

UKRAINE SITUATION

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

31 December 2014

This update provides information on the situation of displaced people and their protection needs. It is intended to be complementary to the [situation reports](#) issued by OCHA.

KEY FIGURES

610,413

internally displaced Ukrainians
(as of 26.12)

245,510

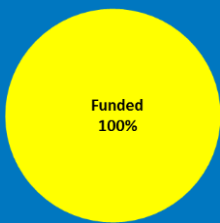
Ukrainian applications for refugee status and temporary asylum in the Russian Federation (as of 23.12)

Top 5 applications for international protection in other countries (provisional data)

- Germany: 2,222 applications (as of 30.11)
- Poland: 2,218 applications (as of 23.12)
- Italy: 1,990 applications (as of 30.11)
- France: 1,248 applications (as of 30.11)
- Sweden: 1,217 applications (as of 05.12)

FUNDING

Current 2014 requirements of USD 11.3 million for the operation have been fully met. Requirements for 2015 were presented in the 2015 Strategic Response Plan, launched on 8 December in Geneva, as part of the Global Humanitarian Appeal.



PRIORITIES

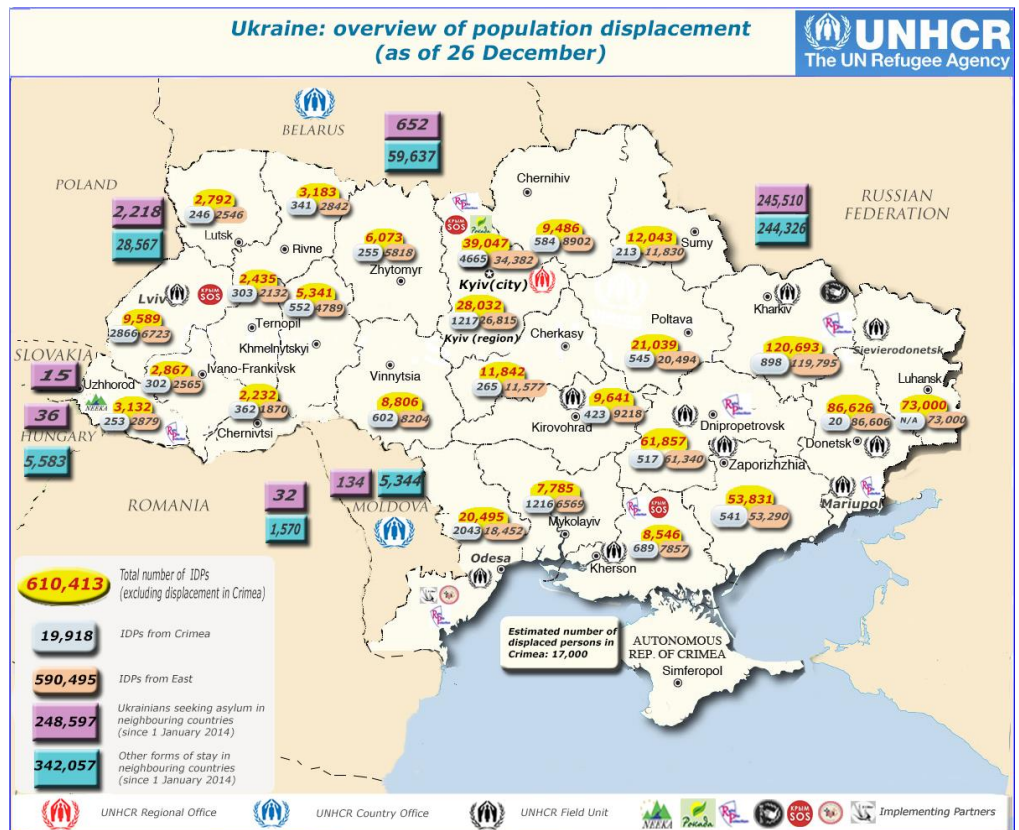
Work with the Government to improve the IDP law and registration system, specifically procedures relating to pensioners and access to social assistance.

