

UKRAINE SITUATION

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

2 – 24 December 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** The security situation in eastern Ukraine has fluctuated during a period of increased political tension.
- **Protection concerns:** Freedom of movement across the line of contact remains a primary concern. Access to adequate housing for internally displaced people (IDPs) is also an ongoing concern.
- **Legislation update:** Following recommendations by the President, Parliament revised a draft law amending the IDP Law, aimed at improving conditions for IDP registration and registration renewal.
- **Assistance provided:** Since 2 December, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 2,000 people.



On 3-4 December, UNHCR Ukraine together with Kharkiv National University organized Civil Society Forum “Community and Us: Acting Together” in Kharkiv. The event brought together over 400 participants, including representatives of 130 national community based organizations (CBOs) and 30 international organizations, as well as regional and local authorities, academia, international organizations, IDPs and general public.

The Forum program included several plenary sessions with high level speakers, expert practitioners and academics to debate the role of community-based responses to forced displacement, lessons learned and ways of cooperation. Panelists at the Forum raised a wide range of issues linked to the displacement, ranging from the experience of local community-based organizations, lessons learned by State actors, and results of the research conducted by academics and practitioners to better understand the various dimensions of the situation in Ukraine, including from a gender and age dimension. A series of capacity-building workshops was organized for local NGOs to enhance a wide range of skills and competencies, strengthen their knowledge and disseminate information.

Photo: UNHCR/A.Starikov

WINTERIZATION PLAN

57,300

beneficiaries

USD 6.1 million

total budget

116,400

NFIs

34,100

tonnes of heating coal or m³ wood

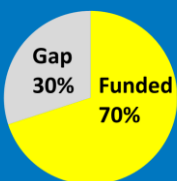
USD 1.75 million

winterization cash assistance

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

During the reporting period, the security situation in eastern Ukraine has alternated between periods of intense fighting and de-escalation. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission [reports](#) fighting centered on Donetsk airport. The fighting remains localized on the line of contact and the overall situation volatile and tense. Political tension increased following the disruption of the electricity supply to Crimea by activists, a ban on all Russian planes from using Ukrainian airspace and the halting of gas exports from Russia to Ukraine. Meanwhile diplomatic efforts continue, with the working sub-groups of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) meeting to reinforce implementation of the 1 September ceasefire and to discuss local elections in the non-government controlled areas due to take place in February.

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. Long queues of cars are observed in both directions at checkpoints on the line of contact, with reports of people waiting many hours and sometimes overnight to cross. De facto authorities in non-government controlled Donetsk have initiated a “registration” process at the checkpoints. Passport and car details are recorded manually exacerbating waiting times. At government controlled checkpoints, capacity to cope with the number of people crossing is insufficient.

Recent increase of population movement near the line of contact has led to an increase of the number of people killed or wounded by explosive remnants of war (ERW). The threat from explosive remnants of war may remain for many years after the end of the conflict. It is therefore imperative that people living in the conflict area are informed of the risks.

UNHCR continues to implement its winterization plan, distributing non-food items (NFIs) and heating fuel to affected communities both in the government controlled and non-government controlled areas. UNHCR is prioritizing assistance to communities in so-called ‘grey areas’, located close to the line of contact. People remaining in these areas face particular hardship due to fighting, the presence of explosive remnants of war and greatly restricted freedom of movement caused by additional checkpoints close to the line of contact. It is often not possible to travel from one village to the next without passing a checkpoint, even when not crossing the line of contact. In these areas, public services do not function and merchants refuse to make deliveries, so people are obliged to travel elsewhere to access assistance and to buy food.

Humanitarian access in non-government controlled Donetsk region remains limited for UN agencies while the issue of ‘registration’ is still pending. UNHCR is distributing half its winterization assistance for non-government controlled Donetsk through partner NGO People in Need (PiN). In non-government controlled Luhansk, five UNHCR convoys carrying humanitarian assistance for some 20,000 people have arrived since UNHCR was ‘registered’ by de facto authorities on 23 October. In the absence of ‘registered’ partners in non-government controlled Luhansk, UNHCR carries out all implementation directly.

