

Operational Update

February 2021

UNHCR jointly with OCHA delivered the first humanitarian convoy across the 'contact line' through the new Entry-Exit Crossing Point in Shchastia. This development is expected to facilitate the convoys' movement directly to the non-government controlled areas in Luhansk. More operational highlights are on page 2.

who completed an online training in Unilever legal assistance populations in eastern Ukraine. More COVID-19 pandemic. on page 4.

UNHCR coordinated a final in-person UNHCR delivered cleaning and workshop for future legal volunteers hygiene items which were donated by **Temporary** 2020. The activists from Donetska Accommodation Centres for asylumand Luhanska oblast are about to seekers in three regions of Ukraine. become certified experts providing These products will be used to affected improve hygiene conditions during

KEY INDICATORS

2,017

Internally displaced (IDPs) and other conflict-affected persons received legal assistance from UNHCR's NGO partners in 2021.

424

IDPs and other conflict-affected persons benefited from psychosocial support in 2021.

1,611

Refugees asylum-seekers and benefited emergency assistance, medical support and social accompaniment in 2021.

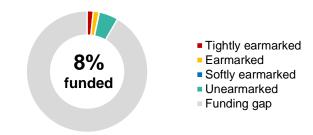


Vira*, 67, lives in the village of Maiorske in Donetska oblast, only 200 metres from the 'contact line'. She can finally feel warm and protected in her house after UNHCR jointly with its NGO partners replaced a window which was damaged by shelling in 2015. Since then, Vira had not been able to afford the repair works and covered the window with plywood boards, carpets, pillows which did not provide proper insulation.

"Sometimes during the cold season, the temperature would go as low as -20C°. Such conditions were life-threatening. Since the window was replaced, I am able to survive freezing temperatures. It is significantly warmer in my apartment and I spend less money on heating", Vira says. Read the full story here. Photo credit by UNHCR. **FUNDING (AS OF 2 MARCH 2021)**

USD 28.9 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2021



INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)*

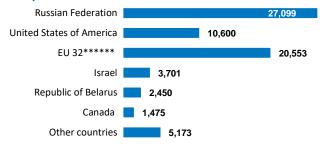
734,000

OTHER CONFLICT-AFFECTED PERSONS***

1,62 million ····

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM UKRAINE

71,051



*Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA)

*Source: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)

***Vulnerable, conflict-affected persons living along the 'contact line' in GCA and in non-government controlled areas (NGCA)

****Sources: Protection Cluster, UNHCR, December 2020

**Source: UNHCR's Refugee Population Statistics Database, June 2020

******27 EU countries and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom



Operational Highlights

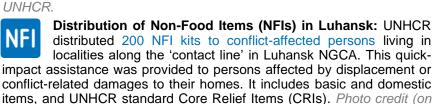
In February, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)'s Special Monitoring Mission recorded 3,008 ceasefire violations in eastern Ukraine, or a 5 per cent less, compared to the previous month. The number of hostilities remains at the highest level for two consecutive months since the ceasefire came into force in July 2020. In February, the UNHCR-led Shelter/NFI reported about 21 civilian houses damaged on both sides of the 'contact line' which represents the highest number since July.

First UN Convoy crosses the 'contact line' through new EECP in Shchastia: On 18 February, UNHCR jointly with OCHA delivered the first humanitarian convoy to the non-government controlled areas (NGCA) in 2021. Eleven trucks transported to Luhansk over 80 tons of assistance belonging to UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and the NGO Médicos del Mundo. On 24 February, citing security concerns, the Joint Forces Operation (JFO) Commander closed all Entry-Exit Crossing Points (EECPs) in Donetska oblast for humanitarian convoy movements. This required from UNHCR to re-route another planned convoy and deliver it through the EECP in Shchastia (Luhanska oblast) on 1 March. This was the first attempt to deliver humanitarian aid through this crossing point, paving the way for



convoys to cross directly to Luhansk without the need to go through Donetsk or to use the pedestrian-only bridge at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. *Photo credit (on the right):*

the left): UNHCR.



Provision of Construction Tools to the State Emergency Service: On 16 February, UNHCR handed over construction equipment and inflatable tents to the Donetsk branch of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU). With this handover, UNHCR marks the completion of its shelter programme in the government-controlled areas (GCA) in eastern Ukraine. In 2021, SESU plans to repair 900 civilian houses (out of 4,000 that still require repairs) using the UNHCR-procured tools. The inflatable tents will be used at the EECPs to provide shelter for those unable to cross the 'contact line'. Photo credit (on the right): UNHCR.