Protection, shelter and NFIs as part of the Strategic Response Plan 2015 and cluster activation.

Continued advocacy and support to the Government in efforts to establish a central IDP authority.

HIGHLIGHTS

- As of 26 December, 610,413 IDPs have been identified by Ukraine's State Emergency Service.
- UNHCR is discussing with the Ukrainian Government the need to address the issue of access for affected people to social assistance in the regions outside of government control.
- Nine collective centres in Odesa, Kharkiv and Kyiv region received UNHCR funding and construction materials for repairs and winterization.
- Some 8,600 IDPs were assisted with non-food items by UNHCR in December
- Some 11,800 IDPs benefited from UNHCR one time financial assistance in 2014



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The UN General Assembly affirmed its commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, underscoring the invalidity of the 16 March referendum held in autonomous Crimea. Internal displacement: figures are reported by the Ukrainian State Emergency Service (SES). UNHCR is currently using official statistics provided by SES, but estimates that the real number of IDPs is likely to be higher. The figure excludes the number of displaced people in Crimea, currently estimated by reliable sources to be at 17,000. The real figure remains unknown. External displacement: figures reported to UNHCR by respective national asylum authorities are as follows: as of 24 December for Belarus, as of 31 October for Slovakia, as of 30 November for Hungary and Romania, as of 24 December for Republic of Moldova, as of 23 December for Poland, and as of 23 December for the Russian Federation. Creation date: 26/12/2014, UNHCR Kyiv

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Operational Context

Internal displacement

The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) continues to increase according to the State Emergency Service (SES) and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine which assumed responsibility for the registration of IDPs as of 15 October. The number of IDPs identified by SES rose from 490,046 on 28 November to 610,413 on 26 December. The majority (97 per cent) come from the eastern regions of Ukraine. Most internally displaced people remain close to the conflict-affected areas: in government-controlled territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as in the Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk regions. The IDP population includes 25 per cent children, 27 per cent identified as elderly or disabled and 65 per cent of all IDPs are women.

Figures available through the Ministry of Social Policy also indicate an increase from 449,847 IDPs on 28 November to 823,000 IDPs on 30 December¹. The increase in Ministry of Social Policy registrations is linked to the recent government resolution 637.² This states that all citizens who reside on “temporarily occupied territory” (i.e. Crimea) or the “regions where the anti-terrorist operation is conducted” (i.e. Donetsk and Luhansk regions) can only receive their social payments and pensions once registered as IDPs at a new location in Ukraine under government control. As a result, the statistics shared by Ministry contains a disproportionately high percentage of pensioners (58 per cent), while pensioners only constitute 30 per cent of the population in Ukraine. It currently remains unclear how many people registering with the Ministry are IDPs and how many of them are registering solely for the purpose of transferring their pensions.

External displacement



UNHCR together with its partner NGO Dzerelo Nadii supports displaced children in Vinnytsia region

In the Russian Federation, according to data provided by the Federal Migration Service (FMS) as of 23 December, 245,510 Ukrainians have applied for international protection.³ Of these, 236,765 people were granted Temporary Asylum (TA) status, while 237 people received full refugee status. A further 244,326 people have applied for other forms of legal stay,⁴ however UNHCR has no means to verify whether all these people left Ukraine in 2014 as a result of the conflict. Most applications for international protection have been submitted in the Central Federal District (87,342), Volga Federal District (41,738), and Southern Federal District (27,078).

A growing number of Ukrainian citizens, who have been staying under the visa-free regime in the Russian Federation, are now applying for resident permits. In November, the FMS received nearly twice as many Ukrainians as in October. UNHCR is not currently provided with data to allow for the monitoring of returns from the Russian Federation.