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 1,093,300, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (858,400) and Belarus (127,500).

The OSCE Observer Mission monitoring the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints on the Russia-Ukraine border inform that the situation remains calm. Total cross-border traffic increased at both checkpoints during the reporting period, with daily averages going from 9,728 to 10,593. The daily average net flow indicated 118 people going from the Russian Federation to Ukraine, reversing the trend seen during the past month of more people leaving Ukraine.

As of 24 December, since the beginning of the crisis, in the top five receiving countries in the European Union and in neighbouring countries there were 6,540 applications for international protection in Germany, 4,359 in Poland, 5,289 in Italy, 2,532 in Sweden, 2,637 in France, 250 in Moldova, 70 in Romania, 65 in Hungary and 30 in Slovakia according to government sources in receiving countries.

Data source: Respective national asylum authorities

Achievements



Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR and co-led by OHCHR, participated in the Community Based Organization (CBO) Forum in Kharkiv on 3-4 December. The leading Ukrainian and international NGOs as well as local authorities met to discuss the challenges and responses to working with IDPs; participated in workshop sessions facilitated by CBOs, NGOs and other experts in areas aimed at CBO capacity building and worked out recommendations which will aim at strengthening partnerships, formulating key advocacy messages and identifying key areas of urgent humanitarian and longer term response. The Protection Cluster was able to explain its work to participants between workshops.
- A first meeting of Technical Working Group on Ageing and Disability was held and chaired by Help Age International on 2 December to discuss the terms of reference and scope of the working group and to identify immediate priorities. The working group aims at mainstreaming the integration of needs of these groups in the planning and implementation of programs. Some cluster/sector specific recommendations will be identified to ensure their integration in clusters strategy. In addition, a secondary data review will be conducted to develop region level profiles reflecting age, gender and disability.

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 9 December, the Parliament Human Rights Committee met to discuss the Presidential proposals to Law no. 2166 amending the IDP Law. The Committee Chairperson informed a representative of the Presidential Administration that the Ministry of Social Policy (MoSP) and social protection units within regional and city administrations will be responsible for verification of IDP residency and movements within Ukraine. It was also stated that information from state registers, local government and organizations providing assistance to IDPs might be used to confirm long-term IDP absence from the place of residence. The Presidential Administration representative confirmed that the revisions are acceptable, stating that the President wanted to avoid arbitrary cancellation of IDP certificates. The revised law will go to Parliament for its third reading in the New Year.
- On 7 December, in the framework of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (GBV), UNHCR Kyiv in cooperation with partner Crimea SOS hosted a presentation of the booklet 'Life that we did not plan'. The booklet contains stories of 10 IDP women from Crimea and eastern Ukraine currently residing in Kherson. UNHCR, through its community-based initiative support program, assisted a group of IDP women who suggested the proposal to gather stories of IDP women and share them with the community. Through this activity, IDP women have tried deal with the emotional stress caused by displacement and share their experiences of integration within host communities. Sievierodonetsk Field Office supported and participated in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (GBV) by providing GBV awareness, prevention and response training together with NGO SOS Kinderdorf. 25 secondary school students in Stanitsa Luhanska actively participated in the training. Stanitsa Luhanska was selected for the training due to its proximity to the line of contact and the high concentration of military personnel stationed there presenting a latent risk of exploitation and violence.
- Implementation of the community-based initiatives (CBI) program in cooperation with partners Crimea SOS, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Right to Protection (R2P) is progressing. As of now under the UNHCR/Crimea SOS program, 39 projects have been approved for the small grant program facilitating communication and cooperation between UNHCR, Crimea SOS and community initiatives developed by IDPs. In addition, four big projects submitted by CBOs in Kyiv, Kherson and Lviv regions have been approved and are being implemented. Projects are aimed at integration, adaptation, psychological support for IDPs and peaceful coexistence with host communities. Under the UNHCR/DRC/R2P program, 113 CBIs have been identified and 76 fully implemented. Projects are aimed at child protection, social cohesion, women's empowerment as well as support of youth-led initiatives, stress relief and activities for the elderly.
- On 8 December, UNHCR together with partner R2P and the State Migration Service (SMS) held a roundtable on statelessness in Kyiv. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Social Policy (MoSP), Department of State Registry, the Human Rights Ombudsman and the State Border Guards Service

