that there are approximately three thousand pensioners in Avdiivka, UNHCR and UNDP will jointly contribute to **make the premises more accessible for persons with specific needs**.



Donor Relations

- On 4 February, UNHCR facilitated a mission of the new **Ambassador of Canada to the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk oblast**. During the visit, the delegation learned about the different protection and humanitarian activities of UNHCR along the contact line. The Ambassador also met with a family that were relocated from a high-risk zone near the contact line to a safer location as part of **UNHCR's pilot relocation project**. In 2019, UNHCR relocated 14 families with specific needs that resided in conflict hotspots to safer locations. *Photo by UNHCR shows the Ambassador Larisa Galadza of Canada meeting with the relocated family in their new home.*
- During the reporting period, UNHCR organized **two briefings that specifically focused on the agency's work in NGCA**. These briefings were held to accentuate UNHCR's extensive work in NGCA and draw attention to the challenges faced in these locations.




MULTI-SECTOR RESPONSE TO REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS
Protection of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- On 21 February, UNHCR jointly with its NGO partner “The Tenth of April” organized a Forum for refugees and IDPs communities in Odesa. In total, 42 participants among 29 associations, IDPs and refugees communities from four regions of Ukraine joined the event. In the Forum, communities were able to share achievements and best practices on advocating for their rights. *Photo by UNHCR.*
- During the reporting period, UNHCR produced a **video for social media** which promotes the **Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee initiative, known as DAFI**, which offers scholarships for higher education for refugees and asylum-seekers. In Ukraine so far, **twenty-seven refugees** have received these scholarships, which are generously funded by the Government of Germany.
- On 28 February, UNHCR met with representatives of **Kyiv’s Free Legal Assistance Centres (FLAC)** to discuss their assistance to **unaccompanied and separated asylum-seeking children**. The current Refugee Law in Ukraine requires the presence of the attorney during the asylum procedure. However, at the moment the legal assistance to these children is only provided by UNHCR’s NGO legal partners.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR assisted **three unaccompanied and separated asylum-seeking children from Afghanistan** to receive their complementary protection certificate.



620

Persons received Legal Assistance

(including refugees and asylum-seekers) in Kyiv, Odesa, Zakarpattia and Kharkiv regions in February

54

Persons accessed education

This number indicates how many refugees and asylum-seekers UNHCR and its NGO partners supported with enrolment to educational institutions in Kyiv, Odesa, Zakarpattia and Kharkiv regions in February

29

Persons received Psychosocial Assistance

(including refugees and asylum-seekers) thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners’ support in February

157

Persons were assisted in accessing healthcare

(including refugees and asylum-seekers) thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners’ support in February

Livelihood Interventions for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

73

Refugees have started their own businesses

with UNHCR self-reliance grants since the launch of the program in 2018

In February, UNHCR and its NGO partners **Rokada** and the **Tenth of April** provided **counselling on employment opportunities** to 30 refugees and asylum-seekers.



Farhad is an asylum-seeker from Iran and currently lives in Kyiv. Back home, he was a renowned shoemaker and produced handmade shoes for the local market. In Ukraine, Farhad started working in a bakery where he discovered a passion for baking and started producing his own original recipes. Thanks to UNHCR’s livelihood grant, he was able to purchase a confectionery production machine to produce different types of sweets. Farhad now plans to become a chef and make his cookies famous with a name that he created - “cookies of winners.” Photo by UNHCR.*

Assistance to Stateless Persons and Persons at Risk of Statelessness

- On 5 February, UNHCR participated in the [Human Rights Committee at the Parliament of Ukraine](#) to discuss amendments to the [draft law on Statelessness Determination Procedure](#). This law has been at the center of UNHCR and NGO partner's advocacy efforts together with the [State Migration Service of Ukraine](#). The Committee supported the draft law for the second reading and recommended it for consideration of the Ukrainian Parliament.