The number of asylum applications is also increasing in European countries. As of 30 November, Germany had the highest number of asylum applications from Ukrainians (2,222 applications), after the Russian Federation. In Poland, 2,218 Ukrainians have applied for international protection in Poland and a further 28,567 have applied for other forms of legal stay.⁵ In Italy, 1,990 Ukrainian nationals have applied for asylum as of 30 November. In Belarus, as of 23 December, the authorities have reported that the number of asylum applications reached 652, while some 59,600 are reportedly seeking other forms of legal stay.

¹ http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=247854940&cat_id=244314975

² Available in Ukrainian at <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/637-2014-%D0%BF>

³ This figure includes the number of applications for temporary asylum and refugee status

⁴ Other forms of legal stay include: temporary/permanent residence permits, Russian citizenship or ‘Compatriots’ Repatriation Programme (integration and support plan for foreigner citizens with family links to the Russian Federation)

⁵ This figure includes applications for temporary and permanent residence permits and also for EU long-term residence permits

Update on legislation



Elderly woman in anti-government controlled Novoazovsk district of Donetsk region receives bedding set from UNHCR delivered by volunteers

In November two government resolutions and a presidential decree came into force ending the funding of any government institutions and services in “temporarily uncontrolled territory.” Resolution 595⁶ states that all government institutions on these territories will no longer receive government funding and that social benefits for citizens residing there will stop. Resolution 637⁷ states that welfare benefits will only be provided to registered IDPs. Presidential decree 875⁸ provides for the halting of government funding for institutions on “specific territories” where the “anti-terrorist operation” is being conducted, and for the evacuation of personnel, property and documents from these zones.

On 29 December, the Ministry of Social Policy announced that people who transferred their pensions to offices in government-controlled territory have until 1 February to register as an IDP. The deadline previously was 31 December.

UNHCR has concerns that these regulations may encourage further internal displacement, introduce discriminatory measures and impose additional economic burdens on individuals and the State. UNHCR is

working to encourage the Government to review its approach to assisting citizens in the regions outside of its control.

On 2 December, a government resolution on tax exemption for donations and charitable activities⁹ came into force. Tax exemption covers a wide range of services and items including medical services, food, clothing, household and hygiene items. UNHCR will continue to monitor the implementation of this resolution.

Protection monitoring and response

UNHCR works with two partners conducting protection monitoring and response activities throughout regions in the country with significant IDP populations:

Monitoring of the registration of IDPs and assistance programmes: The working group on IDP registration, with the participation of the Ministry of Social Policy, UNHCR and NGOs, has developed an action plan. Understaffing of social protection divisions and lack of necessary equipment have significantly slowed down the registration process. In areas close to conflict-affected parts of the country, beneficiaries are experiencing long queues and the issuance of IDP certificates is often delayed for one to two months. The involvement of volunteers, the introduction of online registration, pre-registration and other options are currently being discussed with the Ministry of Social Policy. In December UNHCR delivered 200 computers and other equipment for further distribution to 24 regional social protection divisions to strengthen their capacity on the ground and speed up the registration process. Additionally, assistance was provided to the Ministry of Social Policy for the printing of a new batch of IDP certificates.

Access to social services: The payment of social benefits, including pensions, has become a major concern for Donetsk and Luhansk residents following the resolution on the transfer of all social payments to government-controlled areas. This decision has resulted in many people rushing to register in government-controlled areas, with the most vulnerable remaining in the conflict zones. People who are in special institutions, including children, as well as those who are in their homes, do not receive the assistance they need. A proper protection assessment is urgently needed. This issue is further exacerbated by the limited access to areas controlled by armed groups.

⁶ Available in English at <http://unhcr.org.ua/attachments/article/226/Resolution595e.doc>

⁷ Available in Ukrainian at <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/637-2014-%D0%BF>

⁸ Available in Ukrainian at <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/875/2014>

⁹ Available in Ukrainian at <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/653-2014-%D0%BF>

Access to bank services by IDPs from Crimea: The law on the creation of a free economic zone in Crimea and the Resolution of the National Bank of Ukraine on currency legislation have created additional challenges for residents of Crimea. Some Ukrainian banks have refused to open accounts for Crimean residents who do not possess permanent residency on mainland Ukraine. Furthermore, IDPs from Crimea continue to report problems with re-registering of private businesses in other regions of the country.

