

UKRAINE SITUATION

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

8 September – 6 October 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** The conflict situation in eastern Ukraine has improved following a ceasefire on 1 September, though the overall situation remains tense.
- **Humanitarian access:** UN agencies have been expelled from the non-government controlled area of Luhansk narrowing the humanitarian space and limiting humanitarian action, including protection monitoring and activities.
- **Legislation update:** On 9 September, Resolution no. 636 came into power harmonizing existing Resolutions relating to IDP registration and social assistance with requirements of the “Law on ensuring of rights and freedoms of internally displaced people”.
- **Assistance provided:** Since 8 September, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 5,100 people in government controlled areas. In non-government controlled areas, provision of humanitarian assistance remains greatly restricted.



The small town of Pesky close to the line of contact near Mariupol, is one of the most affected areas in southern Donetsk region. With a pre-conflict population of more than 2,500 people, only 16 residents remain in the village. The majority of them are over 60 years old. During an assessment visit to the village, UNHCR delivered hygienic items, batteries, torches and plastic sheets to help with acute needs to people staying in Pesky.

Photo: UNHCR/I. Bulgakov

KEY FIGURES

1,505,600

registered Internally Displaced People (IDPs) including:

887,800

pensioners

359,900

working age

190,200

children

62,600

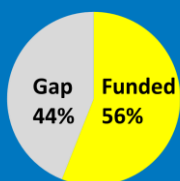
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Source: Ministry of Social Policy, Ukraine. UNHCR is not responsible for data inaccuracies.

FUNDING

USD 41.5 million

requested for the operation in 2015



PRIORITIES

- As part of the UN Humanitarian Response Plan, to lead protection, shelter and NFI clusters to help those forcibly displaced from their homes.
- Support Government in efforts to establish a central authority to deal with IDPs.
- Work with the Government to improve registration system, specifically procedures relating to pensioners and access to social assistance.
- Promote freedom of movement and humanitarian access.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

On 23 September, UN agencies and a number of humanitarian NGOs have been expelled from the non-government controlled area of Luhansk region by authorities in control of the area. The decision comes at a critical time as the weather becomes colder, making the resumption of humanitarian assistance to the region all the more urgent. The conflict situation in eastern Ukraine has somewhat improved following a ceasefire on 1 September. Diplomatic efforts to achieve implementation of the Minsk Agreements continue. On 29 September, parties to the conflict agreed on the withdrawal of tanks, artillery under 100mm and mortars up to 120mm. The overall situation remains tense amid isolated reports of small arms fire along the line of contact. Freedom of movement across the line of contact between the non-government and government controlled area remains limited due to security measures and the continued blockade against the non-government controlled area by the Government.

As of 6 October there were **1,505,600** internally displaced people (IDPs) registered by the Ministry of Social Policy, representing an increase of 45,600 since 7 September. The reported number of new IDP registrations has remained constant since mid-August.

Humanitarian access to the non-government controlled area is currently a major challenge for the humanitarian community. The latest decision by de facto authorities in the non-government controlled area of Luhansk means that humanitarian intervention in the area is currently suspended. UNHCR is hoping to resume access to the area as soon as possible in cooperation with the parties concerned. UNHCR continues to conduct protection activities in the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, though many humanitarian agencies including UNHCR partners have been forced to restrict or suspend their activities pending a 'registration' process. Following the successful sending of 13 UNHCR trucks carrying 260 tonnes of shelter materials on 28 and 29 August to Horlivka, in non-government controlled Donetsk, it was planned to send a further 22 trucks of humanitarian assistance in mid-September. Despite extensive efforts by UNHCR and the Logistics Cluster, the attempt was prevented due to restrictions put in place by de facto authorities in non-government controlled Donetsk. Other constraints include security conditions and bureaucracy relating to the control of humanitarian assistance to the non-government controlled area. While the Government has improved the process allowing delivery of humanitarian assistance to the non-government controlled area, more needs to be done to facilitate humanitarian access.