12

Stateless persons
(or at risk of) obtained passport
or other document certifying
nationality

in February thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support

160

Stateless persons
(or at risk of) received advice
on acquisition or confirmation
of nationality

in February thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners'
support

22

Persons obtained their
birth certificates
for the first time

in February
thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support



PROTECTION FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND OTHER CONFLICT-AFFECTED PERSONS

Protection Cluster

- On 15 February, the Protection Cluster released an [advocacy note on the 'Protection concerns of people living along the contact line.'](#) The note outlines key protection issues, including restrictions on freedom of movement, mine contamination and lack of access to services, and provides recommendations for authorities, humanitarian and development actors.
- During the reporting period, the [Protection Cluster meetings were held in Kyiv, Sievierodonetsk and Kramatorsk](#). Protection partners discussed their achievements in 2019, contingency and transition planning, accountability to affected population (AAP), as well as partners' advocacy strategies and response priorities for 2020. Special focus was placed on the latest increase of shelling in Luhanska oblast and possible implications for conflict-affected persons due to a new procedure for crossing the border with the Russian Federation only with passports for travelling abroad, entering into force on 1 March.
- On 26 and 27 February, the Protection Cluster conducted [training sessions on Protection of Civilians and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) as part of a two-day training on Civil-Military Coordination. The training brought together representatives from humanitarian, governmental, donor and military sectors.



UNHCR Protection Activities

- Birth Registration for Residents of NGCA:** On 13 February, UNHCR met the [Deputy Minister of Justice \(MoJ\)](#) to discuss the adoption of the administrative procedure for birth registration in NGCA. Jointly with the Ministry for Veteran Affairs, Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs (MinVetTOT) and Office for Humanitarian Policy of the Ministry of Culture, the participants agreed to [identify a list of maternity clinics in NGCA, reflected in court practice on birth registration](#). The next step envisages the possibility of the adoption of a joint order of three ministries (MoJ, MinVetTOT and Ministry of Health) that would introduce the birth registration procedure.
- Durable Solutions for IDPs:** On 24 February, [UNHCR visited the city of Zaporizhzhia](#) where it met with its NGO partner the [Right to Protection \(R2P\)](#) to discuss the [handing over of legal assistance to the state Free Legal Aid Centers \(FLACs\)](#). UNHCR also met with local IDP community groups to develop concrete steps that UNHCR will undertake to assist displaced persons in this region in their efforts to improve access to housing.
- Compensation for Civilians:** On 25 February, UNHCR and its NGO partners Proliska and R2P joined a working group meeting to discuss the [compensation mechanism for houses that had been damaged or destroyed during the conflict](#). The event was organized in the town of [Kurakhove](#) by UNHCR's NGO partner, [the Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#), and brought together state and local authorities, as well as conflict-affected communities. The meeting resulted in the development of a list of amendments to the respective draft law that would enable practical implementation of the mechanism.



Legal Assistance and Protection Counselling

1,246

Internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons (69% female, 31% male) received legal assistance from UNHCR and its partners in February

2,655

Persons benefited from individual protection counselling in February

32

Group consultations on protection-related issues were provided to 419 persons (68% female, 32% male) in areas along the contact line in February



Social Accompaniment

- In the month of February, UNHCR's NGO partners provided social accompaniment to **370 individuals** (7,3 per cent of them were persons with disabilities) who needed support in, inter alia, obtaining personal documentation, accessing state services, or receiving authorization to cross checkpoints. In some cases, individuals were supported with transportation to access public buildings and register for social services.



Nina, 82, lives in the isolated village of Pisky, Donetsk oblast, where the conflict has damaged all houses in the location. Infrastructure has also been severely disrupted, leaving the residents with no access to state services. Nina was displaced after her home was destroyed by shelling; she has since been forced to move between different buildings in the village. She also lives with her son who has lost his ability to hear or speak following injuries sustained from shelling. To assist Nina and other elderly persons in Pisky, UNHCR and its NGO partner Proliska, facilitated a visit of the representatives of the social protection services' to the village. Thanks to this intervention, Nina received all the necessary documentation to receive social payments for her and her son. Photo by Proliska.*



Psychosocial assistance

185

71% Female | 29% Male
Persons received consultations in February

During the reporting period, UNHCR's NGO partner **Proliska** provided **185 vulnerable persons** with psychological consultations to help conflict-affected persons deal with symptoms of psychological trauma, domestic violence, grief, depression, anxiety, and psychological tension.