Emergency Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

UNHCR Emergency Shelter and NFI Sector working group meetings are held on a weekly basis in Kyiv, while regional coordination mechanisms are in place for Kharkiv, Slovyansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Mariupol and Kyiv, and are held every two weeks. UNHCR is encouraging all partners and donors to coordinate their shelter and NFI activities within the Shelter/NFI sector.

Cash assistance: UNHCR is steadily expanding its assistance programme for vulnerable IDP families in all displacement regions of Ukraine. One-time cash support has been given to 4,640 families (11,829 people) in Lviv, Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Vinnytsia, Zakarpattia, Odesa, Kherson, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Kirovograd and Zaporizhzhia regions helping cover essential needs for the most vulnerable families, particularly larger families and single-parent families, as well as families with disabilities and special needs.



UNHCR together with partner NGO People in Need distributes warm blankets in the city of Donetsk on 28 December

Chernivtsi, Khmelnytskyi, Zhytomir, Ternopil, Kirovograd, Mykolayiv, Rivne and Donetsk regions, and the city of Kyiv, are gradually joining the cash project which has some 4,278 vulnerable families (11,347 IDPs) currently on the waiting list.

Collective centres: UNHCR has transferred 1,600,000 UAH (USD 100,000 USD) for construction materials, heating equipment, furniture and household appliances to improve living conditions for some 700 IDPs who are accommodated in four buildings in the Odesa region. UNHCR has also delivered construction and winterization materials to the collective centre in Kharkiv to create additional capacity for 50 people.

Following a series of assessment visits to reception facilities across Kyiv city and region, over the past three weeks UNHCR has delivered winterization and housing assistance to four collective centres in the region. Assistance included basic furniture and solid-fuel heating solutions, benefiting some 270 people. Construction works are ongoing in the following locations: Dniprodzerzhynsk (Dnipropetrovsk region), Odesa, Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Additionally, UNHCR, together with its partner *People in Need*, is currently renovating eight collective centres in Slovyansk area in northern Donetsk region. The total number of collective centres renovated with UNHCR's assistance is currently 52 facilities.

Non Food Items: Since 1 December UNHCR has delivered over 7,400 blankets, 5,400 bed linen, 3,100 towels sets and clothing sets, 2,900 food sets and 540 hygiene sets benefiting some 8,585 IDPs. Distributions are ongoing in the major reception areas.

In December, UNHCR established a presence in Donetsk to meet the acute needs of the affected population in the areas controlled by anti-government elements. UNHCR together with partner NGOs distributed 6,000 square metres of reinforced tarpaulin and 3,000 blankets in areas not controlled by the Government. A further 3,500 blankets, 3,500 bed linen kits and 7,000 blankets have been prepositioned in Donetsk. UNHCR and partners also operate in Sieverodonetsk, Kharkiv, northern Donetsk government-controlled areas, Mariupol, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovograd, Poltava, Kherson, Odesa, Lviv and Zakarpattia.

UNHCR is concerned about several incidents which have prevented its access to people of concern in some areas not under government control. It is essential that full unimpeded access be allowed for UNHCR to be able to provide humanitarian assistance for internally displaced people throughout the country.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

