

FOUR YEARS OF CONFLICT IN UKRAINE LEAVE 4.4 MILLION PEOPLE IN A DIRE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

(New York, 20 April) – The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Mr. Neal Walker, today briefed Member States and International Organizations on the dire humanitarian situation faced by 4.4 million conflict-affected people in eastern Ukraine. After four years of conflict, 3.4 million people in Ukraine are struggling to cope with the impact of the humanitarian crisis and urgently require humanitarian assistance and protection.

Every day, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine forces millions of civilians to make impossible choices whether they eat, have medicine, or their children go to school. Critical civilian infrastructure is severely impacted, as ceasefire agreements are consistently disregarded. There were on average 40,000 violations per month last year alone. During his briefing, Mr. Walker said that, “only this week, five water treatment workers were shot while trying to maintain critical water infrastructure along the “contact line”. Today, water supplies to over 345,000 civilians hang in the balance. Last year alone, over 130 incidents affected critical water infrastructure”.

Over 600,000 people, including 100,000 children, bear the brunt of the continued armed clashes along the 457-km ‘contact line’. Every month, over 1 million people are forced to cross the “no-man’s land” through checkpoints, many to simply access basic humanitarian and social services. More than 2,500 civilian men, women and children have been killed, and over 9,000 injured, since hostilities began four years ago.

Explosive hazard contamination in eastern Ukraine is impacting 1.9 million people, including around 200,000 children. The use of landmines across urban areas, farmland and the checkpoints is a constant concern. “Last week, landmines killed a family of four in eastern Ukraine. In 2017, over 235 civilians were killed or injured by landmines and other explosive remnants of war,” said Mr. Walker.

The humanitarian community is committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of all conflict-affected people in Ukraine. In December 2017, humanitarian agencies launched a highly prioritized US\$187 million appeal to reach over 2.3 million of the most vulnerable people in Ukraine with assistance and protection services. So far, this appeal remains largely unfunded. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Walker said: “Today, I call on Member States to stand in solidarity with conflict-affected people in Ukraine and to help urgently address this 97 per cent funding gap. I continue to call on the parties to the conflict to take all measures necessary to ensure international humanitarian law is respected – civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected. The only solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine is peace. We do not want to mark any further anniversaries of continued conflict.”

For further information, please contact:

Damian Rance, OCHA New York, rance@un.org, Tel: +1 917 367 4930, Cell: +1 917 328 6574

Jens Laerke, OCHA Geneva, laerke@un.org, Tel.: +41 22 917 11 42, Cell: +41 79 472 9750

Valijon Ranoev, OCHA Kyiv: ranoev@un.org, tel. +38 050 422-3943

OCHA press releases are available at www.unocha.org or www.reliefweb.int