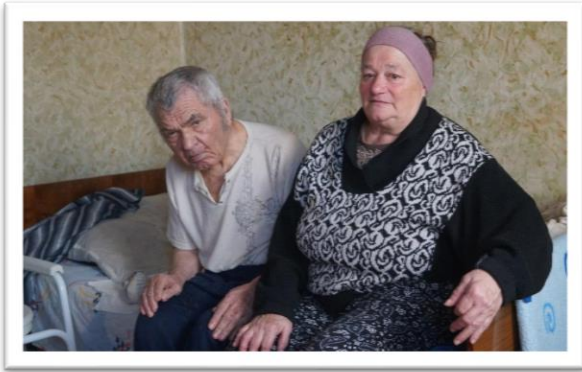
Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

- On 20 and 21 February, UNHCR jointly with the Protection Cluster participated in the **International Forum** entitled "On the Way to Zero GBV in Ukraine" organized by the **United Nations Population Fund**. The Forum was staged to review the progress in developing a robust national system of GBV response and to discuss how to strengthen GBV prevention mechanisms in Ukraine, particularly in conflict-affected areas in Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts. *Photo by UNHCR shows UNHCR's Representative, Protection Associate and the Protection Cluster's Coordinator presenting UNHCR's activities related to SGBV response.*



Individual Protection Assistance (IPA)

- In February, UNHCR continued to identify and provide the most vulnerable conflict-affected individuals in eastern Ukraine with **cash for protection**. This assistance is used to cover different types of needs, ranging from winterization and livelihood items to medical examinations and procedures. In the areas where state services are not accessible, UNHCR and its NGO partners provide **Individual Protection Assistance in-kind**. In 2019, the **2,686 persons** received the IPA assistance (2,091 persons were supported with cash and 595 - with in-kind assistance).



Oleksandr and Maria* both live in Donetsk and are persons with disabilities. Their love story started recently when they both turned 60. They were neighbors and lived on their own, so they started to support each other before eventually deciding to move in together. A few years ago, Oleksandr started showing symptoms of Parkinson's disease and gradually lost his autonomy. This took a toll on the couple as Maria also suffers from serious spine problems and diabetes. Therefore, UNHCR jointly with its NGO partner DDC provided the couple with vital medical equipment, including an orthopedic mattress, anti-decubitus cushions, a blood pressure monitor, a wheelchair and various hygiene products. These enabled the couple to gain greater autonomy and move around the*

house for the first time in many months. Photo by DDC.

Peaceful Coexistence Projects (PCPs)

- UNHCR supports small to medium-scale infrastructure repairs proposed by communities or local authorities in eastern Ukraine. These Peaceful Coexistence Projects (PCPs) aim at creating an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence between the displaced populations and host communities and to complement the resilience of IDPs and affected communities. In total, UNHCR has implemented **63 Peaceful Coexistence Projects (PCPs)** in eastern Ukraine in 2019.



This House of Culture in Kondrashivka suburb of Stanytsia Luhanska has been rehabilitated by UNHCR. The House of Culture now provides a safe and dignified space for both internally displaced persons and their host community of all age groups. Some of the activities organized in this facility include craft-making workshops for children and elderly persons, as well as musical and artistic performances. Thanks to these activities, conflict-affected persons can alleviate stress whilst strengthening the links between host and displaced communities. Photo by UNHCR.

Community Support Initiatives (CSIs)

- UNHCR in Ukraine empowers communities of internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons throughout the country. Community Support Initiatives (CSIs) implemented in the spirit of a **Community-Based Protection** approach include a range of activities designed to mobilize and empower communities, strengthen their ability to organize emergency responses and self-advocate with local and national authorities in order to find durable solutions for their own protection. Since the start of 2020, UNHCR **approved four CSIs to be implemented in eastern Ukraine**. In 2019, UNHCR jointly with its NGO partners have supported **over 200 conflict-affected and displaced communities throughout Ukraine**.