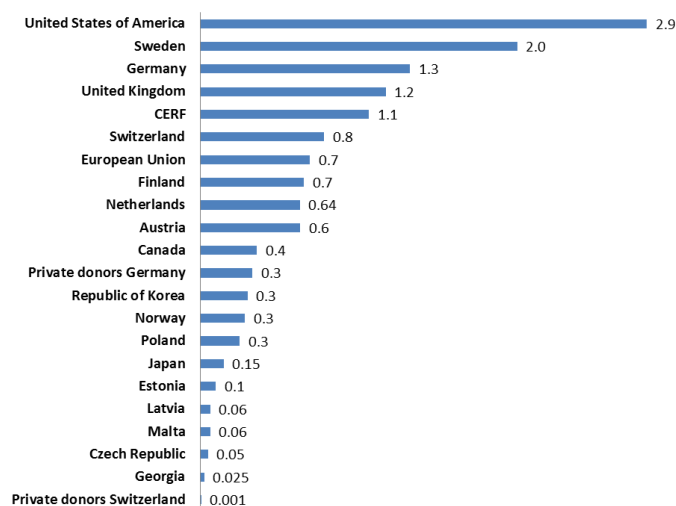
UNHCR's financial requirements for IDPs in government-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine up to the end of 2014 were set at USD 11.3 million, as presented in the Preliminary Response Plan (PRP) launched in Kyiv on 14 August 2014.

The assessed sector needs for IDPs have been fully funded in 2014. Some of the additional funding received will enable the operation to continue its work without interruption through into early 2015, particularly for critical winterization activities.

For 2015, the Strategic Response Plan presents updated financial requirements based on a more holistic assessment of needs. The overall budgetary requirements will also increase once areas currently out with government control become accessible. UNHCR will issue its supplementary appeal for 2015 early in the new year, with further details on the strategy for supporting people of concern affected by this emergency situation both inside and outside the country.

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors in 2014, particularly those who have contributed to UNHCR activities with un-earmarked or broadly earmarked funds, as well as those who have contributed to the situation of displaced people in Ukraine through financial or in-kind contributions, coordinated in advance with sector leads and based on prior needs assessments.

Contributions in millions of USD



Working in partnership

The humanitarian response to the internal displacement situation in Ukraine is a coordinated effort by international organisations, the government and local NGOs.

Key Shelter and Non Food Items sector partners: [Adventist Development and Relief Agency \(ADRA\)](#) | [Agency for the development and reconstruction of Donbas](#) | [Caritas Ukraine](#) | [Charitable Foundation ROKADA](#) | [NGO Chesna I Svyata Kraina](#) | [NGO Crimean Diaspora](#) | [Danish Refugee Council \(DRC\)](#) | [Dopomoga Dnipra](#) | [Harmonia Foundation](#) | [IOM](#) | [International Human Rights Commission \(IHRC\)](#) | [International Relief and Development \(IRD\)](#) | KoloVorot Public Organization | [Krym SOS](#) | [People in Need \(PIN\)](#) | [NGO "VOSTOKSOS"](#) | [Save the Children UK](#) | [Save Ukraine Organization](#) | [Slavic Foundation](#) | The Right to Protection | [Luxembourg Red Cross](#) | [UNDP](#) | [World Jewish Relief](#).

Key protection sector partners: [State Migration Service of Ukraine](#) | [The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights](#) | [Danish Refugee Council \(DRC\)](#) | [NGO "Crimea SOS"](#) | [NGO "Crimean Diaspora"](#) | The Right to Protection | [NGO "VOSTOKSOS"](#) | [OSCE](#) | [OHCHR \(HRMMU\)](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [OCHA](#) | [ICRC](#) | [Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union](#) | [IOM](#) | [UNDP](#) | [UNFPA](#).

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Links: External Update: www.unhcr.org/ua/externalupdate IDP Profile as of 17 October: www.unhcr.org/ua/idpprofile

Latest IDP Statistics: www.unhcr.org/ua/maps UNHCR Assistance to IDPs in Ukraine www.unhcr.org/ua/humanitarianresponse

UNHCR Kyiv: <http://unhcr.org/ua/en> Twitter: www.twitter.com/UNHCRUkraine Facebook: www.facebook.com/UNHCRKyiv

Recent web stories: Déjà vu for Ukrainian grandpa displaced by war <http://www.unhcr.org/5492dc256.html>

The approach of winter threatens thousands of displaced Ukrainians <http://www.unhcr.org/548085426.html>

International Protection Considerations Related to the Developments in Ukraine: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=53b29ad44>