Protection Monitoring Tool: UNHCR jointly with its NGO partner Proliska completed the first data collection within the newly launched Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT) which was developed to collect and analyze data on the protection situation in localities along the 'contact line' in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts. Proliska's monitors visited 98 settlements and had 520 key informant interviews. The key findings revealed lack of employment opportunities in 52 settlements with 37 of them also having no access to public transportation. In 22 localities, security concerns raised by residents included shooting and shelling in inhabited areas. In addition, in 43 localities, residents could travel around only by crossing military checkpoints. The monitoring also confirmed a significant lack of access to essential services: in 34 settlements, there were no medical facilities, banking and postal services making people largely dependent on public transportation.

Freedom of Movement: The State Border Guard Service of Ukraine recorded 32,431 crossings across the 'contact line' (see UNHCR's dashboard "Checkpoint Crossing" here). This represents a 13 per cent increase compared to January and was linked to improved weather conditions, following the harsh winter temperatures. The majority of crossings (31,112) were recorded through the EECP Stanytsia Luhanska which together with the EECP Novotroitske remains the only crossing points opened for civilian crossing on both sides of the 'contact line'.

COVID-19 testing at the EECPs: UNHCR's NGO partner Donbas SOS reported an increase in calls to its hotline regarding the availability of free COVID-19 antigen testing at the EECPs. Although the introduction of such tests is established by Government Resolution #1236 in January, testing was not yet available at the Stanytsia Luhanska crossing point. In Novotroitske, over 500 people were able to take a test and upon receiving a negative result were exempted from the requirement to self-isolate when they crossed to GCA. In February, UNHCR's NGO partner, the Right to Protection (R2P), surveyed 629 persons at the EECPs. Of them, 41 per cent were elderly residents of NGCA who travelled to GCA to access their pension payments. More information is available at the online UNHCR-R2P dashboard "Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint Monitoring".



Legal Highlights

- National Web Platform for Administrative Services Centres (TSNAPs): On 3 February, the Government adopted Resolution #72 introducing a national web platform for TsNAPs. The platform will be maintained by the Ministry for Digital Transformation and is accessible for free. Obtaining information about TsNAPs services in a single source may facilitate access of IDPs and conflict-affected persons to state services. They may plan their visits to TsNAPs close to their place of residence or temporary staying.
- Social Assistance to Persons with Disabilities: On 3 February, the Government adopted Resolution #79 establishing a procedure for providing state social assistance to persons with disabilities since childhood and children with disabilities aged below 18. The assistance will be available for citizens of Ukraine, foreigners and stateless persons, refugees and persons in need of complementary protection permanently residing in Ukraine. Their disability and terms for providing state assistance should be defined by a medical social commission. Persons concerned should refer to social protection departments with an electronic or paper application. Since 1 March, e-applications may be submitted to TsNAPs.
- Pension Fund Budget for 2021: On 17 February, the Government adopted Resolution #126 establishing the 2021 budget of the Pension Fund. The budget provides UAH 360,000 to cover pension payments under relevant court decisions. IDPs represent one of the categories of applicants. There is lack of clarity on whether pension debts for IDPs will be reimbursed from this amount. The Government still has not adopted a resolution on the payment of accumulated debts to IDPs under court decisions, as it has been expected since 2018.
- Funding to support EECPs: On 24 February, the Government adopted Resolution #153 specifying the amount of financial support from the state budget for facilitating freedom of movement across the 'contact line' in eastern Ukraine and the administrative boundary line with Crimea. This support would be used for public transportation of persons who cross, maintenance of the EECPs and their technical improvement. In 2020, new centres for administrative services were opened at the EECPs in Novotroitske and Shchastia and plans are underway to build such facilities in other crossing points.

Key Advocacy Messages

UNHCR welcomes steps that the Government takes towards ensuring the possibility of remote birth registration through the online e-Malyatko service. UNHCR calls on the Government to adopt necessary amendments that will enable access to this service for residents in NGCA and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. This could be done by introducing an opportunity to use a court decision number as a reference number instead of a medical certificate number.

On 24 February 2021, the Government of Ukraine adopted Resolution #155 extending the use of e-Malyatko for residents in NGCA and Crimea. This is expected to simplify the registration of children born on these territories remotely via the "Act at Home" mobile phone application. Confirmation of the fact of birth still does not abolish and/or replace court procedure for such registration. The e-version of a court decision should be uploaded to the state unified database and then transferred to the mobile app. However, the procedure is not agreed upon yet and needs to be defined jointly by the Ministry for Digital Transformation and the State Court Administration.