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>

(SBGS). NGOs from Kyiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odesa also participated. International experts from Moldova and Georgia shared regional best practice on the establishment of statelessness determination procedures and the elimination of statelessness. Valeriia Cherednichenko, statelessness expert from the UNHCR's Europe Bureau presented a global overview of best practices on eradicating statelessness. The roundtable was a continuation of UNHCR's work on statelessness in Ukraine, which began in 2014, as part of UNHCR's Global Campaign to End Statelessness 2014-2024.

- On 9 December, UNHCR, together with IOM and ODIHR, held an expert roundtable on combatting hate crimes in Ukraine: 'Building Partnership and Communication between Law Enforcement and Minority Communities'. The event was part of UNHCR's work on the Diversity Initiative, and broader efforts to build the capacity of government bodies and civil society to enhance the reporting and prosecution of hate crimes. This event brought together representatives of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), minority communities and civil society organizations, with the purpose of building communication between them so as to strengthen collaboration on countering manifestations of hate speech, discrimination and hate crimes. Experts on hate crimes were also invited from Croatia so as to share best practices.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR partner Stantia Kharkiv provided 1,014 general consultations, 136 legal consultations and 72 psychosocial consultations. UNHCR partner Slavic Heart provided 1,307 general consultations, 225 legal consultations and 53 psychological consultations. More than 80 per cent of consultations were provided to female beneficiaries. Main concerns were humanitarian assistance, initial IDP registration, medical assistance, IDP rights, social counseling, social assistance, crossing the line of contact, employment, children, social adaptation, anxiety and depression. Between 15 and 30 November, UNHCR partner Crimea SOS provided consultations to 1,299 people, of which 1,011 were social consultations and 288 were legal consultations. The most frequently raised concerns included the crossing of the line of contact, civil documentation, pensions, winterization assistance, medical assistance and property. Between 23 November and 6 December, UNHCR partners the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Right to Protection (R2P) conducted 201 protection monitoring visits to over 2,200 IDPs and referred 47 cases to legal counseling providers. Main concerns raised included: freedom of movement, employment, social assistance, accommodation, civil documentation, medical assistance, education, IDP registration and discrimination against IDPs.
- On 10 December, UNHCR participated in the NFF NGO Forum organized by local authorities in Dnipropetrovsk. The aim of the forum was to provide a networking opportunity and to promote the work of international organizations supporting community-based organizations. There were 414 representatives from local NGOs and 15 international organizations present. UNHCR presented background on the work of the agency, an overview of achievements so far and plans for 2016.

Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)

Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter and NFI cluster led by UNHCR, conducted sub-national meetings in Kramatorsk and Sievierodonetsk focusing on winterization, particularly in villages located along the line of contact. Almost all villages accessible from the government controlled area are receiving at least one of the four types of assistance (NFI, shelter, fuel and cash). The situation in the non-government controlled area is much more concerning, with many settlements left without coverage mainly due to restriction of humanitarian access. The Cluster has produced a map showing ['Grey area' winterization gaps](#) as well as a map showing [planned activities for winterization](#).
- More information can be found in the November [factsheet](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter materials were provided to over 2,000 people. In the government controlled area, UNHCR partners distributed NFIs to over 750 people in the Mariupol area. The Mariupol Field Office provided 634 roofing panels and other shelter material to partner DRC for distribution to beneficiaries. The office has begun distribution of winterization assistance. So far 258 tonnes of coal and 101 m³ of wood have been distributed to beneficiaries near the line of contact. UNHCR Kharkiv Field Office delivered 3,090 m³ of wood and 2,091 tonnes of coal to people in northern Donetsk. UNHCR Field Office Sievierodonetsk provided winterization kits and coal to residents of Zolotoye. Further deliveries of coal were made to the villages of Sizoe and Balotenne. 2,200 plywood boards to partner NRC for shelter activities.
- In the non-government controlled areas, UNHCR distributed NFIs, roofing panels, plywood sheets and other shelter material to over 1,000 people in the villages of Khryashchuvate and Novosvetlovka, Luhansk region.