As the displacement situation in Ukraine becomes more protracted, long-term housing solutions for IDPs is difficult to find. The majority of IDPs stay with host families, volunteers and in private accommodation, though in many cases affordable private accommodation is in poor condition. Others stay in collective centres intended as short-term transit accommodation. Some IDPs in collective centres face eviction as they stay longer than anticipated or are unable to pay utility bills, sometimes leading to involuntary return. Those staying in collective centres tend to be the most vulnerable with limited financial means and who are unable to afford private accommodation. Livelihood opportunities for IDPs are very restricted due to the difficult economic situation and discrimination from employers. UNHCR is working closely with authorities and civil society to address the needs of IDPs remaining in collective centres with durable solutions.

External Displacement

UNHCR continues to monitor the refugee situation in neighbouring countries. According to government sources in receiving countries, the total number of people seeking asylum or other forms of legal stay in neighbouring countries now stands at 1,111,300, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (858,400) and Belarus (127,140).

The OSCE Observer Mission monitoring the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints on the Russia-Ukraine border inform that the situation remains calm. While the total number of border crossings remains relatively high compared to the summer period, latest numbers are down compared to a surge at the end of the holiday period in late August. Latest data indicated a net flow of 175 people entering Ukraine.

As of 6 October, since the beginning of the crisis, in the top five receiving countries in the European Union and in neighbouring countries there were 5,613 applications for international protection in Germany, 4,104 in Poland, 4,546 in Italy, 2,221 in Sweden, 2,211 in France, 200 in Moldova, 70 in Romania, 60 in Hungary and 30 in Slovakia according to government sources in receiving countries.

Data sources: Respective national asylum authorities

Achievements



Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster co-led by UNHCR and OHCHR is concerned by administrative constraints limiting access and presence of humanitarian organizations in the non-government controlled area. The measures narrow the humanitarian space and limit humanitarian action, including protection monitoring and protection activities such as psychosocial support, mine risk education, legal assistance as well as space for local civil society to operate. The restrictions jeopardize the provision of crucial psychosocial support to children and caregivers provided by NGOs. There remains great need for psychosocial support in Luhansk and Donetsk where children are still exposed to violence. Recent surveys reveal high levels of psychosocial traumatized stress in 37 per cent of school children. The restriction on mine risk education affects all children, particularly those living near the line of contact. Cluster munitions block access to smallholdings and agricultural land. The population in the area continues to experience the conflict first hand and need to be aware of the dangers involved, particularly children.
- The Protection Cluster has developed a guidance document on vulnerability criteria and how to address protection and vulnerability in their work, highlighting aspects to consider in operations to ensure a protection focused humanitarian response in Ukraine.
- In August, the Donbas SOS hotline received 2,516 calls, the majority coming from non-government controlled Donetsk and Luhansk. 10 per cent of callers from the non-government controlled area inquired about organizations supporting IDPs. 71 per cent of callers were women and 45 per cent were pensioners. The number of calls concerning the procedure of crossing the line of contact decreased, although it is still the most frequently asked question. There was a 7 per cent increase of the number of inquiries about humanitarian aid provided by NGOs to IDPs. Questions about programs supporting IDPs interested in opening their own business are also on the rise. Callers from the non-government controlled area stated that the provision of medicines is the biggest problem.
- A gender-based violence (GBV) assessment commissioned by the GBV Sub-cluster has been initiated and will be rolled out in five conflict affected regions in the government controlled area. A survey in the non-government controlled area is on hold due to the security situation and unavailability of referral pathways and services. The survey questionnaire and its methodology were developed through a consultative process. The Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms will conduct the survey.
- The inter-agency Gender Capacity (GenCap) advisor for Ukraine facilitated 5 two-day training sessions on "gender equality in humanitarian action" in Kyiv, Dnipropetrovets'k, Kharkiv, Sievierodonetsk, and Kramatorsk to equip humanitarian actors with information and tools to better understand how gender dimensions feature in humanitarian contexts and how to better integrate a gender and protection lens in their work. The majority of participants (84 in total) were protection actors from the United Nations and NGOs.
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the August [factsheet](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 9 September, Resolution no. 636 came into power harmonizing Council of Ministers Resolution nos. 505, 509, 535, 637 and 595 with requirements of the "Law on ensuring of rights and freedoms of internally displaced people" dated 20 October 2014. The Resolution should clarify the IDP registration process, including the registration of unaccompanied children IDPs and improve access to financial assistance for IDPs. The Resolution completes legislation facilitating the employment of IDPs by providing free requalification vouchers to IDPs of employable age who have not found appropriate employment; compensation of medical examination and transport costs relating to employment for those who were registered unemployed; reimbursement of training costs for employers hiring IDPs; reimbursement of salary costs for 6 months to employers hiring registered IDPs for at least 12 months.
- On 17 September, the Parliament adopted an amendment to the state budget increasing the minimum wage and subsistence levels. The amendment should result in increased pension and social assistance payments for vulnerable people and IDPs, as well as targeted financial assistance to disabled IDPs under Resolution no. 505.