UNHCR welcomes this initiative and advocates for its full technical implementation. Currently, other citizens may submit an e-certificate of birth issued by a maternity clinic. This option is not available for residents in NGCA and Crimea. UNCHR suggests that these persons should be allowed to download an e-court decision to the mobile phone application to confirm the fact of birth.

UNHCR'S AND UNHCR-LED CLUSTER'S RECENT REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS:

[ONE-PAGER] LATEST INFORMATION PRODUCTS: This one-page factsheet includes UNHCR Ukraine's recent products, reports, thematic factsheets, dashboards and UNHCR-led Clusters' reports.

[THEMATIC UPDATE] LEGISLATIVE UPDATE (FEBRUARY 2021): This update provides an overview of UNHCR's legal analysis of laws and governmental policies that affect refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless, IDPs and conflict-affected persons in Ukraine. The latest edition also covers the legal response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

[SNAPSHOT] CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE (FEBRUARY 2021): This joint UNHCR/R2P thematic update presents key developments at the EECPs in eastern Ukraine in February.

[PROTECTION CLUSTER'S FACTSHEET]: This factsheet focuses on protection concerns and partners' response related in eastern Ukraine in February.



[THEMATIC UPDATE] REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS (MARCH 2021): This thematic update explores UNHCR Ukraine's protection activities in favour of refugees and asylum-seekers.



Humanitarian Development Nexus

Joint UNHCR-UNDP project in Chermalyk: On 18 February, UNHCR inaugurated its Community Support Project (CSP) in the town of Chermalyk in Donetska oblast. Through this CSP, UNHCR and UNDP supported the community's initiative to launch sewing classes. UNDP repaired the premises of the community centre and

UNHCR provided sewing equipment. Twelve women activists have already engaged in sewing classes and started producing shopping begs for sale.

• Free Legal Aid (FLA) Volunteers Project in eastern Ukraine: On 27 and 28 February, UNHCR coordinated a final in-person workshop for twelve activists in Luhanska oblast who completed online training to become legal volunteers in 2020. During the event, the volunteers signed an agreement with the local Free Legal Aid Centres (FLAC) and received their certificates. In March, a similar workshop will be held for participants from Donetska oblast. This project was jointly implemented by UNHCR and UNDP to expand the network of legal volunteers in eastern Ukraine. Photo credit (on the right): R2P.





MULTI-SECTOR RESPONSE TO REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS

Protection of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- Resettlement to the USA: UNHCR received confirmation about the departure of a Syrian refugee family (six persons) for resettlement to the USA. The case was submitted for resettlement in 2015 and has been considered under regular priority.
- Cooperation with Unilever: UNHCR facilitated the delivery of cleaning and hygiene items donated by Unilever to the Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) for asylum-seekers in Kyiv, Odesa and Zakarpattia oblasts. These products will be distributed by the TACs' administration to residents of these facilities to improve sanitary conditions as part of the COVID-19 response. This is the fourth donation received from Unilever to support refugees and asylum-seekers in the state-run TACs since the start of the pandemic.
- Draft law on the treatment of prisoners of war (PoW): UNHCR's NGO partner R2P prepared a detailed analysis of risks which draft law #4327 may constitute for UNHCR's persons of concern if adopted. This analysis was shared with OHCHR and will be considered when developing a joint UN Country Team position about the proposed legislation. Draft law #4327 on the treatment of prisoners of war was registered in Parliament in November 2020 and raised several concerns linked to risks for nationals of the Russian Federation, asylum-seekers and persons granted refugee status or complementary protection as its provisions can be considered as contradicting international human rights standards. (For more, please see UNHCR's November Legislative Update.)
- Planning meeting with the State Migration Service: On 4 February, UNHCR had a planning meeting with the State Migration Service (SMS) to discuss cooperation in 2021. Cooperation in the areas of monitoring and capacity building was defined as one of the priorities. The SMS also reiterated its request to UNHCR to cover the costs of renovation of the state Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) for asylum-seekers.
- **UN Meeting on the Migration Policy:** On 25 February, UNHCR participated in a UN meeting on the Migration Policy in Ukraine organized by IOM on behalf of the UN Country Team. The problems of asylum-seekers, as well as the needs for the different ways of regularization of irregular migrants, were the focus of discussion. Participants developed a list of recommendations that will be shared with the Government.