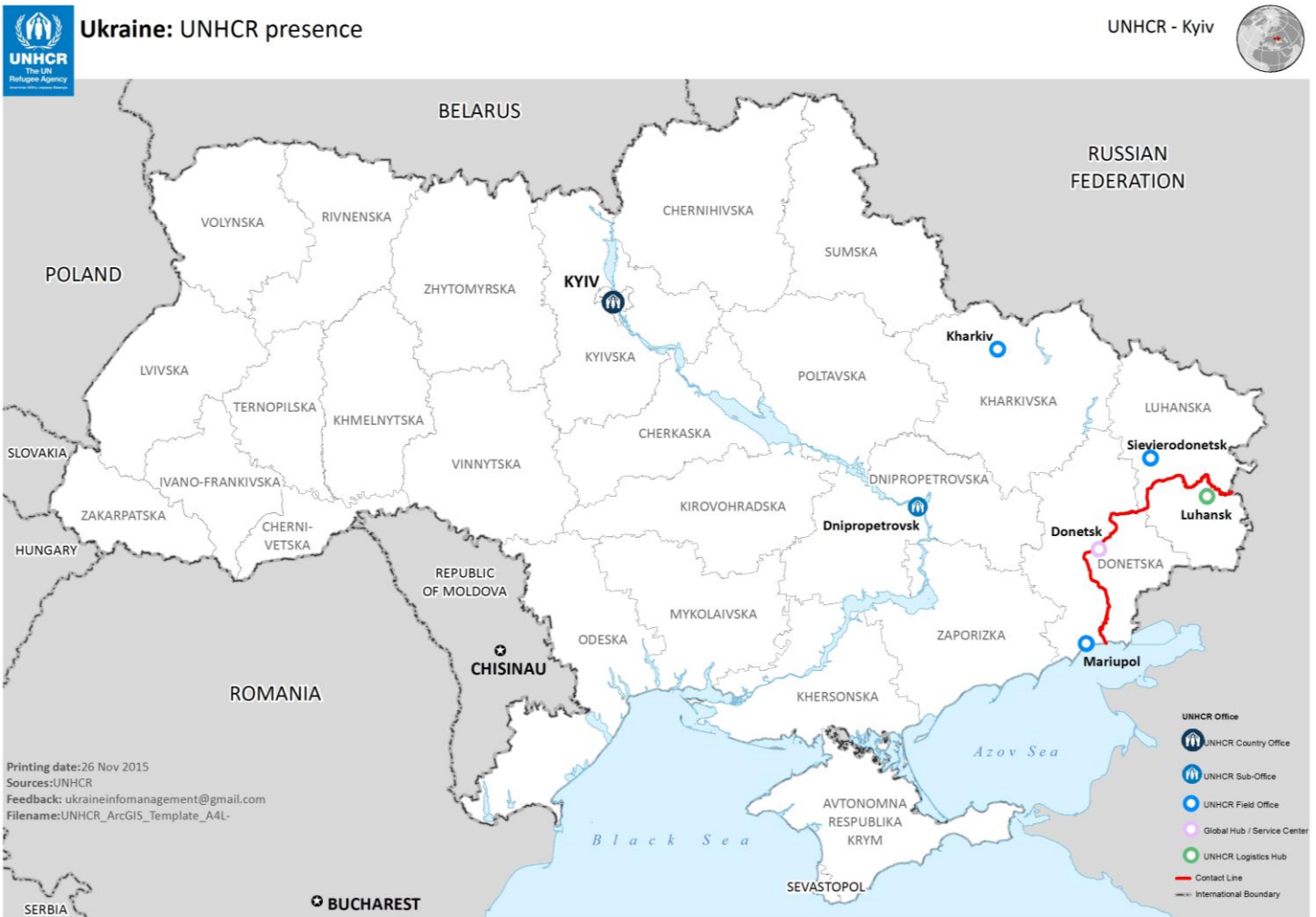
IDP Community Centre opened

On 10 December, UNHCR together with NGO Foundation of good deeds, Kyiv Regional Administration and representatives of Iren city mayor's office, opened an IDP Community Center in Irpen city, Kyiv region. The idea to establish a the center came from a participatory assessment conducted earlier this year in Kyiv region, protection monitoring and regular communication with the Department for Family and Children Affairs of the Kyiv Regional State Administration which is designed as a coordinating body for IDP issues in Kyiv region. Assessment and monitoring revealed that while many initiatives are taking place in Kyiv city, smaller towns in Kyiv region require more support in terms of community



mobilization and assistance. IDPs shared their concerns, including lack of information, legal assistance and psychosocial activities. UNHCR has supported the establishment of a community center through a Quick Impact Project (QIP). Funding was provided to repair the premises as well as procurement of equipment and furniture. The center will become an open space for IDPs to receive legal, social, and psychosocial assistance. Already this week several community-based organizations have included the center in their programs for IDP children and elderly people. The center is open to initiatives from IDPs and the host community aimed at raising awareness of IDP rights, facilitating integration and social cohesion.

Photo:



Working in partnership