¹ [International Protection Considerations Related to the Developments in Ukraine – Update III](http://www.refworld.org/docid/56017e034.html)
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/56017e034.html>

- In the framework of community based protection initiatives, UNHCR continues to work closely with its partners and community-based organizations to implement a community based response project in central and western Ukraine. Since the start of the project in August 2015, 12 applications submitted by IDP initiatives from Kherson, Kyiv and Lviv regions have been approved, out of which 3 have been successfully implemented. Two projects supported initiatives aimed at stress relief by involving IDPs in outdoor sport activities and an IDP awareness raising campaign targeting both IDPs and host communities. Additional equipment was provided to a community-based organization for improvement of psychological assistance activities for IDPs.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR implementing partner Stantia Kharkiv provided 3,613 general consultations, 1,117 legal and 424 psychosocial consultations. More than 80 per cent of the consultations were provided to female beneficiaries. Main concerns were access to humanitarian assistance, the voucher programme, assistance from partners, IDP rights, crossing the line of contact, initial registration, housing issues, pensions, children, depression, psychological disorders and family problems. UNHCR implementing partner Crimea SOS provided consultations to 3,576 people, of which 2,639 were social consultations and 934 legal consultations. The most frequently raised problems included blocked bank accounts, crossing of the line of contact and the administrative border with Crimea, court decisions, disposal of property in the non-government controlled area and employment.

Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter and NFI Cluster led by UNHCR, is currently involved in general Humanitarian Needs Overview Process and starts planning for 2016 program cycle to define priority needs, which will then drive the response given the context and operational capacity of partners on the ground.
- Shelter/NFI Cluster has released the [final report](#) of the Shelter Assessment led by REACH and supported by UNHCR in five regions in eastern Ukraine (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk), focusing on displacement trends, shelter and non-food items needs, income, and rent.
- Sub-National Shelter and NFI Cluster for northern Donbas has released its [recommendations](#) with regard to winterization 2015/16. As a result of several working meetings and the collaboration of partners in the field, all have agreed on recommended response areas: personal essential items, heating fuel and shelter improvements. It is recommended to use these guidelines in other regions as well, mindful of region-specific context which may vary.
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the August [factsheet](#).



'We could stay back at home and hide in the bomb shelters until the conflict is over, but I have seven children and I do not want them to live in a fear,' says Lyudmyla, 35, a single Roma mother, who fled the war-torn town of Snizhne in Donetsk region in November 2014. A family now stays in a two room apartment in Pavlohrad in Dnipropetrovsk region. They are among 800 displaced families that received UNHCR cash assistance grants in September 2014 in Dnipropetrovsk region. As explained by Lyudmyla, the allowance was spent to purchase necessities, including a little stock of food, additional clothes for children and other basic needs.

Photo: UNHCR/I.Myronenko-Dribna

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter assistance was provided to over 5,100 people. In the government controlled area, UNHCR operational partner SOS Kramatorsk distributed UNHCR-provided NFIs to 1,000 people in the Kramatorsk area, northern Donetsk. UNHCR operational partners distributed bedding sets (consisting of a blanket, bed linen and towels) and other NFIs to some 1,970 people in the Mariupol area. The UNHCR field Office in Sievierodonetsk distributed NFIs including sleeping bags, blankets and jerry cans to 40 people residing in a bomb shelter in Stanitsa Luhanska. Shelter materials were distributed to some 700 people in Krimskoje, near the line of contact. Repairs will be undertaken by NRC and Mercy Corps in coordination with the local community.