523

Persons received Legal Assistance

(including refugees and asylum-seekers) thanks to UNHCR and its NGO partners in February 168

Persons were assisted in accessing healthcare

(including refugees and asylum-seekers) thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support in February 51

Persons provided with language training for livelihood purposes

(including refugees and asylum-seekers) thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support in February 58

Persons received Psychosocial Assistance

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



Livelihood Interventions for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

• In cooperation with the Hilton Hotel in Kyiv, UNHCR facilitated an on-the-job training for an asylum-seeker who strives to gain expertise in the area of hotel housekeeping. The training is initially planned for a month but can be extended up to three months. UNHCR supports the trainee with financial assistance.



Assistance to Stateless Persons and Persons at Risk of Statelessness

- In February, UNHCR's NGO partner R2P finalized results of the mapping of persons with undetermined nationality in conflict-affected areas of Donetska and Luhanska oblasts. The exercise covered 190 locations in the 20-kilometre zone near the 'contact line'. The results revealed that 152 persons with undetermined nationality live in these locations. This data will feed UNHCR's programmes aimed at helping to restore documentation that is often lost as a result of the conflict.
- On 9 February, UNHCR's NGO partner, The Tenth of April, participated in a meeting organized by the Council
 of Europe to discuss the 2021-2026 Roma Strategy. UNHCR will contribute to the drafting of the Strategy to
 ensure that documentation procedures accessible for Roma persons are considered and included in the
 document.

7

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

in February thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support

284

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

in February thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support

23

Persons obtained birth certificates for the first time

in February thanks to UNHCR and NGO partners' support



PROTECTION FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND OTHER CONFLICT-AFFECTED PERSONS

UNHCR-led Protection Cluster

- On 3 February, the Protection Cluster hosted its first national meeting in 2021 to identify priorities for collective engagement and discuss the humanitarian exit strategy. Partners agreed that priority should be given to monitoring the impact of the decentralization process on access to protection services, particularly along the 'contact line'. Advocacy efforts will be focused on the protection of civilians, national mine action frameworks and expansion of housing programmes as part of the pathway towards durable solutions.
- On 12 February, the Protection Cluster organized a Protection Working Group meeting in Donetska oblast. Partners agreed to share their observations on the decentralization process in conflict-affected locations and to develop a contingency plan for the possible re-opening of the EECPs or flexibilization of crossing criteria in the upcoming months, particularly during summer.
- Review of the Protection Response in 2020: The Protection Cluster consolidated the data on the Protection Response in 2020. The review revealed that restrictions in freedom of movement across the 'contact line' severely impacted the provision of legal assistance and individual protection counselling by protection partners. The number of assisted persons for both activities decreased by 35 per cent and 51 per cent respectively, compared to 2019. Despite the restricted crossing, partners provided protection assistance to 77,500 persons directly at the EECPs. This included dissemination of information, transportation assistance,



explosive ordnance risk education, protection counselling and legal assistance. The analysis also showed that the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of funding led to a five-fold decrease in the number of elderly people and persons with disabilities accessing community spaces which leads to the increase of their vulnerability and isolation. The Cluster reported a 91 per cent increase in the number of persons provided with psychosocial (PSS) support through five PSS hotlines. In 2020, mine action partners demined 2.2 million m² of the hazardous area, a 28 per cent increase, compared with 2019.



UNHCR Protection Activities

- Remote access to services for residents in NGCA and Crimea: On 15 February, UNHCR finalized its note on legal and technical opportunities for the remote verification of residents in NGCA and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The document will be shared with the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories, the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the state Oshchadbank, responsible for paying pensions. UNHCR seeks to ensure that residents in NGCA and Crimea can access administrative and banking services remotely. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, thousands of persons cannot travel to GCA to undergo verification procedures in-person, which are currently required, in particular, for receiving their pensions.
- Webinar on Assistance to Persons with HIV/AIDS: On 12 February, UNHCR participated as a speaker in a webinar on assisting people living with HIV/AIDS in emergencies. UNHCR was invited by the Global Network of People living with HIV which includes NGOs from Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine. UNHCR highlighted its role in addressing HIV/AIDS as a part of the Joint UN Team on AIDS and presented the results of the project implemented with the support of UNAIDS in 2020.
- Working with Persons with Disabilities: On 18 February, at OHCHR's request, UNHCR held an online discussion and individual interviews with 14 representatives of IDP communities that work with persons with disabilities in central and western Ukraine. The purpose was to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on communities' activities. The results will be shared with the Parliamentary Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Legal Assistance and Protection Counselling

925

Internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons (70% female, 30% male) received legal assistance from UNHCR and its partners in February

2,066

Persons (70% female, 30% male) benefited from individual protection counselling

5

Group consultations on protection-related issues were provided to 54 persons (69% female, 31% male)
in areas along the 'contact line' in February



Social Accompaniment

• In February, UNHCR's NGO partners provided social accompaniment to 348 individuals (10,1 per cent of them were persons with disabilities) who needed support in, inter alia, obtaining personal documentation, accessing administrative and other essential services, and receiving authorization to cross checkpoints.