On 3-4 December, more than 350 people participated in the [Civil Society Forum](#) hosted by UNHCR and the University of Kharkiv. Representatives from 150 Community-based Organizations (CBOs), local volunteer initiatives, authorities, media, international NGOs, UN agencies and donors attended. The forum consisted of 25 workshop sessions aimed at CBO capacity building; four panel discussions aiming to find community-based solutions to displacement and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine; a marketplace for CBOs, NGOs, clusters and authorities to present their work. As a next step, UNHCR will continue to facilitate discussion among CBOs and present some agreed action points which will aim at strengthening partnerships and formulating key advocacy messages

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 seven 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 leads the Shelter and Non-food Item Cluster and co-leads the Protection Cluster.

UNHCR implementing partners (IDP operation): [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [All-Ukrainian Network of PLWH](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Slavic Heart](#) | [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 Dnipro](#) | [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 UK](#) | [The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [UNDP](#) | [UNFPA](#) | [Vostok SOS](#)

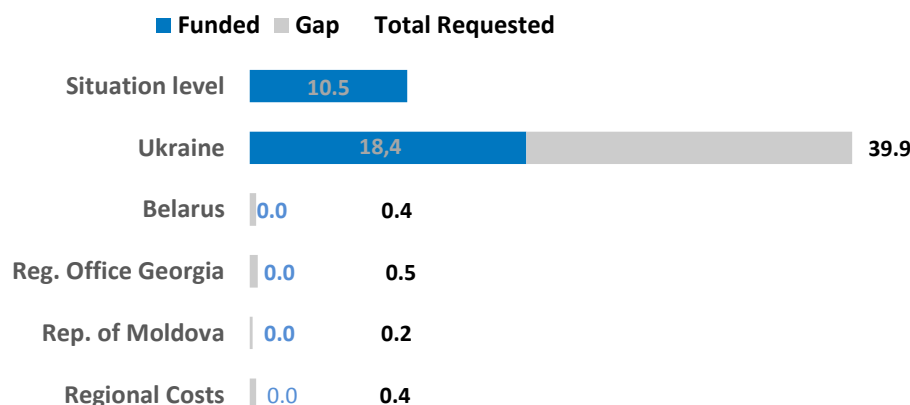
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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 **69 per cent** of the total financial requirements.

Donors who have contributed: Funding (in million USD)

- Canada
- Denmark
- Estonia
- European Union
- Finland
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Japan
- Norway
- Portugal
- Private Donors
- Republic of Korea
- Russian Federation
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

A total of **28.8 million** has been contributed



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