

CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE:

April 2020 Snapshot

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AT EECPS

CASES OF CROSSINGS

○ Stanytsia Luhanska EECP

Over 120 attempts to cross the contact line was observed at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. The problem with people who stranded for days at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, was partially resolved on 1 April. 27 of them were allowed to cross to NGCA side, and 14 people were allowed to cross from NGCA. But, during April, the number of people waiting for a permit to cross the contact line increased every day. In mid-April, the number of those people was over 60. On 25 April, 25 of them were allowed to cross to NGCA (3 of them were blocked on the NGCA side and had to return), and 20 people crossed from the NGCA side.

On 4 April, permission was given to transport a deceased from NGCA to GCA at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP.

○ Novotroitske EECP

On 11-12 April, 2 women were allowed to cross at Novotroitske EECP from NGCA to GCA due to receiving treatment;

○ Marinka EECP

On 11-12 April, 2 women with cancer were allowed to cross at Marinka EECP from NGCA to GCA.

On 25 April, a woman with NGCA residence registration, was allowed to cross at Marinka EECP for the purpose of burying her father on the GCA side.

An elderly man with brain cancer who was temporarily in Germany for treatment and had NGCA residence registration, was rejected to cross the contact line at Marinka EECP, despite severe illness and the seriousness of the reason for his immediate return home.

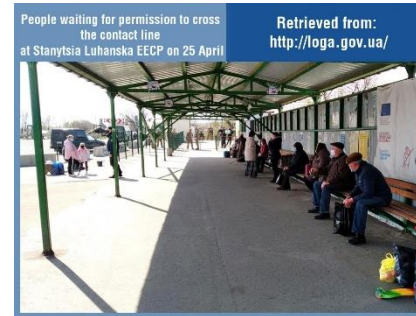
A man was returning home to NGCA to his wife's funeral after working abroad. He was not allowed to cross the contact line at Novotroitske EECP despite the provided death certificate.



At the entrance to Marinka EECP
9 April, 2020



Empty pedestrian zone at Hnutove EECP
24 April, 2020



People waiting for permission to cross the contact line at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP on 25 April

Retrieved from:
<http://loga.gov.ua/>



The day of the exchange of prisoners of war
16 April, 2020

Retrieved from:
Photo of the press service of the President's office



At Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, R2P monitors and lawyers spoke to people waiting for permission to cross the contact line. People were consulted about changes in the regulatory legal act due to the quarantine.

○ EECPs continued to operate in a restricted mode for the quarantine period. Hence, crossing through EECPs requires a special permission from both sides. However, even after getting approval to cross the contact line from one side, the other side may not allow the crossing. SBGS may allow crossing if a person has an urgent issue and by the decision of the JFO Headquarters. Thus, people submitted requests and waited for a decision. More than 10 cases were reported when people were allowed to cross the GCA side but were blocked on the NGCA side of the EECP. Consequently, these people had to return to GCA.

○ The quarantine, implemented to stop the spread of the COVID-19 has become a trap for thousands of internally displaced persons and other citizens who have residence registration on one side of the contact line, but actually live on the other side. Before the closure of EECPs, thousands of pensioners went to the GCA side every day to receive their social benefits. Residents of NGCA, who are quarantined for the last 45 days, do not have access to different state services and funds.

○ Over 200 attempts to cross the contact line on five EECPs were identified during April. In most cases, appeals for a permission to cross were rejected even though some people had serious reasons to cross. In particular, R2P observed cases where parents got separated from their children because of different residence registration or when individuals travelled for purposes of medical treatment or attending funerals.

○ On 16 April, Ukrainian government and the NGCA side exchanged prisoners of war at Maiorske EECP. 20 people were returned to the GCA side in exchange for 14 persons returned to the NGCA side, 4 more people refused to return to NGCA. Returning citizens were placed on a two-week self-isolation.

***(N)GCA** – (non-)government-controlled areas;

EECP – entry-exit checkpoint;

JFO – Joint Forces Operation;

SBGS – State Border Guard Service;

UNHCR and the NGO Right to Protection (R2P) are grateful for the generous support provided by donors, including the European Union's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO); the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (DFID), the United States of America (PRM) as well as private citizens who are contributing funds through different UNHCR private associations such as España con ACNUR of Spain and the UNO Flüchtlingshilfe of Germany.