Kateryna*, 80, lives by herself in the town of Svitlodarsk, only a few kilometres away from the 'contact line'. Like many other residents in the town, she used to hide in a basement during the most intense shelling. Due to permanent stress, her health declined over the last years and she started losing sight. Her children live abroad and having no family to ask for help, Kateryna turned to UNHCR's NGO partner Proliska asking to assist her in renewing a contract with a gas heating company. As part of its case management approach, UNHCR and Proliska also provided Kateryna with 'cash for protection' which she used to undergo several eye surgeries and receive treatment. Photo credit: Proliska.







Psychosocial assistance

176

78% female | 22% male Persons received consultations in February UNHCR's NGO partners provided 176 vulnerable persons with psychological consultations. These sessions help conflict-affected persons deal with symptoms of psychological trauma, domestic violence, grief, depression, anxiety, and psychological tension, including the effects caused by quarantine restrictions.



Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

On 5 February, UNHCR delivered a laptop and a multifunctional device to a centre for social services in the town
of Novoaidar in Luhanska oblast. The facility accommodates space for working with SGBV perpetrators. UNHCR
joined efforts with the Department of Social Protection in Luhanska oblast to support the establishment of these
premises.



Individual Protection Assistance (IPA)

27
IPA cash
beneficiaries
selected in 2021

UNHCR continued identifying and providing the most vulnerable conflict-affected individuals in eastern Ukraine with "cash for protection". This assistance is used to cover needs, particularly for persons with disability. The assistance is delivered using a case management approach and with a focus on supporting people to access public services. In areas where state services are not accessible, UNHCR and its NGO partners provided Individual Protection Assistance in-kind.

In her nineties, Mariia* still remembers the horrors of the Second World War and did not expect to live through another armed conflict. She lives with her daughter not far from the city of Donetsk where many civilian houses were damaged during the shelling. Mariia's home was not spared either. In 2014, the roof and windows were hit and since then both women were not able to repair the damages as they are both pensioners and live on social benefits. UNHCR jointly with its NGO partner, The Donbas Development Centre (DDC), supported Kateryna with in-kind assistance and provided a new washing machine, kitchen appliances and two bedding sets. This would help Kateryna and her daughter to save some resources and spend them on much-needed medicines and renovation works. Photo credit: DDC.





Community Support Projects (CSPs)

Projects approved in 2021

In 2021, UNHCR re-defined its Community-Based Approach in eastern Ukraine. To support the capacities of conflict-affected communities, UNHCR implements its Community Support Projects (CSPs). These include small to medium repairs of premises, provision of equipment, improving access to services and training activities.

The CSPs aim at ensuring that protection gaps are addressed and IDPs and returnees have improved access to durable solutions. UNHCR adapts its projects to the local context, with more focus given to security and restored access to essential services in communities along the 'contact line'. Community empowerment and durable solutions for IDPs will be prioritized in locations further away from the contact line.



These activists in the village of Zelenopillia in Donetska oblast are busy with sewing stage costumes for local children and youth who participate in concerts and performances that are often organized in the village located near the 'contact line'. These activities are very important for promoting social cohesion between the host and conflict-affected communities. To support this initiative, in 2020, UNHCR and its NGO partner Proliska provided a steam generator, sewing equipment and materials. The first performances have already been a success and local children were invited to represent their village in regional events. Photo credit: Proliska.





Voluntary Relocation

12

Conflict-affected families (42 persons) relocated to safer homes in 2020 Since 2019 UNHCR implements a project of voluntarily relocating families who live in dangerous areas along the 'contact line' to safer locations. Persons who benefit from this project are carefully selected based on protection vulnerability criteria and a security assessment of the settlements to which they relocate.

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 Temporarily Occupied Territories. In the case of refugees and stateless persons, UNHCR cooperates closely with the State Migration Service of Ukraine. UNHCR works together with eight 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 facilitating 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 2,416,269. 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.

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 22.1 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Spain 13.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Japan 0.25 million | Sweden 0.24 million | Ukraine Humanitarian Fund 0.5 million

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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 ukrkicom@unhcr.org.

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