UNHCR implementing partner ADRA carried out repairs to 213 houses and an apartment block with 52 apartments in the area of Slovyansk, northern Donetsk. Implementing partner People in Need (PiN) provided shelter materials to 283 households in northern Donetsk. PiN also distributed emergency shelter materials to a school in Pervomaysk.

- In the non-government controlled area, UNHCR emergency shelter materials were provided to PiN for distribution to 38 households in Horlivka, northern Donetsk, though de facto authority restrictions have greatly curtailed humanitarian operations in the area.

Working in partnership

The humanitarian response to the internal displacement situation in Ukraine is a coordinated effort by international organizations, the Government, local and international NGOs. UNHCR works with six implementing partners and other partners providing assistance to internally displaced people through protection and legal assistance, policy development and capacity building and the distribution of emergency shelter materials and non-food items. UNHCR co-leads the Shelter and Non-food Item Cluster and co-leads the Protection Cluster.

UNHCR implementing partners (IDP operation): [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Stantia Kharkiv](#)

Key Shelter and Non Food Items Cluster partners: [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [Caritas Ukraine](#) | [Chesna i Svyata Kraina](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Donbas reconstruction and development agency](#) | [Dopomoga Dnipra](#) | [HIA Hungary](#) | [IOM](#) | [Mercy Corps](#) | [Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Communal Living](#) | [Ministry of Social Policy](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Save the Children UK](#) | [Save Ukraine Organization](#) | [State Emergency Service](#) | [Ukrainian Red Cross Society](#) | [UNDP](#) | [Vostok SOS](#) | [World Jewish Relief](#)

Key Protection Cluster partners: [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Crimean Diaspora](#) | [HelpAge](#) | [IOM](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [OHCHR \(HRMMU\)](#) | [OSCE](#) | [People in Need](#) | [The Right to Protection](#) | [Save the Children](#) | [The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [UNDP](#) | [UNFPA](#) | [Vostok SOS](#)

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

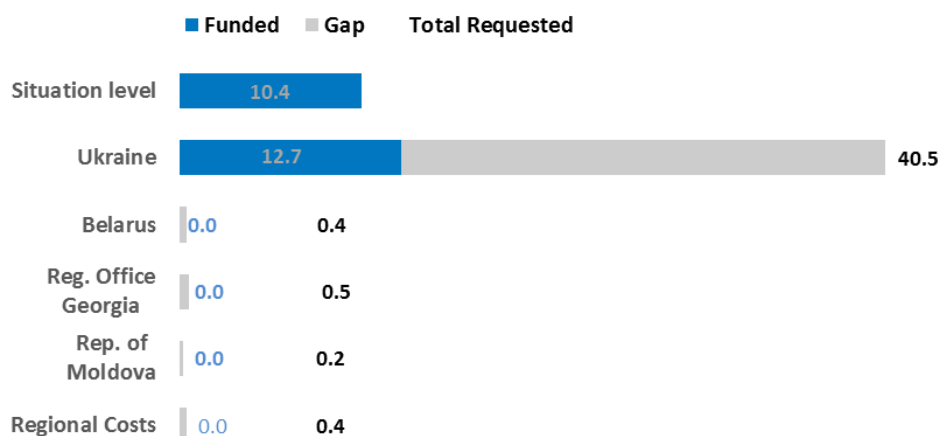
UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, particularly those who have already indicated a contribution to UNHCR's 2015 activities in Ukraine with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds. UNHCR's total financial requirement in 2015 for the Ukraine situation is **US\$ 41.5 million**, as presented in the [Supplementary Appeal](#). This covers UNHCR's financial needs for providing protection and assistance to those displaced by the conflict inside Ukraine, as well as those externally displaced in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova as well as in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, countries covered by the Regional Office in Georgia. Contributions recorded so far represented **56 per cent** of the total financial requirements.

Donors who have contributed:

Funding (in million USD)

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- Georgia
- Germany
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- Italy
- Japan
- Norway
- Portugal
- Private Donors
- Republic of Korea
- Russian Federation
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

A total of **23.1 million** has been contributed



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Ukraine: Internally Displaced People

- 25 September 2015

UNHCR - Kyiv