UNHCR and its NGO partner Proliska supported residents of the Toretsk, Donetsk oblast, in organizing a Christian Orthodox festival known as “Butter Week”. On this day, those who joined the festival tried to build the highest “tower of pancake”. To assist residents in this ambitious achievement, UNHCR and Proliska procured two electric pancake making machines and kettles that were subsequently donated to the community. This festival brought host and displaced communities together to enjoy food and outdoor activities together. The communities also learned about the activities offered by UNHCR and its NGO partners’ support. Photo by UNHCR.



SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFIs)

Shelter and NFI Achievements, Impact, and Identified Needs

- In February, UNHCR completed [the repairs of 101 houses in NGCA Donetsk](#).
- On 19 February, UNHCR participated in the meeting organized by the Donetsk oblast administration in Kramatorsk to discuss the house repairs in the region. It was announced that the State Emergency Services (SES) plans to repair approximately a thousand houses damaged by the conflict. To avoid duplication [UNHCR, its NGO partner the Norwegian Refugee Council and the SES will coordinate the selection of individuals](#) who would receive this assistance, prioritizing those with specific needs.

Svitlana* lives with her brother Maksym* near the contact line next to the city of Donetsk. Their house was severely damaged by shelling back in 2015. The same year, their mother was diagnosed with cancer and the family’s scarce savings were spent on treatment. Regrettably, she has recently passed away. The employment opportunities in the village are limited, and although Svitlana has recently found a job as a cleaner in the local orphanage, the family’s income is not enough to cover their most pressing needs. Svitlana and Maksym were trying to save some money to repair the house, but this meant depriving themselves of other basic means. Thanks to UNHCR’s shelter programme, their house was repaired. As a result, Svitlana and Maksym can now spare some budget to cover other needs while living in the house that keeps so many memories of their beloved mother. Photo by UNHCR.



Voluntary Relocation

16

Conflict-affected families relocated to safer homes in 2019-2020

In 2019, with the conflict in Ukraine stretching into its sixth year and with many families with specific needs still living under very difficult conditions in affected locations, UNHCR initiated a [pilot project of voluntarily relocating families](#) who live in dangerous areas along the contact line. Persons who benefit from this project are carefully selected based on [protection vulnerability criteria](#) and a [security assessment](#) of the settlements where they are relocated to.

Shelter/NFI Cluster

- During the reporting period, the UNHCR-led Shelter/NFI Cluster held two Sub-National Cluster meetings in Sievierodonetsk and Sloviansk and the National Cluster meeting in Kyiv. These events were staged to develop the coordinated approach to the implementation of shelter activities in 2020, including the winterization programme, distribution of NFIs and houses repairs in conflict-affected areas in Luhanska and Donetsk oblasts. The Shelter/NFI Cluster also presented the 2019 annual report which highlighted the achievement rates of activities.
- On 24 February, the UNHCR-led Shelter/NFI Cluster held a [Strategic Advisory Group meeting with the Ministry for Veteran Affairs, Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs](#) to discuss the improvement of the conditions at the EECPs along the contact line in eastern Ukraine and the development of a comprehensive housing programme to better address the housing needs of IDPs.

Working in Partnership

The humanitarian response to displacement 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, UNHCR has signed a Letter of Understanding with the [Ministry for Veterans, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons](#). In the case of refugees and stateless persons, UNHCR cooperates closely with the [State Migration Service of Ukraine](#). UNHCR works together with [10 NGO partners](#). UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and Shelter/Non-food Items (NFI) Cluster. UNHCR together with OCHA also co-leads the logistics working group that is mainly responsible for humanitarian convoys to eastern Ukraine.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for critical financial support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programs with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

The indicative level of funding for the operation is **US \$1,028,977**. This figure is based on contributions earmarked to Ukraine, the indicative allocation of flexible funds and adjustments.

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the Major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Sweden 76.4 million | **Norway** 41.4 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Germany** 26.4 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **Private Donors**

SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of softly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

Canada 2.3 million | **Morocco** | **United States of America** | **Private Donors**

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Please note that this report attempts to highlight the main activities implemented by UNHCR and its NGO partners within the selected reporting period. Please note that it is by no means exhaustive. For additional details about our work, do not hesitate to check www.unhcr.org/ua or, contact us directly at ukrkom@unhcr.org.

**Please note that the names of persons who appear in this report have been changed for their protection.*